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PRESS RELEASE

MAY 26, 2016

WAYPOINTS' (formerly FORT MCMURRAY FAMILY CRISIS SOCIETY) UPDATE

Waypoints' ceased operations of all its' programs and services and closed its' doors by 4:00 PM on May 3rd in response to a mandatory evacuation of the downtown and shortly after, Timberlea. These involved ensuring clients at Unity House and in Second Stage Housing at the Compass were moved to a safe location and that Housing First clients were able to get transportation to a reception centre. Staff were contacted, notified of the situation and advised to fuel up their vehicles as soon as possible. For Waypoints, along with the rest of the community of Fort McMurray, it was the start of what would become a very different future from what we had all been expecting to live.

Fast forward to May 26th and the Waypoints' leadership team of the Executive Director and Managers have been meeting virtually and through text groups to plan communications, ensure financial obligations are met, insurance claims are started, and prepare for restarting operations. "After making sure that our clients and staff were safe and our buildings were as secure as we could make them, we focussed on communications internally, with our board and our funders, as well as with social profit coordination efforts." said Michele Taylor, Executive Director. "With approval from our funders, we continued to pay all but our casual call-in staff throughout this period. Knowing that their income was secure during this time was incredibly important to the well-being of our staff and we thank our funders for seeing how important continued pay would be to the ability to restart operations at the first opportunity and to retaining our staff." said Taylor.

Currently, all three Waypoints' buildings are standing and awaiting assessment for smoke and water damage from Waypoints' insurance adjustor on June 6th. "After the walk-through, we hope to have a good idea of timelines to get Unity House, the Compass and the Opportunities for Change Centre back open and to relaunch our programs and services for the community." "We are tentatively planning to start basic operations by July 4th. This would include the leadership and administration teams working out of the first floor of Unity House." said Taylor. "As soon as we have tentative dates for reopening Unity House, our two crisis lines and the Compass, we will release them on our website and through social media." added Taylor. "The staff can't wait to get back to work!"

Waypoints operates a 36-bed emergency women's shelter, an Opportunities For Change centre, domestic violence outreach programs and services, sexual assault and abuse programs and services, an affordable housing apartment building, Housing First program and Second Stage Housing for women escaping domestic violence. They also operate two crisis lines for the community.

For more information, contact Michele Taylor, Executive Director at michele.taylor@waypointswb.ca or on her cell at [780-881-8099](tel:780-881-8099)

A safe place to choose your direction

*Working toward a community free of domestic violence, sexual assault,
abuse and homelessness.*

