



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Safe at Home celebrates community progress towards ending homelessness

Whitehorse – August 21, 2020

The Safe at Home Progress Report, released today, highlights momentum towards ending and preventing homelessness across Whitehorse between 2017 and March 2020. The report shows progress and action on the goals and priorities identified in the original *Safe at Home community-based plan to end and prevent homelessness*, which was endorsed by four government partners, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Government of Yukon, and the City of Whitehorse, in 2017. While most progress and impacts on providing supports to Yukoners experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity are focused in Whitehorse, the report draws attention to a few key initiatives in rural Yukon.

“This report is really an opportunity to honor the partnerships, learnings, and successes that the broader community doesn’t always hear or see” says Kate Mechan, Safe at Home’s Implementation Manager, “There is no single effort that will end and prevent homelessness and there is no one government, organization, or person responsible to implement all the solutions.” The Progress Report builds on successes of the last three years, and moving forward, Safe at Home and community partners will continue to coordinate actions rooted in community values, lived/living experiences, and the best available research to end homelessness in the territory.

Each of the government partners are pleased to support the release of the report.

“TKC’s commitment to ensuring all Citizens have access to affordable housing continues to be our top priority. Our government’s partnership in the Riverbend Project is just one example of what can work to alleviate the housing crisis we are seeing here in Whitehorse. It is initiatives like this that bring positive change to our community. Having affordable housing is more than having a roof, it’s the overall security that leads to better life choices, better health and much needed stability for our children. By sharing our progress and working together with other agencies and governments we are moving in the right direction.”

- Chief Kristina Kane, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

“There is no one-size fits all (OR all encompassing) solution to end and prevent homelessness but that does not mean we can turn a blind eye to the situation.

Homelessness affects all our communities and it requires community solutions. Many communities know exactly what is needed to help close certain gaps. The heavy lifting for these solutions have already been completed but resources are not always available to see long term change happen quickly. Safe at Home is a collaborative holistic approach, embracing unique circumstances; includes the voice of lived experiences; with aims to meet the needs of our community's most vulnerable. Together, we can and will make a difference!"

- Acting Chief Jessie Dawson, Kwanlin Dün First Nation

"The Safe at Home Plan is a roadmap we use to address homelessness in the territory. It is heartening to see the progress we have made over the past three years, but there is a lot of work left to do. Cooperation between governments in collaboration with community organizations is integral to addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in Yukon."

- Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation Pauline Frost

"Our Yukon community has made great strides as we continue to work towards preventing homelessness. We've come a long way as a city and territory since Chief Doris Bill of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation approached me to say our entire community had to work together on behalf of our vulnerable people. Her strong leadership formed the basis of the Vulnerable Peoples at Risk Forum of 2015, and I am empowered by the areas of this progress report that need to be strengthened. We are committed to addressing these next steps and filling in those gaps, so that the plan can be as effective as possible. It is humbling to see our entire community step up to this enormous challenge to create opportunities and establish a living plan where everyone is valued and engaged."

- Mayor Dan Curtis, City of Whitehorse

Contact Kate at safeathomeyukon@gmail.com for a copy of the Progress Report and as always, Safe at Home is eager to engage with community members who have feedback, questions, and solutions.

For more information:

Kate Mechan, Implementation Manager, Safe at Home Plan: (867) 334-9310