



The Salvation Army

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Dear Port Hope fire evacuee families,

Re: Key information for your future planning

First, let us express our heartfelt sympathies for the trauma that you have all experienced in recent days. You have incurred devastating losses of material items, memories, and pets, and we recognize that temporary accommodations and financial worries are additional stresses. It is the purpose of this letter to lessen those burdens as much as we can, by providing answers for some of the “unknowns” in your lives. We are amazed by how you continue to support one another, and we are ever so grateful to our generous community for offerings of help during this difficult time.

To date The Salvation Army has received \$32,615.20 in cash donations and gift cards as well as a variety of other donations including clothing, household furniture and appliances and has been carefully tracking and using these donations to directly support those affected by the fire.

Under CRA regulations, we must ensure full transparency with how funds are being used and distributed, and standard receipting of expenses is how we are able to do that. This was clearly explained to the organizer of the fund raising concert and has always been the practice of The Salvation Army. Furthermore, before we accepted the \$10,000 cheque that was pledged at the concert, we made it clear to the donors, that we were not able to give out cash, and they indicated that this was their assumption anyway.

Since the fire, The Salvation Army has dispersed close to \$21,000, and we anticipate many more associated costs for storage, moving expenses, hotel accommodation, and medical expenses. There is no way to determine when these costs will end and with 24 households, and approximately 50 people affected, every individual and family situation is unique. Some have insurance, and some do not. Some are single, while others are large families. Some victims also have extensive medical needs that require unique support.

The Salvation Army is only able assist with the needs that we are aware of, so please contact us if you have an unmet need. If we are unable to assist directly with a specific issue we will ensure that you are connected with those who can. The Salvation Army is able to make donations work well beyond their value through our community partnerships and our broad network of resources.

As we continue to connect with each of you to address your specific needs, there are a number of resources available to immediately assist you in specific ways.

Moving Company Support

A partnership has been arranged with **Northumberland County Moving Company** on Hwy #28 so that when you have secured permanent housing, you can contact them at **905-373-4668** and **speak with Tanya Stanley**. They will work with

you to coordinate your move, and we will cover the associated costs. They are aware that there may be multiple stops to gather the items that you need from our warehouse and from friends or family. The moving company will let us know when they need to get into our warehouse, and you will need to accompany them to choose the items that you want.

Assistance with First and Last Month's Rent

If you are concerned about gathering first and last month's rent, Northumberland County has a program in place to assist. If needed, phone their **Community Outreach Program at (905) 372-6846 x2468**, to complete the intake process. They have a worker who has been assigned to assist fire victims.

Furniture, Appliances and Household Supports

We have spent significant time on donation management, so that when you are able to find permanent housing, you can choose from a wide variety of furniture items. We also have lots of toys, dishes, cutlery, glass ware, small appliances, linen, and décor items.

These are available to you even now, by arranging with Lisa Graham, our Port Hope manager, to access the warehouse. She can be reached at saporthope@gmail.com or via cell phone at 289-251-5758. Many have taken advantage of this already. Since our warehouse is currently at capacity, we have a number of donors who are holding items, which we have documented, so that we can connect you with those items should you need them.

Warehouse items will be given out on a first come first served basis, but we are not able to hold items, because we are only guaranteed our current space for another 6 weeks. Should you find accommodation after that time, we would have to move it a third time, which is simply not practical.

Beds, Mattresses, Clothing, Food, Medical and Counselling Support

- For acquisition of beds for your new home, contact the **Help Centre at 905-372-2646** or e-mail them at info@thehelpcentre.ca. They are located at 1005 Elgin Street West, Suite 301, in Cobourg, in the Fleming building east of Staples and west of Missions Thrift Store. They will provide a letter for you to take to **Sleep Country**.
- For clothing, we have developed a partnership with **all the thrift stores in Port Hope and Cobourg**. If you identify yourselves as fire evacuees, they will give you what you need at no cost. All clothing donations that we receive are being funneled to them.
- For food, visit your local food banks, including ours at 100 Peter St in Port Hope on Mondays and Fridays between 9am & 12 pm. Appointments can also be made through that office at other times.
- For toiletries, go to our Port Hope office, where numerous hair brushes, razors, and other items are available to you to choose from.
- For school supplies and backpacks, as well as winter coats, contact our Port Hope office, these will be provided for you as the time nears, through our partnerships with Coats for Kids and the United Way.
- For new toys, which we are able to access through The Salvation Army Railside Distribution Centre in Toronto, we ask that you e-mail or call the Port Hope office with your children's wish lists. We will contact Railside and do our best to find some of the items on their lists. While electronics are harder to come by, you are welcome to tell us what games they are hoping to have. Please ensure other items such as specific board games, books, toys, and sports items are listed, to give us some options. If your children are in diapers, please provide us with their sizes.

- For medical needs, contact the Cobourg Salvation Army Community and Family Services at 905-373-9440, located at 66 Swayne Street, Cobourg.
- For support and counselling in the aftermath of this tragedy, please call Victims Services at 1-888-822-7729 or e-mail them at support@vspn.ca

We are hopeful that the \$300 gift card that you are now receiving will help with some of your current miscellaneous expenses. If you have access to e-mail, we invite you to communicate with us in this way, due to its simplicity. Then, should we hear of the opening of a rental somewhere, we can get you the information quickly.

The Salvation Army continues to work with the Municipality and County on ways in which we can support you in the long term and we are actively engaged in meeting current needs. Again, we encourage you to contact Lisa Graham, our Port Hope Community and Family Services manager with your questions or concerns, at either her cell or office number noted above. For those in hotels, continue to connect with David Alexander, our family services director at 905-373-9440. He will be your contact until he retires at the end of August, at which point you will learn of his replacement as needed. If for some reason you are unsatisfied with the help offered, you are welcome to call us.

We are the local Corps Officers, overseeing the work of The Salvation Army in Cobourg and Port Hope. We appreciate your patience as our very small local organization manages the complexities of a very large crisis. We wish you all the best during this very difficult time, and will continue to do all we can to ease the burdens you have that fall within our sphere.

Warmest regards,



Captains Michael & Carolyn Simpson

Corps Officers

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