



Dear Mayor and Council:

Homelessness. It is a national crisis and a national shame. Chronic homelessness in Hamilton is becoming more severe and people are struggling to survive the day. They are without hope, and many Hamiltonians are at grave risk of remaining in a cycle of addiction and mental health crisis that diminishes their dignity.

In Hamilton, homelessness is like a flood where we are up to our knees, and some in our community are already over their head.

In times of crisis, communities come together and respond. Hamilton is no different.

HATS is a group of citizens responding to this crisis, trying to provide temporary shelter for those in need, in the hope that people and governments with the means will invest in the transformational change needed.

As you are aware, for almost 70 years, Wesley has worked with those most chronically homeless through outreach and drop-in programs. Our staff revive people from overdose and assist individuals with serious mental illness as part of their daily work providing food, harm reduction supplies, and assistance in securing treatment and shelter.

We are part of a network of organizations supporting the HATS community. Social Research and Planning Council and Wesley assist with policy development and administrative support. Ongoing supports already accessed by those unhoused will continue as they are, including Social Navigators, HamSmart and the Shelter Health Network.

Wesley staff has unique expertise with mitigating the risks associated with supporting those most in need – skills that are often gained through lived experience and professional training.

HATS and other citizen-led responses must be supported as they are prepared to take on some heavy lifting to address this crisis. We need every little bit of help we can get. We are with them for as long as they are required to help shelter Hamiltonians from the rising floodwaters of homelessness. We see HATS as partners in developing a new continuum of service as we transition from the Wesley Day Centre to a new approach to addressing the root causes of homelessness.



It is cold outside, and the citizens of HATS want to provide warmth, shelter, support, and hopefully, a first step to recovery and contribution for Hamiltonians suffering from homelessness.

We hope Council will address this crisis with the urgency it deserves and ask that you to please support the HATS project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Don Seymour".

Don Seymour, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Vernon".

Julie Vernon Chair, Wesley Board

cc: Janette Smith, City Manager
Angie Burden General Manager, Healthy & Safe Communities