



Northern FIRE: *Feminist Institute for Research & Evaluation* at UNBC & host of the *Women North Network*

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January 28, 2021

Re: Support for proposed expansion of Harmony House

Dear Prince George Mayor and Council:

We are writing on behalf of Northern FIRE: *Feminist Institute for Research & Evaluation* at UNBC and our electronic network – the *Women North Network*. We are both a UNBC research centre and an electronic network of more than 400 women and women serving organizations across northern BC. In our research and community work, we have come to know the work of Harmony House and the positive impact their presence in the community has had on the health, wellbeing and future of mothers and children who are lucky enough to spend time there.

We have had the opportunity to visit Harmony House and see, first hand, how it provides a safe and nurturing space for pregnant women who are facing challenges with addiction and mental health issues. Important to the success of Harmony House is the grounding of services in an empowerment perspective – a belief in working with and supporting women to find the ways to ultimately support themselves, live healthy lives, and contribute to the broader community.

With that background in mind, Northern FIRE fully supports the opportunity to expand the work of Harmony House – especially given the success to date and the fact that there are more women wanting to access Harmony House than there is space available. Expanding these services will allow more women to overcome their challenges and ensure that their children have opportunity for a solid start in life such that they too will have the capacity to grow up in a positive way and have the foundational knowledge and life experience to be healthy contributing members of their communities.

In addition to expressing our support via this letter, *Northern FIRE & Women North Network* will provide ongoing support to the work at Harmony House in whatever ways we can. Some possibilities could include sharing our “Moving into Wellness” Workshop that includes body movement, dance, meditation and bead-making or perhaps assisting with program evaluation components as may be needed. And we are open to other possibilities.

If you would like to learn more about *Northern FIRE* and *Women North Network* or wish to connect with us to further discuss our thoughts about and support for the expansion of Harmony House, please don't hesitate to get in touch as per the contact information above.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Northern FIRE Leadership Council
Professor Dawn Hemingway
Dr. Jacqueline Holler
Dr. Indrani Margolin
Dr. Lela Zimmer