

City of Prince George Mayor and Council
1100 Patricia Boulevard
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

RE: Harmony House Rezoning Zelkwas Avenue

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to express support for the rezoning at 606 Zelkwas Avenue to facilitate the development of Supportive Housing for the Phoenix Transition Society's Harmony House program. Harmony House serves a critical need for mothers and pregnant women in Prince George. Harmony House has successfully been operating their six-bedroom house for four years and has served 94 women from across northern BC. To date, 89% of the women who participated in the Harmony House program have successfully gone through the program and are living independently with their children. This success rate is attributed to the highly effective and unique program that provides 24/7 staffing and focuses on strengthening the bond between mother and child and promoting the women's confidence by teaching life and parenting skills in a non-judgmental and caring environment.

Our Transition House and associated supportive housing complex in Masset, Haida Gwaii have been in operation for 20 years. During our few first years of building and program development, we also heard concerns from community members about the impact our program and site could have in the neighborhood. We are happy to report, two decades later, that community concerns about safety, drug use, and crime have been unfounded and we are a welcome, well-functioning addition to our small town. The 24-hour nature of our facility staffing rotation combined with a strong set of safety protocols as well as related lighting and camera infrastructure have ensured that our services for women and children are delivered in a safe and unobtrusive manner. In fact, some of our most vocal opponents from the early years have become dedicated supporters of our agency and shelter program, as we have proven to be not only a valuable service but also a good neighbor.

We support Harmony House and know that they are committed to constructing a building that fits into the neighbourhood and is a maximum of 2-storeys. We believe that the neighbourhood concerns about safety, drug use and crime are unwarranted and will be non-issues, as the building will be staffed 24/7 and Harmony House has demonstrated success in their existing development. We have every confidence that the Phoenix Transition Society will take community concerns into consideration as they develop their programs, and will implement appropriate policies, procedures, and infrastructure to be able to deliver their services in a way that provides for community health and safety for all.

We urge you to support this rezoning application, as it serves a critical need in our community and region. From a land use perspective, this development is in an ideal location as most of the mothers living in Harmony House will not have vehicles and therefore having services, schools, and parks within walking distance is important.

Thank you for considering this letter. If you have any questions for us about our experience opening and operating a residential facility, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

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Brie Altrogge
Executive Assistant & Interim Administration Manager
Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace
Tlaa Juuh Ldaa Naay Transition House
Masset, Haida Gwaii

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