

8th February 2021

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.

I 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. In addition, Harmony House regularly supports student nurse placements, as visitors in their family home. Healthcare provision has a tense history with Indigenous Peoples, as we know from the recent BC report In Plain Sight, which raised the Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in BC. As part of the pediatric course student nurses have the privilege of connecting with the women and their children. This opportunity builds empathy and compassion within the students, opens their hearts and minds to the experiences of some of our most vulnerable and overburdened population. The focus on cultural humility, acting as role models, and embracing the learning Harmony House and its residents offers - is highly valued by the nursing students. The opportunity to create a purposeful space for the women and their families is critical in the present and future narrative of Harmony House. Building on the planned site will offer an exemplar to the wider BC, that our community not only recognized what was needed but supported change with compassion.

I 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 in building community and supporting people to live their best lives.

Thank you for considering this letter.

Sincerely

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Dr Caroline Sanders, MBE, PhD, RN
Associate professor, School of Nursing UNBC.

"The views expressed here are mine and are not necessarily those of UNBC."