



## **PATHSTONE MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVING SERVICES BY PURCHASING WOMEN'S PLACE SHELTER ON RIVER ROAD BUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN WELLAND WILL CONTINUE**

WELLAND, ON, March 2, 2022 — On April 4, the building that has housed Welland's domestic violence shelter since 1996 will transfer ownership from Women's Place to Pathstone Mental Health. Currently known as "Serenity Place," 102 River Rd will be renovated by its new owners and continue the location's legacy of providing critical social services to the community. Pathstone's newest centre, "River House", will provide one-on-one counselling, group clinics and walk-in support to help meet the increased need for children and youth mental health services in South Niagara.

Pathstone's Director of Philanthropy, Kim Rossi, shares that expanding their services "could not wait another minute," which is why the agency jumped at the opportunity to put down roots in Welland. "We have been carefully looking at the number of kids we have been seeing," explains Rossi, "which spiked by 35 percent during the first year of the pandemic and they haven't slowed down since. 3,800 of the 10,000 children we saw over a 15-month period were from Niagara South."

Pathstone's decision to purchase the River Road property was made even easier by the generosity of an anonymous donor whose gift will have a positive impact on families for years to come. Pathstone will also launch a renovation campaign to help prepare the site to welcome children and families this fall.

Women's Place Executive Director, Jennifer Gauthier, is excited that River House will continue to provide important social services. She also emphasizes that women and children will continue to have access to critical domestic violence services in Welland, a need that is more critical than ever as the pandemic continues to contribute to a spike in the instances and severity of violence against women. "The sale of our Welland Shelter," she explains, "is part of a plan to add 10 beds to our total shelter capacity in South Niagara. While all of our safe beds

will be located at our Niagara Falls shelter moving forward, we are excited to announce that we will be opening an outreach office at the Hope Centre in Welland in early April, which will offer counselling for both women and their children as well as housing and legal support, and other critical services.”

Mayor Frank Champion was happy to learn that the sale of Serenity Place would not mean the loss of domestic violence services in the Welland Community. “Women’s Place of South Niagara will still have a presence in our community, now based with services out of the Hope Centre,” he said. “We are excited to welcome Pathstone Mental Health into our community. The services that women and children receive from both of these agencies are critical and we are thrilled they will both be calling Welland home.”

Journalists wishing to learn more about the changes coming to Pathstone Mental Health and Women’s Place are invited to contact the following individuals for more information:

***Pathstone Mental Health (Media Contact: Kim Rossi - 289-969-8342 / [krossi@pathstone.ca](mailto:krossi@pathstone.ca))***

*Pathstone Mental Health is a community-based organization with a mission to provide innovative and effective treatment for all children in Niagara struggling with mental health and addictions issues. Thanks to support from our donors and volunteers, we can help meet the needs of more children and families. As the primary accredited provider of mental health services for children in Niagara, helping Niagara’s kids is not only our job, it’s our passion.*

***Women’s Place (Media Contact: Amanda Braet – 905-356-3933 ext. 240 / [amanda@wpsn.ca](mailto:amanda@wpsn.ca))***  
*Since 1981, Women’s Place has been providing confidential support to women across South Niagara when faced with the difficult issue of gender-based violence. Whether it is a partner or another loved one who is being abusive, our counsellors are here to provide compassionate support to help women figure out their options.*

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