

# HOME AWAY

## CHARITABLE GROUP AIMS TO PROVIDE THE COMFORTS OF HOME DURING

Manitobans are accustomed to traveling to Winnipeg for medical treatments when the situation requires specialized treatment; but what happens when the treatment involves an extended stay in the city? For some Manitobans, weeks or months of their time are spent living with friends or relatives; but for most, the extended stay involves hotels or rented accommodations. The disorientation of being away from home and family can be emotionally and physically draining – not to mention the financial impact.

To address this problem, a group of concerned Manitobans have undertaken a fund-raising effort to build a residence for rural adult Manitobans requiring treatment while in Winnipeg. Founded by two oncology nurses, **Joanne Loughery** and **Patricia Benjaminson**, and a patient volunteer, **Greg Pilgrim**, the project is known as A Port in the Storm Inc. (APITS).

According to the trio, the “Port” will be a house – which will provide a safe, supportive, affordable, home-like environment and haven for people who are in the centre of a “Storm.”

President of APITS, Joanne Loughery, often shares a story of inspiration that encouraged her and her partners to dedicate their time to establishing this charity:

A young single parent from rural Manitoba required a lengthy stay in Winnipeg to receive aggressive out-patient treatment for a life-threatening illness. As there were no family or friends living in Winnipeg, arrangements were made to rent a furnished apartment. The child was frightened by the parent’s illness and missed her extended family and friends when in Winnipeg so the parent spent much time alone. During one conversation the young parent shared her dream: “The worst part of my cancer experience was staying in that expensive apartment all alone. If I had one wish I would want a house built in Winnipeg for people like me, similar to the Ronald McDonald House for children. I would call it my ‘house of hope.’” Regrettably, this young patient did not live to accomplish this dream.

Joanne states, “I have been a nurse in the field of cancer for over 20 years.

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(L to R) Gary Hanna, Board member representing Whiteshell and East Beaches Region; Dale Smeltz, Steering/Fundraising Committee Chair; Darcy Kruger, Building Committee Chair; Ro-Jean Anstett, Campaign Director; and Kathy Hanna.



Dale Smeltz, Chair of the Steering / Fundraising Committee and Joanne Loughery, President and Board Chair

# FROM HOME

## PROVIDE MANITOBBANS WITH A BETTER MEDICAL STAY IN THE CITY


Receiving treatment for cancer or any life threatening illness is a very trying experience for patients and their families. It creates enormous physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial burdens. Over the years as an oncology nurse I have known this to be a very difficult problem for many patients and have heard many similar stories. I have cared for endless numbers of patients from rural Manitoba and housing is an enormous burden for them during this very stressful time.”

APITS has adopted a mission statement to provide a safe, supportive, affordable, home-like environment and haven for people who are in the centre of a “Storm.” Since the inception of the organization, like-minded volunteers have been working to move the project forward.

A 10-member board meets regularly to review the work of eight committees involving dozens of volunteers throughout the Province. Various groups throughout the province have developed fund-raising projects for APITS and now the Board is moving towards the launch of a public capital campaign. A Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation grant was approved and awarded to assist with building and developmental plans. In addition, a Winnipeg Foundation grant was secured to assist with ongoing campaign costs. Currently, a building and operations committee is actively working with City of Winnipeg councillors on a donation of land in the city.

All of these signs of progress indicate that there is a strong body of public support for the project.

“We are hopeful that we can complete our capital campaign this year,” says Loughery. “Then we can be talking about making our dreams a reality.”

More information can be obtained by contacting A Port In The Storm’s offices, 161 Rue Grandin in Winnipeg or by checking their website [www.aportinthestorm.ca](http://www.aportinthestorm.ca). 



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