

## As the Pandemic Persists, Indwell Continues to Open New Homes

The pandemic highlighted the growing homelessness and housing crises across Ontario. We are thankful to continue (and even begin) construction in several cities. And in August, we opened new homes for 48 people!

“A few months ago, we didn’t quite know how we’d open a new building if the pandemic continued,” says Hannah Bartha, housing support staff at Indwell’s new North End Landing in Hamilton. “But we’ve found new rhythms and better understand how to stay safe. With tenants moving in one day at a time, with masking, physical distancing and sanitizing in place, we’ve started to build a thriving new community.”

North End Landing is Indwell’s first formal housing partnership with a church, James North Baptist Church (formerly Hughson Street Baptist Church). Years ago, they’d outgrown their historic building in Hamilton’s

rapidly changing North End. Committed to serving neighbours feeling the effects of gentrification, the church planned to build nearby. But they withdrew their building application when Indwell leaders suggested they add affordable housing to their plans. Federal and provincial funding for the housing, in addition to ongoing fundraising, signaled the go-ahead for the project. Indwell managed the building project and operates the housing.

While most tenants moved from within the neighbourhood and elsewhere in Hamilton, some tenants, like Stacey, moved from other Indwell programs:

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*I realized I needed more independence, my own oasis.*

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“I think of myself as a bird. When I came out of the hospital, I was like a baby bird, and I couldn’t fly. I needed the nurturing, the security and the stability of living at Indwell’s Wentworth Program. As I progressed with my university studies, and with starting my practicum, I realized I needed more independence, my own oasis. And a larger place where I can have my family over. The sense of community here is already strong. There’s already programming here—like tea-time—which is so good. This place is absolutely wonderful.”



All tenants benefit from the support that Hannah and other team members offer as, through relationships, they create community—a community that supports each other through life’s joys and challenges. In addition to community building and the usual landlord functions, the team helps with problem solving and connecting to services in the broader community.

### North End Landing highlights

- 45 apartments
  - 43 one-bedroom (9 barrier-free)
  - 2 two-bedroom
- 1 full-time staff member
- Highly energy efficient building
- Amenities
  - Community room
  - Quiet common space/library
  - Small meeting room
  - Secure bicycle storage
  - On-site laundry
  - Access to church programming

While the planned open house was cancelled because of pandemic restrictions, you can still tour through North End Landing with Hannah here: [indwell.ca/nel-tour](http://indwell.ca/nel-tour)



# Indwell: Combatting Homelessness

Home is where you belong. More than simply a place to sleep, it's where you have privacy, where you can relax, where you feel comfortable and safe.

## homelessness

[ hōm-ləs-nəs ] *noun*

: having no home or permanent place of residence

Too many people don't experience home. Instead, on any given night about 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness. We sometimes notice people hunched in doorways and alleys or sleeping in tents. Less noticeable are the people staying in emergency shelters or couch surfing. Then there are many more people who don't show up in official homelessness statistics – people whose economic or housing situation is precarious or whose housing does not meet public health or safety standards (many rooming houses, for example). Homelessness is about more than a place to sleep; it's about a lack of housing security.

Regardless of the reasons people experience homelessness, it's unhealthy, unsafe and demeaning. Most at risk are single adult men, people with mental health issues, people with addictions, women with children fleeing violence, and Indigenous people.

## Why Affordability Matters

What is affordable housing? That depends on your income.

Most of Indwell's tenants receive ODSP for a mental health or physical disability. The monthly ODSP payment to a single person is \$1,169. In the open market, where average rents are well over \$1,000 in many Ontario cities (see above), our tenants would be hard pressed to have much left for food, utilities, clothing, or transportation. Vacancy rates are also low in most of these communities, which contributes to higher rents.

Permanent affordable housing, like Indwell's, brings stability and peace of mind to our tenants so they can focus on reaching goals in their lives. In addition, all 650 Indwell tenants receive the benefit of an active, caring community and supportive staff and volunteers.

The shelter allowance for people who receive the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is \$497, and for people who receive Ontario Works is \$390. Compare this to \$1,180, which is the average rent for an apartment in Ontario (CMHC, 2019). No wonder there are more than 170,000 households in Ontario on social housing waiting lists.

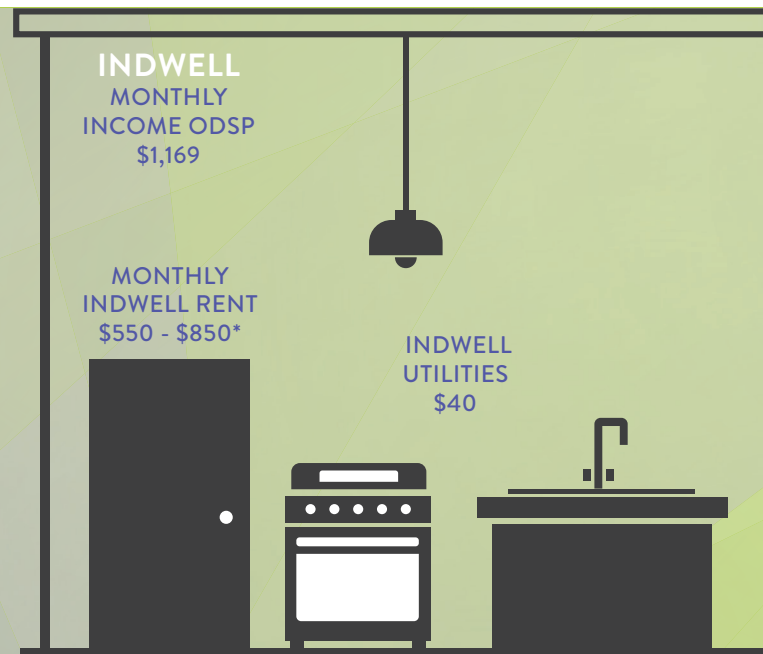
There are solutions. And Indwell is one of the best!

Indwell provides people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with affordable homes. Equally important, Indwell provides tenants with community and health supports that increase the likelihood of success in maintaining stable housing and pursuing their health and wellness goals.

This isn't charity. It's simply the right thing to do. It's taking seriously Jesus' call to love our neighbours as ourselves. It's recognizing that we're all worthy of the dignity of a place in which we can feel comfortable and safe, a place in which we can dare to hope for a better future.

**Thank you** for being a part of the Indwell solution. **Thank you** for offering others the gift of a home.

*Judy Eising, Director of Donor Relations and Fundraising*



\* FOR A SINGLE PERSON, ASSESSED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS, DEPENDING ON INCOME AND

# Book Review - Jesse Thistle's *From the Ashes*

A 2020 Canada Reads finalist, this is Thistle's account of being Indigenous in Canada and growing up with the intergenerational impacts of colonialism that led to the dislocation of Indigenous people from the land, from one another and from their own identity.

Jesse's story begins in childhood as he recounts being separated from his parents and from the Métis way of life. He gives a stark account of how disconnection and feelings of shame around his identity led to years of intensive substance use and over a decade of being precariously housed, incarcerated and homeless in Toronto. Finding his way involved a year at Ottawa's Harvest House, reconnecting and reconciling with family, learning about Indigenous history through university classes and research, and finally by returning to the Cree road allowances in Saskatchewan—home to his earliest memories of the land, family and culture.

Jesse's life experiences illustrate that Indigenous homelessness is not simply a lack of shelter or housing, but a profound disconnect from 'all my relations', from the interconnection between all aspects of life. Reconnecting to the land, place, culture, family, kin, self, spirituality, emotions and identity were critical to finding his way home.

Amy Brouwer, Program Launch Supervisor, McQuesten Lofts



Kody (left) and Heather (middle), pictured here with Amy (right), are tenants at Indwell's Parkdale Landing in East Hamilton. They'll move into McQuesten Lofts (in the background, and view from Parkdale Ave N, below) by early 2021 when construction is complete. McQuesten Lofts will prioritize Indigenous tenants for 10 of the 50 units.



Learn more about Indigenous homelessness here:

[homelesshub.ca/IndigenousHomelessness](https://homelesshub.ca/IndigenousHomelessness)



SERVICES.

# Your Questions Answered



## Do you need my donation?

Yes! People like you provide about 15% of Indwell's operating and capital project funding. Your gifts enable Indwell to operate high quality affordable housing and provide professional supports to our tenants—as well as helping to create new housing to serve more people. Your gifts are also the base from which Indwell can apply for government funding, multiplying your donations many times over. (You can give at [indwell.ca/donate](http://indwell.ca/donate) or use the form below)

## How do you ensure Indwell is sustainable?

Our financial strategy, planning, execution and monitoring are led by our experienced finance and executive team. Indwell's Director of Finance, along with its Board of Directors and its Audit Committee, provide governance oversight. Our financial statements are audited each year by an independent auditing firm, Deloitte LLP, and are publicly available on our website. Each new project must have a sustainable business plan that covers its direct costs and also contributes to the organization's other costs. As we grow, we carefully monitor our debt and leverage ratios so that we can cover our mortgage and loan payments within our operating budget.

Have more questions?  
Send us an email: [info@indwell.ca](mailto:info@indwell.ca)

Cut off and return to Indwell

Yes! I want to provide hope and homes for people in Southern Ontario!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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DIRECTED GIFTS: Donations are used only for approved programs and projects. Donations received in support of a specific program or project will be used as directed by the donor, with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met or cannot be completed for any reason determined by Indwell, the remaining amount of the donation will be used where most needed. A 10% contribution toward Indwell's general operating support will be included in gifts received for specific programs and projects. Donors will receive a charitable tax receipt for gifts of \$10 or more. Charitable Registration Number: 131295198 RR0001

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