



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Welcoming Streets Initiative launches in downtown Kingston

Kingston Ontario, July 19th, 2023 - The Downtown Kingston BIA, in partnership with Addiction and Mental Health Services Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (AMHS-KFLA), is pleased to introduce a new street outreach initiative in Kingston's downtown core. This collaborative pilot project, supported by the City of Kingston, called *Welcoming Streets*, aims to create a compassionate, inclusive, and supportive environment for everyone in the downtown community.

"City Council identified funding for this exciting partnership in May, which reflects our strategic priority of expanding street outreach support with addiction and mental health expertise, with a downtown focus," says Ruth Noordegraaf, Director of Housing and Social Services. "We are proud to support this pilot project, expertly led by our community partners, which will improve access to services for unhoused and precariously housed individuals in Kingston's core."

Welcoming Streets serves two significant purposes: supporting those who may not be accessing the services they need, and engaging business and property owners in the downtown core while collaborating with local service providers. Business owners, community organizations, and service providers have the opportunity to be a part of a safe, welcoming, and supportive community while taking into consideration the complexity of needs for all those involved.

The Welcoming Streets initiative is supported by two dedicated professionals from the mental health and addiction sector, one from the Downtown Kingston BIA and one from AMHS-KFLA. The Welcoming Streets team members will collaborate regularly to address community outreach needs, drawing upon their combined experience, expertise, and mutual commitment to community well-being.

“The downtown Kingston Welcoming Streets initiative will offer the downtown community the support and resources needed to ensure our streets are welcoming for everyone,” says Marijo Cuerrier, Executive Director, Downtown Kingston BIA. “Working alongside AMHS-KFLA will ensure trained professionals are available for both the vulnerable in our community as well as the business owners and their employees in situations where specialized support is needed.”

The aim of the program is to communicate directly and support vulnerable individuals who may be experiencing homelessness, addiction, or mental health difficulties, treating them with respect and supporting them in accessing the services they may need.

The Welcoming Streets Program is being funded in part by the Ontario Homelessness Prevention Program.

For further information or media inquiries, please contact:

Terra Smith,
Communication Lead, AMHS-KFLA
media@amhs-kfla.ca

or

Peter Gillespie

Manager, Marketing and Communications, Downtown Kingston BIA
peter@downtownkingston.ca

About Downtown Kingston BIA: The Downtown Kingston Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an organization dedicated to enhancing the vitality and overall appeal of downtown Kingston, fostering a vibrant and thriving business community.

About AMHS-KFLA: Addiction and Mental Health Services – Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (AMHS-KFLA) is a non-profit organization that delivers community-based mental health, addiction and housing services to nearly 7,000 individuals each year in the City of Kingston and the counties of Frontenac and Lennox and Addington. Services are free and available to those 16+. Services are provided with dignity, hope and in confidence. For more information visit www.amhs-kfla.ca or call 613-544-1356.