

Rachelle McCready, R.N. BScN

Professor of Nursing, Fanshawe College

1005 Chippewa Drive London, Ontario N5V 2T4

**RE: CPSC Report Item 4.2:**

I have lived my whole adult life in London. I was educated at Montcalm Secondary School then attended Western. I worked for 40 years as a nurse, mostly at LHSC before retiring. We own a home here and have raised our children here. I have found London to be a rather suburban city; my friends and I rarely ventured out of the suburbs, mostly to go to the Grand Theater on occasion. As I was busy working full-time and raising children, rarely leaving my northeastern suburb, I didn't spend much time thinking about social issues in our city, other than considering the various politician's platforms at election time. Along with volunteering with 519 Pursuit, I also work relief at Carepoint Consumption and Treatment Service, at a crucial time when that service is being defunded. I've never felt strongly enough about an issue to protest or get involved as an activist. This has recently changed as I've seen the terrible effect the toxic drug supply has had on our friends.

I've been volunteering with 519 Pursuit for 3 years now. I remember going on outreach when outreach was mostly volunteers. I love it and feel that our friendship-based approach along with meeting people where they are, forges strong connections with people experiencing homelessness. I strongly believe that "dead people can't recover", that the work that we do supporting those on the streets keeps them alive so there is a chance for recovery.

When 519 received funding from the city, some of the volunteers became employees with a consistent approach and mandate. The consistency that Sean, Michelle, Patty, Evan, Gary, and Bea bring to the depots as well as to the people that they routinely see every day has made a huge difference. I've seen people that I've known for years that we have supported, are now able to transition to microshelters or other housing. Of course, 519 is not alone in the city's efforts to help our most vulnerable. The biggest difference I've seen with 519's consistent team approach is that our friends count on the team to come by with much needed supplies and support. Because a consistent team sees our friends, they can see significant issues and our friends are more likely to be receptive to accessing other services. I strongly request that the city grant a one-year extension of funding to 519 Pursuit through reserved social service funds.

With regards,



Rachelle McCready