

Jane Finch Community Ministry

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Dec. 9, 2019

To whom it may concern

Re: Support for Tenants of 235 Gosford

On Friday, November 15, 2019, there was a devastating fire that affected all of the tenants (up to 700 residents) who were living at 235 Gosford Blvd. An emergency shelter was first set up by the City of Toronto's Emergency Services and Red Cross at the Driftwood Community Centre in Jane and Finch. Later that weekend, the residents were moved to Tait Mckenzie Gymnasium at York University until November 30. Residents who were not able to find alternate accommodations with friends or family have now been put up temporarily in a city run homeless shelter near Weston and Steeles.

To date, the landlord has not been forthcoming on providing information on when residents would be able to return to their homes. Some have received minimal financial compensation for the meantime yet not nearly enough and many residents are in need of social and emotional support which the landlord is yet to substantively address. Many of the tenants are traumatized by the fire and are without stable and consistent shelter and due to the landlord's lack of communication; they continue to have no clear understanding of what the future holds for them. They are still trying to carry on with their lives of getting children to school and back and themselves to work and back as well. Understandably, most are facing financial hardship because of these difficult and continuing circumstances.

Immediately after the fire, a group of caring residents and community workers from various local agencies and networks in Jane and Finch came together to look at how to best support these displaced tenants. On Dec. 4, this coalition hosted an information night and meal which was a huge success with over 100 displaced residents coming out. We are following up with an additional meal on December 17th which will also have a legal clinic and social and emotional supports present with whom residents can connect.

Since it looks like it may be several months, if not a year before the tenants of 235 Gosford will be able to return, the coalition wants to stand with them every step of the way. We understand this will be a long haul. Acting on behalf of this coalition as Trustee, we encourage you to support us, not only for the 17th but for future organizing and support we can provide. Cheques can be made out in trust to the Jane Finch Community Ministry and sent to the above mailing address. You can also donate online with "Gosford Fire" Special Fund at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/jane-finch-community-ministry/>

Signed by:

Black Creek Community Collaborative, Black Creek Community Farm, Firgrove Learning and Innovation Community Centre, Jane Finch Action Against poverty, Jane and Finch Boys and Girls Club, Jane Finch Centre, Jane Finch Community Legal Services, Jane Finch Community Ministry, Jane Finch Concerned Citizens, Jane Finch Housing Coalition, Success Beyond Limits (SBL), Toronto Community Benefits Network and YUFA Community Projects

Link to media story of the Dec. 4 support meeting <https://www.cp24.com/mobile/news/displaced-residents-of-235-gosford-blvd-voice-concerns-about-the-future-at-meeting-1.4716098>

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