



October 30, 2014

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to offer my support for the establishment of a Clubhouse International facility in the Greater Victoria region. In recent years, a number of facilities providing support for individuals with mental health issues have been closed in our region. It is critical that we address the growing gap in service for people with mental illness.

This September, the Mayors of British Columbia issued a joint statement identifying mental health, addictions and homelessness as a top priority for all B.C. communities. Not only do we have a social responsibility to ensure that all citizens have access to the supports and services that they need to be healthy, successful members of society, we know that the cost of ignoring mental health issues is far greater than the cost of providing supports. In fact, the Richmond, BC Clubhouse International boasts a \$14 social return on every dollar invested.

Mental health issues account for a high percentage of police calls and emergency hospital visits in Greater Victoria. Holistic models like Clubhouse International that provide members with opportunities for friendship, employment, housing, education and access to medical and psychiatric services can often relieve pressures on other forms of service while also improving participants' quality of life. Not only can models like this save money, they can save lives.

In the City of Victoria, we are committed to ending homelessness. Working with dedicated community partners including Island Health, we have had great success providing housing and supports to some of our community's most vulnerable individuals, many of whom experience mental health issues. But the commitment to supporting people with mental health issues must not be focused solely on supporting those who are homeless and put the greatest strain on our systems. We must commit to supporting all individuals with mental illness to live healthy, successful lives.

Clubhouse International is already well established in BC communities like Richmond, who have demonstrated fantastic results. It is time to explore the potential for establishing a Clubhouse International in the Greater Victoria region.

Sincerely,

Dean Fortin
MAYOR