

## Information for Prospective Family Caregivers

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Family Caregiver with The John Howard Society of North Island (John Howard).

We want to provide you with as much information as possible about John Howard and our expectations of Family Caregivers before you fill out the attached application form.

### **Please read this information carefully.**

It is important that you understand our assessment process and what to expect. Caregivers are in positions of significant trust, so our process is very personal. We need to know about your skills, abilities, experiences, suitability, expectations, the structure and functioning of your family/household, and the physical environment of your home. During the assessment you will be asked very personal questions. We will ask you about your background, personal experiences, values and beliefs, past and current relationships, family life, and parenting practices.

These questions are necessary to make sure that youth are placed with families who can provide them with a safe and nurturing environment, and can meet their individual needs. The questions are part of our assessment and home study process as required by The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). We are also required to complete various forms including Criminal Record Searches on all adults who are living in or regularly visit your home, the submission of a Medical Report by your doctor, reference forms/letters completed by the three people you provide as references, and the completion of a Home Study Report.

It is important to note that John Howard only approves Family Caregivers who demonstrate a strong commitment to providing residential care services that meet the best interests of the young people placed in their homes. Family Caregivers must also be willing to work closely with the program team they are assigned to and with other workers who are involved in providing services. This means that you must be willing to attend meetings, keep records, attend training, and actively support the relationships youth have with members of their families and communities.

***A Note Regarding Timelines:*** *The time it takes from when you first apply to when you become an approved Carehome will depend on factors such as program need and the availability of trained staff members to perform the Home Study and required checks. Most Full Time Family Caregivers are processed and approved within four months, however in some cases the process can take longer.*

## About The John Howard Society of North Island

“The John Howard Society of North Island is a charitable organization whose mission is to promote and foster safer and healthier communities by providing appropriate programs of rehabilitation, education, prevention and healing for those who need an opportunity to achieve, maintain or regain a balance within their communities.”

For more than 50 years, The John Howard Society of North Island (John Howard) has been serving the community justice and social services needs of northern Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Our locations include offices and residential programs, but our work also takes us into schools, homes, and other parts of the communities. We have a holistic approach, recognizing that safer, healthier communities are created through the combined and diverse efforts of citizens, organizations, and governments.

Based on our experience, we believe that the best model for providing residential care services to young people is within family settings in the community.

*All Family Carehomes/Caregivers are independent contractors and are required to sign an agreement with John Howard that outlines the specific obligations of both parties.* John Howard has written policies and procedures that specify the responsibilities of both the organization and those who are approved to be Family Carehomes/Caregivers.

We recognize the time and energy that Caregivers devote to providing care to the young people placed in their homes. The youth we work with have unique needs which vary according to the nature of the program they are participating in. Every youth is provided with a safe, nurturing and healthy Carehome environment and is encouraged to become an active member of the family for the duration of his or her stay. The youth are cared for in a way that recognizes their individual strengths, needs, and circumstances.

We regard Caregivers as important members of the program team they are working with. John Howard employees work closely with Caregivers to ensure that they have a good understanding of the services they have agreed to provide, are prepared to meet these expectations, and that they receive the support they require.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

John Howard strives to recruit applicants who reflect the diverse backgrounds of the clients we serve. We recognize that “family” can be defined in a variety of different ways and we are an equal opportunity employer.

John Howard recognizes that the reputation and privacy of all prospective Family Caregivers must be protected. All information gathered in the Family Caregiver assessment process is treated in the strictest confidence and records are maintained in secured files.

## OUR SELECTION CRITERIA

In order to be approved, Family Caregivers must:

- Be over 21 years of age. They must be able to demonstrate that they can provide a safe, stable, and nurturing living environment for the youth who are placed with them, with minimal disruptions.
- Be financially stable. Prospective Family Caregivers are advised that John Howard will not approve them if they are potentially insolvent or un-discharged from bankruptcy. They must also agree to notify the organization immediately if these circumstances arise during the term of their agreement.
- Complete a Criminal Record Search. All other adults living in their home (any person over the age of 18) and regular visitors to the home must also complete a Criminal Record Search.
- Make sure that at least one Family Caregiver in the home is available to meet the young person’s needs at all times, and provide support and supervision as required.
- Be able to provide each youth with their own bedroom, which is safe, comfortable, suitably furnished, and affords personal privacy.
- Have no more than 5 children in the home, including the Caregivers’ own children. John Howard limits the number of youth living with each Caregiver from one to a maximum of two at any time.
- Be willing and able to comply with John Howard and MCFD (Ministry for Children and Family Development) standards for Carehomes.
- Be willing to work closely with the program team they are assigned to, and with the workers involved in providing services. In some cases, Family Caregivers must also be willing to actively support the relationships youth have with their own families and other important people in their lives.

- Respect and support youths' religious and cultural practices. All young people have the right to make these choices for themselves. They must never be exposed to any form of pressure from Caregivers with regard to their own religious or cultural practices, beliefs, or values.
- Provide a covered area outside their homes where youth can smoke if they wish to.
- Provide a smoke-free residence. Vehicles used to transport youth must also be smoke-free.
- Have at least one working telephone which is a land-line to provide a reliable means of communication with others outside their homes.
- Firearms and weapons must be locked in a safe location.
- Buy and maintain an insurance policy that covers liability, fire, and theft on their homes and contents. Documentation verifying the terms of the coverage must be submitted to John Howard prior to approval and when requested.
- Provide transportation to youth as required (transportation requirements will vary from one program to another).
- Verify with their own insurance agents that their vehicle insurance policy is adequate and appropriate for the work they are undertaking. John Howard strongly recommends that all Family Caregivers have vehicle insurance coverage that includes business use and \$2 million Third-Party Legal Liability. Documentation verifying vehicle insurance coverage must be submitted to John Howard prior to approval and when requested.
- John Howard also requires that at least one Caregiver in the home complete and maintain a basic first aid certificate. They must ensure that there is an adequate first aid kit available in the home.
- Due to the nature of some programs and the needs of the youth they serve, some Caregivers may be required to remove all alcohol from the common areas of the home and lock it up. They may also be required to abstain from drinking any alcoholic beverages while they are providing care to these young people.

We have enclosed a John Howard Family Caregiver Application form. Please don't hesitate to call our **Family Resource Coordinator**, at **250-286-0222 extension 241** if you have any questions or want to discuss any part of this information.

***Note: The information contained in this letter is subject to change without notice.***