

# Host Community Engagement Agreement

## Kinbrace Community Society

Updated May 2023

In 1998, Kinbrace launched as a community-based model of housing and support for newly arrived refugee claimants (asylum seekers). The Kinbrace community is marked by our core values of welcome, trust, mutual transformation, celebration, and prayer.

Refugee claimants are welcomed into transitional housing at Kinbrace by a network of staff, neighbours, volunteers, and current and former residents. Supporting this transformative and rich welcome is the Host Community: a highly dedicated group of people who live with intention, generosity, and commitment in the Kinbrace community.

After longer term housing is secured (ideally within 3-6 months), residents move out of the Kinbrace community and into longer term housing somewhere in BC's lower mainland.

Host Community members are vocationally committed to live as neighbours among refugee claimants, providing an attentive, yet spacious, welcome. While maintaining normal, day-to-day lives, hosts create, sustain, and promote a transformative place of hospitality. Each year, Kinbrace welcomes approximately 40-50 refugee claimants.

### **Host Community Members (or 'Hosts'):**

- Live at Kinbrace (1820-26 Venables Street) voluntarily
- Commit to living in the community for a minimum of one year (as detailed in the Responsibilities and Benefits document)
- May apply for remunerated part-time Host Community roles, as available
- Are accountable to the Kinbrace staff and board
- Will organize themselves as a community
- May be single people, couples, or families

This Engagement Agreement outlines the responsibilities and commitments of each adult Host.

## Alignment with the Kinbrace Shared Mandate

Each adult member of the Host Community strives to whole-heartedly uphold, protect, and live into Kinbrace's Shared Mandate, as follows:

### **Vision:**

*For each refugee claimant: A world of welcome; a community of belonging; a life of opportunity.*

As a member of the Host Community, I commit to whole-heartedly upholding, protecting and living into Kinbrace's Vision. Initials \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mission:**

*The Kinbrace community welcomes refugee claimants with housing, education, and support.*

As a member of the Host Community, I commit to whole-heartedly upholding, protecting and living into Kinbrace's Mission. Initials \_\_\_\_\_

### **Core Values:**

- Welcome: We are in solidarity: bearing witness to exile, we live with refugee claimants.
- Trust: We are a community: affirming dignity, we commit to the best in one another.
- Mutual Transformation: We are diverse: striving to listen well, we learn and grow.
- Celebration: We are grateful: amidst joy and sorrow, we discover hope.
- Prayer: We are sojourners: held by grace, we journey into the mystery and love of God.

As a member of the Host Community, I commit to whole-heartedly upholding, protecting and living into Kinbrace's Core Values. Initials \_\_\_\_\_

## Host Community Member Qualities

Hosts will exhibit a strong mix of the following qualities/skills:

- Proven community-builder
- Capacity to thrive in a multicultural environment
- Open and inquisitive posture to diverse experiences
- Problem-solving capacity
- Patience
- Respect for different lifestyles
- Honour and respect for children
- Capacity to set and maintain healthy personal boundaries (this role can be very emotionally taxing)
- Strong conflict management skills
- Vocational calling to live with asylum seekers
- Ability to manage and mitigate stress
- Well-developed interpersonal skills
- Hospitality
- Practical and handy

- Strong volunteer ethic
- A desire to empower others
- Valid BC driver's license
- Additional language(s)

## **Transitioning into and out of the Community**

Host Community members have lived at Kinbrace for varying lengths of time. The most significant determinants of how long a Host lives at Kinbrace is their capacity to live out Kinbrace's core values, extend hospitality, the measure and health of their contributions, the quality of their experience, and the practice of self-care.

### ***Entering the Community***

New Host Community members will enter with these time frames in mind:

1. Engagement Period: three months—1820 Venables St (Host Community Member, K2 Host); one year—1822, 1824 Venables St
  - a. During this time, the new Host Community member will:
    - i. experience living in the community
    - ii. invest fully in the opportunity
    - iii. make a joint decision, in consultation and discernment with the Kinbrace staff and Host Community, whether or not to enter the Commitment Period.
2. Commitment Period: nine months (with the possibility of extension, to a total maximum of two years)—1820 Venables St (Host Community Member, K2 Host); maximum 6 years, with annual review and recommitment—1822, 1824 Venables St
  - a. With a thorough annual review, and with discernment of the Kinbrace staff and Host Community, a joint decision will be made whether or not the Host Community member will continue in their role for another year.
  - b. A Host Community Engagement Agreement will be reviewed and signed on an annual basis.

### ***Transitioning out of the Community***

1. Should a Host Community member decide to move, they must notify the Kinbrace staff in a timely manner.
  - a. A one month (1820 Venables St) or three months (1822/1824 Venables St) notice of intention to depart is requested. This will help Kinbrace prepare for the transition while maintaining a community of care for Kinbrace residents.
  - b. The Kinbrace staff will support a smooth transition from the community.
2. Should concerns arise (via regular check-ins or annual reviews) about a Host Community member's capacity to healthily engage in their role, or if the Kinbrace Shared Mandate is violated, a meeting will be scheduled with the Community Coordinator and a Stewardship Team member to discuss concerns and whether an exit plan should be developed.
3. Kinbrace Community Society has authority to ask a Host Community member/family to transition out of the community, if deemed necessary.

- a. In the case that a transition is required, the Host Community member/family will be given three months to secure alternative housing.

## **Host Community Structure and Leadership**

The membership of the Host Community is largely shaped by the architecture of the three apartments dedicated to housing the members:

- 1820 Venables Street, 'Host Community Member, Apprentice' (1 bedroom, 200 square feet, in common space shared with the whole community)
- 1822 Venables Street (3 bedrooms, 850 square feet, self-contained suite)
- 1824 Venables Street, Main Floor (3 bedrooms, 1000 square feet, self-contained suite)

The Host Community, with support and mentorship from the Community Coordinator, is responsible for its own planning and decision-making. Fully functioning, the Host Community will exhibit clear, timely communication, defined volunteer roles, and healthy relationships—all leading to a warm welcome for refugee claimants and visitors/volunteers. At the same time, the Host Community members are encouraged to develop and sustain healthy rhythms as they connect with their own network of friends, grow their families, go to work, and take holidays.

### ***Community Coordinator Relationship***

Part of the Community Coordinator's role is to lead and support Kinbrace's Host Community; this includes ensuring all Host Community members are supported, listened to, and advocated for.

The Host Community can expect the Community Coordinator to:

- Communicate with the Kinbrace staff regarding the overall well-being of the Host Community and Residents
- Check-in regularly with all Host Community members
- Support the Host Community to schedule and organize the annual Host Community retreat
- Coordinate training times/workshops for the Host Community
- Confirm seasonal volunteer roles for each member, in collaboration with the entire Host Community
- Coordinate Host holidays and absences from the community, ensuring at least one Host is present at all times.
- Organize regular Host Community meetings in order to:
  - Nurture Host Community relationships
  - Determine and clarify roles and responsibilities
  - Discuss upcoming community building events/opportunities
  - Problem solve
  - Manage conflict/seek reconciliation
  - Etc.

## Volunteer and Renumerated Roles

Living as a Host Community member at Kinbrace can be deeply rewarding, especially as relationships develop in the spaciousness of genuine hospitality. Clear expectations and responsibilities help create a healthy community.

### ***Volunteer Roles***

All Host Community members have volunteer roles—some which are the responsibility of all Hosts and others which they commit to individually.

Each Host will voluntarily:

- As able, assist residents with their day-to-day needs
  - a. For settlement needs, please refer residents to the appropriate staff member (see Appendix A)
- Attend Tuesday Dinners
  - a. Participate in a minimum of 3 Tuesday dinners per month
  - b. Assist in the facilitation of dinners by helping in the cooking, leading, or cleaning as directed by the Community Coordinator
- Attend the Annual Camping Trip
- Attend the Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, if able
  - a. This holiday event is led by the Kinbrace staff team. Hosts are warmly welcome and invited, but not required to attend
- Lead Christmas Eve and New Year's celebrations
  - a. As a Host Community, plan and facilitate these two high-season celebrations (with the assistance from Community Coordinator)
  - b. Rotate responsibility among Host Community members (coordinating for time away)
- Plan and implement a few small community building events
  - a. Host events that naturally fit into the rhythms of the calendar and personal lives (e.g. go to the swimming pool, take people to free events, Family Day, Ramadan, Shabbat, Canada Day, barbeques, Holy Week, Car Free Day, theatre at the Cultch, etc.)
  - b. Coordinate with volunteers and other Host Community members to create inclusive events
- Extend and receive spacious hospitality with Kinbrace residents beyond the Tuesday evening meal and community building events by, for example:
  - a. Visiting in apartments
  - b. Inviting residents in for tea or a meal
  - c. Going to the park with kids and parents
  - d. Catching up in the stairwells
- Offer personal and unique contributions
  - a. Hosts are encouraged to participate voluntarily in ways that align with personal values, passions, and gifts
  - b. Every person has a unique presence in the community and their vision and goals add to an already vibrant community

- c. Previous Host Community members have contributed a chicken coop, running club, art workshop, cooking, book club, English classes, egg painting (pysanka), bread-making, etc.
- Respond to emergencies and after hour needs

Individually, Host Community members will commit to a share of the community tasks (Appendix B), stewarding and taking ownership over the physical spaces of Kinbrace. The Community Coordinator will help ensure that tasks are delegated fairly between Host Community members so that the houses and properties are inviting spaces of hospitality.

Host Community will also:

- Organize their own weekly prayers, meetings and community events, as needed, and annual retreat

### ***Remunerated Role***

#### **K2 Host**

This position is held within the larger Host Community Engagement Agreement and Kinbrace's commitment to supporting the Host Community's health and sustainability. The K2 host is expected to voluntarily fulfill the responsibilities of other Kinbrace Host Community Members, and will hold additional responsibilities and expectations for which they receive compensation for. Please see the K2 Host - Role Description for more details.

### **Accountability and Sustainability**

Kinbrace is committed to supporting the health and sustainability of Host Community members. The Community Coordinator ensures all Host Community members are supported and listened to, and that any concerns they raise are responded to.

Beyond the weekly Host Community meetings, Hosts are invited to participate in regular check-ins with the Community Coordinator (frequency to be determined together) as well as annual reviews with a Director on staff. Hosts may initiate more meetings as needed. (One of these meetings will be an "annual review")

#### ***Sustainability Plan***

Each Host, with the Community Coordinator, will create an individualized sustainability plan to ensure ongoing individual wellness in the context of community and that their commitment to living alongside refugee claimants remains life-giving and creative for everyone involved. (see *Host Community Member Sustainability Plan Template*)

- This plan will be written and reviewed on an annual basis
- The plan will be individually tailored to the unique needs of each Host, addressing sustainability and boundary formation concerns

- Through this plan the member can engage conversations and be formally assessed on levels of burnout and compassion fatigue
- This plan can be rearticulated or amended at any time should the Host or Kinbrace feel specific concerns have surfaced

### ***Weekly Sabbath***

- Sabbath
  - Each Host Community member/family should designate one day each week as Sabbath: an opportunity to step back from responsibilities in the community and pursue rest.
  - On this day, the Host Community member/family is not expected to participate in community activities or respond to resident needs (unless in the case of an emergency)
  - Hosts might consider spending this day off-site, visiting friends/family, or enjoying time alone

### ***Rhythms of Retreat***

- Plan to take personal time away
  - Coordinate with other Host Community members to mitigate overlap of time away
  - Use the allocated quarterly budget to facilitate retreating from Kinbrace for rest and respite
    - For families, \$100 per family member per quarter
      - E.g. family of 4 would have a \$400 budget
    - For singles, \$200 per quarter
    - Quarters are determined on the Kinbrace fiscal calendar (May-Apr)
      - 1st Quarter: May, Jun, Jul
      - 2nd Quarter: Aug, Sep, Oct
      - 3rd Quarter: Nov, Dec, Jan
      - 4th Quarter: Feb, Mar, Apr
    - Budget GL number: 58570 - Host Community Retreats
- Participate in Host Community rhythms of rest
  - Annual retreat weekend with other Host Community members (camping, Keats camp cabin, Rivendell or other).
    - Annual retreat budget: \$100/Host for the Host Community
    - Budget GL number: 58570 - Host Community Retreats
  - Monthly Host Community meal or outing: a chance to foster connection and celebration as a Host Community
    - Annual budget: \$1200 (ie. \$100/month for a shared meal together)
    - Budget GL number: 50137- Host Community Sustainability

### ***Outside Support***

- Recognizing the emotional toll on Host Community members as they live with residents who have, and continue to face, various traumas and challenges, Kinbrace sees the goodness of Host Community members having a professional counselor that they can talk to about their experiences on a regular basis.

- Our goal is to encourage and remove any barriers for Host Community members to see a professional counselor on a regular basis. As such, Kinbrace will pay for Hosts to see a Kinbrace approved professional counselor up to 12 times a year; Host Community members and their counselor can schedule these sessions as they see fit.
- If Host Community members have insurance coverage that provides counseling, Host Community members can choose *not* to use their insurance and use the funds provided by Kinbrace instead. Host Community members with insurance coverage can also choose to use their insurance, and if their insurance does not cover the full cost, Kinbrace will pay the difference.
- The Host Community as a whole will meet with a professional counselor once every quarter for a group session to have facilitated discussion to:
  - Create a safe space for Host Community members to bring up issues.
  - Ensure concerns and challenges within the Host Community are addressed.

### ***Staff Prayers & Staff Meetings***

- All Host Community members are welcome to attend Thursday morning prayers (9:30-10:15) and/or Staff Meetings (10:30-12:00)

## **Tenancy and Rent**

In Greater Vancouver, it is considered "affordable housing" when rent is 30% of a person's gross income, or less. In gratitude for all that Hosts offer Kinbrace, our rental rate is 20% of the Host's gross salary, down to a predetermined minimum (approximately 50% of market rental rates in the area).

The Engagement Agreement, signed annually, will serve as the binding agreement between the adult Host Community member(s) and Kinbrace Community Society, and rent rates will be included.

Rent will be paid to Kinbrace Community Society on or before the first of the month.

Kinbrace will do an annual review of the Host Community members' gross income to determine their rental rate for the following year.

Utilities (electricity, water, gas) and internet are included in the rental rate.

## **Policies and Procedures**

All Host Community members will be informed of and accountable to the Kinbrace Policy and Procedure Manual.

Name of Host Community Member

Signature

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name of Stewardship Team Representative Signature

_____	_____
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Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Entering into Engagement Year \_\_\_\_\_

Entering into Year \_\_\_\_\_ of Commitment Years

## **Appendix A: Interfacing between Residents and Staff**

During the weekdays, staff are present to Kinbrace residents, helping and assisting with settlement needs. During evenings and weekends, residents often have questions or encounter new information they want help with. These may be questions:

1. Regarding technical and legal questions (welfare, refugee claim, lawyer, etc) posed by a resident, Host Community members are encouraged to:
  - a. Listen to residents' questions and concerns seriously
  - b. Refer residents to the appropriate staff member on the next work-day
2. Regarding questions relating to apartments or facilities (laundry, garbage and recycling, etc), Host Community Members are encouraged to:
  - a. Try to problem-solve as able
  - b. If necessary communicate to Loren
3. Regarding emergencies (births, injuries, etc):
  - a. Call 911 as appropriate
  - b. Offer to accompany the resident, if able
  - c. Follow up with the Community Coordinator or Director of Operations on the next working day

## **Appendix B: Host Community Volunteer Tasks**

The Host Community community's commitment to hospitality is expressed by keeping the Kinbrace properties clean, tidy, and visually and practically accessible and beautiful for residents and for guests.

Host Community Volunteer Tasks:

- Welcoming and orienting new residents to Kinbrace
- Garbage, compost, recycling management
- Lawn maintenance including mowing, weeding, weed-whacking, leaf management
- Snow and ice removal
- Planting/maintaining gardens
- Watering Gardens
- Sweep patio & all sidewalks and steps leading into both properties from the street level and the lane at least once a week + as needed
- Caring for chickens
- Laundry area maintenance
- Contributing to light maintenance/repairs and needs in apartments as able
- Tuesday dinner laundry + keeping detergent stocked
- Picking up seasonal CSA box / distributing vegetables to residents
- Neighbour relations