

## Strengthening Community in Cooperative Housing FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kitchener, Ontario – January 23, 2024 – The Central Ontario Cooperative Housing Federation (COCHF) has signed a memorandum of understanding with Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region (EAFWR) to address the gap in support that residents of coop housing may require. EAFWR is an organization that provides support over 2,300 people with a intellectual or developmental disability and continues to be a community builder for more than forty years.

As part of their service, EAFWR provides support to people with a disability in their home. Support ranges from assistance in daily living, resource coordination and case management. The memorandum of understanding signed by both organizations forms the structure for a pilot project whereby access to a housing coop unit will be made available to a person supported by EAFWR in the Waterloo Region. In turn, EAFWR will make their support available to other residents in the coop complex where the person they support will reside. A community worker will be based in the participating co-op complex and will have dedicated hours when other residents can access their support.

Support through the Community Worker will provide connections, relationship building, service navigation, education, and training opportunities for other co-operative housing community members. The goal is to foster a community where everyone belongs and is valued for their unique and diverse contributions.

The partnership is an ideal merging of two organizations who share a common goal of building community as people are stronger when working together. As passionate advocates for affordable and accessible housing, and supporting people with developmental disabilities, our commonalities will provide support to people as they live, work, play and belong in our communities. Together, we can create a community where everyone belongs and is valued for their contributions.

### About Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation:

The **Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation** is a federation of non-profit housing co-operatives in the cities of Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, Brantford and Guelph. The federation currently has 42 member organizations that represent roughly 3,000 units of member controlled co-operative housing in the five cities in Central Ontario.

### About Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region:

**Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region** was founded in 1981 by parents of children with developmental disabilities, as a way to build friendship and nurture community in Waterloo Region. As a local not-for-profit who serves over 2,000 adults and children with developmental and physical disabilities, EAFWR champions an inclusive community for all by working with people with disabilities, their networks and the broader community.

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