



Local businesses converge, donating more than 1,500 items to Inn From the Cold

Children and families are getting hit especially hard by the affordability crisis

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Steve Dimic of Dimic Law and members of Barclay Street Real Estate unload donations for Inn from the Cold on Tuesday. Brent Calver/Postmedia

Inn From the Cold received more than 1,500 items for Calgary families in need Tuesday through the efforts of three city businesses.

Toothpaste, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, shampoo and deodorants were among the personal supplies collected and donated by **Barclay Street Real Estate, Parker PR and Dimic Law.**

The donations will assist children and families getting hit especially hard by the continuing affordability crisis in Calgary, said Ron Smith, the shelter's resource development manager.

"Donations like this will immediately go to help reduce some of that financial burden on families," he said.

Inn From the Cold assists families experiencing a housing crisis through its family shelter, supportive housing, and prevention and diversion programs. Every year, the agency helps about 4,000 family members in their quest for housing independence.

Most of the items Inn From the Cold takes in are new, and during the winter months, coats and boots are among the greatest needs. Smith says cash donations or gift cards to various grocery or clothing stores are also helpful.

"Part of our process is to preserve the dignity of the families, to make sure that they, too, have a choice in the things that they're buying," he said.

One of the biggest challenges at Inn From the Cold, said Smith, is making sure they're getting items that families can use.

"Some people, again, have wonderful generous hearts, but the items that they want to give may not be in line with what our families need," he said.

"This time of year, hygiene items are something that oftentimes people will forget about," said Smith.

John Grimshaw, from Calgary-based **Barclay Street Real Estate**, says they are proud to work with Inn From the Cold. Grimshaw said this is the beginning a larger project in which they will select a different local charity to work with quarterly.

"These initiatives, and this giving back, is really something we plan on pushing more going forward," said Grimshaw.



Corporate volunteers unload donations at Inn from the Cold Members on Tuesday. Brent Calver/Postmedia

The company depends on its employees and clients to pitch in.

Steve Dimic, of **Dimic Law**, said his firm is a big supporter of Inn From the Cold programs.

"I've seen a lot of existing clients, potential clients, that have struggled. The economy has hit them hard, and every little bit helps," said Dimic.

More than 60 per cent of Inn From the Cold's operating budget relies on donations.