



Media Release

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OUT ON THE SHELF NEEDS A NEW HOME

GUELPH, ON – Budget requirements have made it necessary for the Community Mental Health Association to curtail some expenditures. As a result, they have made the difficult decision to not continue renting its space where Out On The Shelf, Guelph's Queer Library and Resource Centre, is housed. The centre is a not for profit organization with no guaranteed funding sources and relies solely on community support and donations. The centre is completely volunteer run with no paid staff. "We have really appreciated the space that CMHA has provided for us", says Dave Vervoort, Promotions Coordinator for Out On The Shelf. "We are hopeful this partnership will continue in new ways when we find a new space."

The centre is searching for a new home by April 30th in order to be moved in to our new location by June 1st, 2007. We are looking to the community for help in a number of ways. Of most importance is a donation or partnership of a new space or the expertise and time from community volunteers to seek out that new space and help with the transition campaign. The centre is also appealing to the community for funds, which will enable the centre to rent out a space of its own downtown. Members of the community are encouraged to host fundraisers, such as a dinner party, or make a financial donation to Out On The Shelf, for more details go to our website at www.OutOnTheShelf.ca.

Since opening its doors in August 2005, Out On The Shelf has continued to grow. "When we opened we had 800 resources and presently we have over 1500 resources. We have over 200 members and since our opening had over 1,000 visitors come through our doors." says Vervoort. "Programming has also grown to include 'Story time' for children and parents, monthly games nights, movie nights and various group sessions, not to mention the extensive library of resources, including fiction, non-fiction,

films, magazines and more. Our website receives approximately 3800 hits per month and hosts a community calendar, resource guide and provides space for Guelph PRIDE, the Gay & Bisexual Peer Support Group and the Lesbian Women 50 + Social Group”, says Lori Guest, Finance Coordinator for Out On The Shelf.

Since its inception, the centre has hosted a number of successful events, with nearly 200 people at their grand opening celebration and 150 people attending their first anniversary party in 2006. Various community groups also use their space for meetings, group sessions and research project interviews, including a project on recommended governmental policy change.

“We are so lucky to have a strong partnership with such an important community resource as the Community Mental Health Association”, says Jerome Chang, a volunteer for Out On The Shelf since its opening. “We’ve definitely grown in this space. Given that book donations and resources continue to steadily come in, a move is a natural and excellent opportunity for growth. It’s also a great opportunity for the Guelph community to help us find a space with a really good fit for this organization, since it is the community that continues to support our growth.”

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