

**For Immediate Release
Waterloo Region**

KW Counselling Services will serve an additional 200 clients at their popular Walk In Counselling Clinic for a full year if they win the \$10,000 prize in the Great Canadian Giving Challenge.

CanadaHelps and the GIV3 Foundation have launched the third annual Great Canadian Giving Challenge.

What is the Great Canadian Giving Challenge? It is a national public contest to benefit any registered Canadian charity. Every \$1 donated to a registered charity in June via CanadaHelps.org or GivingChallenge.ca automatically enters the charity to win an additional \$10,000 donation. The grand prize draw takes place on Canada Day and one lucky charity will receive the grand prize of \$10,000.

Did the Great Canadian Giving Challenge make a difference last year? In 2016, 52,000 Canadians participated, donating more than \$8 million to over 8,600 charities. This was a 48% increase in donations compared to June 2014, and a 21% increase from 2015 for the first annual Great Canadian Giving Challenge.

What is the Walk In Counselling Clinic? Since 2007, KW Counselling Services has opened its doors each Thursday from 12-6pm for anyone to walk in and see a counsellor that day. “In a world full of waiting lists, it’s critical for people who are need of support to be able to access it in their time of need,” says Leslie Josling, Executive Director of KW Counselling Services. “The Walk In Counselling Clinic means that no one has to wait more than a week for counselling here in Waterloo Region.”

The Clinic sees an average of 65 people each week. The record for a single day was 95. People have a 90 minute session with a counsellor and leave with a written plan to work on. If they find they need more support, they can arrange for ongoing counselling or use the Walk In Counselling Clinic as needed. “In 2016,” says Josling, “The Journal of Mental Health published our research on the Clinic which shows that walk in is more effective for people coping with complex issues than traditional counselling services. The research also shows that the Clinic is especially effective for men who make up half of our visitors. The traditional counselling model only sees about 37% men.”

With one in five Canadians coping with mental illness or mental health challenges each year, as many as 100,000 people in Waterloo Region are looking for help each year. “We know the walk in model works,” says Josling, “and we could help more people if we had the funding to do so. If we win the \$10,000 in the Great Canadian Giving Challenge it will mean as many as 200 people will receive counselling over the course of the year.”

The Great Canadian Giving Challenge takes place in June because that is the month when Canadian charities typically see the largest drop in donations. If KW Counselling Services wins the challenge, they will hire a full time counsellor to work at their Walk In Counselling Clinic for a full year. That counsellor could see as many as 200 people over the course of the year.

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About KW Counselling Services:

KW Counselling Services is a multi-service agency offering counselling supports to individuals, couples and families in the Waterloo Region. In addition to our counselling work we offer a variety of parenting education workshops, leadership training for members of the multicultural community, and community development support for newcomers to Canada and the LGBTQ2+ community. We are proud to have been supporting children, youth and families in this community since 1950.