



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2021

Contact: Michael Shewburg
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Local Non-Profit Prepares for the Return of Temporary Foreign Workers: Call for Donations of Goods from the Community

PARIS, Ontario – local retreat centre Five Oaks is preparing for the return of temporary foreign farmworkers to the region this spring. In doing so, they are seeking donations of hard and soft goods to help make the farmers stay more comfortable during their quarantine period.

Last year Five Oaks opened its doors as an isolation centre for temporary foreign farmworkers arriving to support Ontario's agricultural growing season. The centre accommodated 278 short-term stays and 48 long-term stays, resulting in 6,558 bed nights and 11,676 meals. This was a blessing to both the farms who needed to quickly adjust to the newly implemented quarantine requirements set out by the Provincial government, and to Five Oaks who suffered over \$400,000 in lost revenue from cancelled or postponed bookings that season.

With the second-wave of COVID spiking in late 2020, the typical guests to Five Oaks – large group retreats, programs and workshops – will not be returning the summer of 2021 as hoped, freeing up the facility to once-again utilize their resources of accommodations and food services to contribute to Canada's food security. The first group of 48 farmers to quarantine is set to land in the first days of April.



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Preparation for the guests includes staying in communication with farm managers, scheduling arrivals, making modifications and updates to many of the spaces on the property, and collecting items needed to host the guests. Five Oaks is calling on the community for donations of items such as:

- Mini fridges or apartment sized fridges
- Bookshelves
- Small dressers
- Small area rugs or carpet runners
- Warm sweaters and coats
- Spanish language items like novels, magazines, crosswords
- Coffee makers
- Kettles
- Games
- Cards
- Puzzles
- Art supplies

Those able to donate can contact Five Oaks at 519-442-3212 or hospitality@fiveoaks.on.ca to arrange a time for drop-off or pick-up.

Five Oaks is a not-for-profit Interfaith/Intercultural spiritual centre, originally founded in 1952 as a United Church training facility. Five Oaks offers its own retreats, programs, and summer camps, and also provides a sacred natural setting for facility rentals by groups, organizations and personal retreats, with cozy accommodations, meals from an on-site chef and 117 acres of forest, fields and trails on the banks of the Grand River. For more information contact 519-442-3212 x23 or communications@fiveoaks.on.ca

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