

Connections for the Homeless Good Neighbor Agreement

For use of the Margarita Inn to Provide Temporary Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness

March 2023

Connections for the Homeless (aka “Connections”) is a non-profit organization that provides shelter and services for people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing in all of Suburban Cook County. This Good Neighbor Agreement focuses on the temporary housing program it is managing at the Margarita Inn, located at 1566 Oak Avenue in Evanston.

The immediate neighbors of the Margarita Inn welcome Connections for the Homeless and are eager to work with them, the City of Evanston, community members, and other stake holders to ensure that program participants and the community surrounding the Margarita Inn have safety, security, livability, and the ability to conduct business. This group includes immediate home owners, condo owners, business owners, landlords, and renters all within 500 feet of the property.

The intent of this legally-binding Good Neighbor Agreement is as follows:

- Maintain open communications among community members, Connections, and City of Evanston elected officials and employees.
- Provide clear, objective standards for Connections to meet at the Margarita Inn to ensure the effectiveness of the program and its positive impact on the community and on ending homelessness.
- Encourage all parties to be proactive and ready to respond to concerns that arise.
- Avoid risks to neighborhood safety while promoting access to services.
- Minimize whatever negative impact the Margarita Inn might have on livability and on commercial viability of businesses in the City of Evanston.

Legal Requirements Governing Operations of the Margarita Inn

The Special Use Permit and License granted by the City of Evanston and the Operating Agreement with the City will govern the policies and procedures related to all operations at the Margarita Inn. The Good Neighbor Agreement assumes the City of Evanston will dutifully enforce the License and Operating Agreement.

The Good Neighbor Agreement strengthens these documents by stipulating additional, legally-binding standards to ensure that the shelter run at Margarita Inn is operated in a productive, community-enhancing manner.

Agreement

Connections for the Homeless agrees to comply with the following requirements related to the operation of the Margarita Inn:

Connections for the Homeless Revised Good Neighbor Agreement

- Comply with the regulations set forth in the following documents:
 - Connections' Special Use Permit granted by the City of Evanston
 - License granted by the City of Evanston
 - Operating Agreement with the City of Evanston
 - Connections' Good Neighbor Agreement
 - Margarita Inn Participant Handbook
 - Margarita Inn Program Operations Manual
 - Board of Director Pledge
- Provide and document an orientation with specific training to every incoming resident to the Margarita Inn concerning the Good Neighbor Agreement and obtain each resident's written agreement to abide by the following code of conduct. Provide specific training to residents who exhibit antisocial behavior:
 - Friendly, polite interactions with people in the neighborhood and in downtown Evanston
 - No littering
 - Smoking only in areas established away from other properties and sidewalks
 - No trespassing on neighbor properties
 - No public defecation or urination
 - No panhandling in the Evanston area
 - No idling vehicles for long periods of time or double parking, by either Margarita Inn residents or their visitors
 - No bicycles left in public areas
- Comply with the escalation procedures set forth in Appendix A to ensure responsiveness to the community and its property owners and businesses affected by the operations at the Margarita Inn.
- Ensure that at least 100% of residents at the Margarita Inn have lived in a house, condo, or apartment within the City of Evanston for at least one year and has documentation that validates, this with priority given to children enrolled in Evanston schools.
- Maintain a maximum of 30 occupants at the Margarita Inn at any one time.
- Do not allow residents to stay at the Margarita Inn for a period longer than 15 months.
- Separate unaccompanied men from women and children, either by floor or by some other partition.

General Operations

- Provide a 24-hour phone number and an email that can be used to contact both the Margarita Inn and Connections' Outreach Team and document all calls made to it. Respond to questions and concerns in a prompt and helpful manner, as outlined in Appendix A. Document all calls and emails.
- Installation of cameras on every floor, as well as all common areas, and access to cameras to police at their request
- Provide an anonymous channel for residents to report if they are being harassed or otherwise feel endangered within the Margarita independent of Connections staff.
- Update the current building so that all aspects of treatment in a modern facility are accommodating including but not limited to treatment rooms, maintenance rooms, triage areas, nursing rooms, and counseling rooms.
- Prohibit possession of or use of drugs, firearms, and/or alcohol in or around the Margarita Inn, with immediate eviction for any violation and communication of this information to the police .
- Agree to an outside 3rd Party study of the impact of the Margarita, Hilda's Place, and Interfaith on the downtown business district at the 2nd year after Hilda's place has operated for a full year.
- Commit to a yearly evaluation with the business district, landlords, police, and community on the effect of Connections work within the City of Evanston.
- Maintain a working relationship with the Evanston Police Department that includes monthly meetings. Allow police entrance to the Margarita Inn when investigating an issue or when requested.
- Maintain a detailed log of all incidents that involve conflicts between residents or between residents and neighbors and downtown businesses, even if police were not called.
- Allow access to this information to the police or city staff if requested at any time.
- If anyone is "evicted" from the Margarita for violent behavior, their name and their discharge information must be shared with the police.

Services for Participants

Mental Health Services to Prepare them for Independent Living

- Provide full-time certified social worker staff to work with Margarita Inn residents at a ratio of no less than 1 full-time social worker for every 10 residents.
- Mandate that residents who have mental health challenges receive monthly professional counseling as a condition of their residency and make such services available to all residents who signify need for said services.
- Post Clear and Visible signs in public areas with the contact information regarding where residents can seek mental health therapy, or counseling at an entity that can accept various forms of payment that may be accessible to residents.

Physical Health Services to Prepare them for Independent Living

- Mandate that residents who have substance abuse issues receive monthly professional counseling as a condition of their residency and make such services available to all residents who signify need for said services.
- Mandate that residents who have alcohol or drug addictions receive monthly professional counseling as a condition of their residency and make such services available to all residents who signify need for said services.
- Post Clear and Visible signs in public areas with the contact information regarding where residents can seek medical help, therapy, or counseling at an entity that can accept various forms of payment that may be accessible to residents.

Financial Health Services to Prepare them for Independent Living

- Before exiting the Margarita, residents who are able to work must be provided with various job training workshops
- Before exiting the Margarita, residents will be helped with the creation of a resume they can use upon exit from the Margarita.
- Post Clear and Visible signs in public areas with the contact information regarding where residents can seek help financial coaching and planning with an entity that can accept various forms of payment that may be accessible to residents.

Terms of Release from the Margarita:

- Before exiting the Margarita, all must be provided with the contact information a mental health counselor, therapist, as well as a medical doctor
- Before exiting the Margarita to permanent housing, if the resident is still drug-addicted, provide them with the contact information to a rehab center, medical doctor, or any licensed entity that has availability to treat them and has a compensation structure the resident will be able to meet.
- Prepare a continuum of care plan for former residents of the Margarita Inn, including people who have been placed in a permanent residence and those who have been evicted from the Margarita.
- For those placed in permanent residence, weekly phone call well-being checks as well as monthly visits. If phone calls are not returned within one week, an in-person well-being check is immediately triggered.
- Monitor persons placed in permanent residence at the 3, 6, 9, and 12 month period to evaluate their mental health, living conditions, and finances to make sure that their independent living is successful. If the person shows a need for supplemental mental health or medical care, take appropriate actions until the person is stable again.
- For those placed in permanent shelter, weekly phone call well-being checks as well as monthly visits. If phone calls are not returned within one week, an in-person well-being check is immediately triggered.
- Monitor persons placed in permanent housing at the 3, 6, 9, and 12 month period to evaluate their mental health, living conditions, and finances to make sure that their independent living is successful. If the person shows a need for supplemental mental health or medical care, take appropriate actions until the person is stable again.
- Residents who are evicted for violent behavior will be provided with the names and locations of 3 alternate addresses that they may seek shelter.

Monitoring of Terms of the Agreement

Connections agrees to comply with all requirements stipulated in the special use permit, license, operating agreement, and Good Neighbor Agreement, without exception.

To ensure that it is in compliance, Connections agrees to allow a trusted third party, appointed by the City of Evanston with neighbors' consent, to obtain data annually, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- The number of occupants at the Margarita Inn per month

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- The number of occupants who are below age 18 per month
- The length of stay of each resident
- Residency Requirement confirmation to ensure the Evanston residency requirement is being met)
- The number of residents who were successfully placed in long-term housing, at a 3,6,9 and 12 month evaluation period, as well as the number who were evicted.
- Connections social worker and substance abuse counseling staff and their qualifications
- A list of and count of incidents, as well as the nature of incidents that were logged (as part of Appendix A and in the last bullet point under the last bullet point in the prior section.

If Connections fails to meet one or more conditions in the special use permit, license, operating agreement, or Good Neighbor Agreement, it agrees to take immediate and effective action to bring itself back into compliance within 30 days, and it further agrees to cease onboarding any additional resident until it has returned to full compliance.

Credible evidence presented to the City of Evanston that Connections is not in compliance with one or more stated provisions at the Margarita inn will be documented by the City, and the City will immediately investigate the stated violation. If violation is found, the City will monitor the situation to ensure the violation is addressed, and Connections agrees its failure to do so within 30 days will result in termination of its license and operating agreement in the following calendar year.

Signatures

Connections for the Homeless Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___/___/___

City of Evanston Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___/___/___

Appendix A: Response Times & Escalation of Violations

Connections for the Homeless Response Times to Calls & Notifications

Connections will respond to calls as follows, with questions or with information on what we have done to address the situation reported on:

- All health and mental health emergencies will refer to 911 (City Police or Fire/EMT) immediately
- Calls/emails to the Street Outreach Team: Within two business days
- Calls to the Margarita Inn 24-Hour Line: If staff is unable to answer, callers can leave a message, and staff will return the call as soon as possible (within two hours)

Issue Resolution

- All calls and requests for assistance will be logged with details as to the nature of the call.
- If an issue can be resolved before Connections staff calls or emails back, staff will attempt to do so and will report back to the caller/sender, sharing information that does not breach confidentiality with the resident or client.
- If an issue cannot be resolved (e.g., Connections cannot locate an individual being reported on), staff will report this result to the caller/sender.

Stakeholder Protocols

If a stakeholder does not feel that Connections is being responsive, they have several ways to seek action:

- They can contact other organizations on the Contact List about specific situations. For instance, there may be some individuals who panhandle, for instance, who may be more responsive to Trilogy than to Connections, or vice versa.
- They can contact the 4th Ward Council Member, who will investigate it.
- As described in the Special Use Permit and in the Shelter License, Connections is accountable to the City of Evanston for complying with the provisions of these documents. If you believe that Connections is not complying, you should contact the City Manager's Office or 3-1-1
- Email the Community Development Director and if the situation is egregious request their license be reexamined.

Appendix B: Contact List

For These Situations...	Call This Number....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergencies, violent or dangerous situations • Crimes in progress • Physical health emergency • Aggressive panhandling 	<p>9-1-1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health emergency • Individual in a mental health crisis and intoxicated • Individual appears to be experiencing a mental health crisis 	<p>Trilogy FACT Team: 1-800-FACT-400 (1-800-322-8400)</p> <p>Or 9-8-8 (Mental Health hotline)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting a crime already committed, where no one in danger • Non-emergency police concerns • Open alcohol or public intoxication • To report someone urinating or defecating in public 	<p>Non-Emergency Police Number: 847-866-5000</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of people experiencing homelessness in the street or other unsheltered environments, loitering, or sleeping in public places. • Assistance in talking to panhandlers outside of your business • Advice on dealing with non-aggressive panhandlers 	<p>Street Outreach Team (Connections): (847) 475-7070, ext. 201</p> <p>24-hours Leave a message if no one answers</p>
<p>Urgent matters happening on the property of the Margarita Inn or being caused by Margarita Inn residents or visitors</p>	<p>Margarita Inn 24-Hour Phone Line: (224) 422-7969</p>
<p>Questions about eviction prevention, rental assistance, donating or volunteering, advocacy, any non-urgent issues</p>	<p>General Number Connections for the Homeless 847-475-7070</p>
<p>Concerns about sanitation</p>	<p>City of Evanston Public Works Department: (847) 448-4311</p>
<p>General services from the City of Evanston</p>	<p>3-1-1</p>