## Opening Statement

Renew Church's Westbank Salvation Army Thrift Store is ready to re-open its doors to the public in both its Retail Operation and Donation Welcome Centre. In order for this to continue, we are fully aware of the need to adhere to the Canadian government requirements and public health rules and guidelines. Therefore, we are planning to commence effective June 18, 2020 in two stages to ensure full compliancy. In the first stage of reopening, we will open our Donation Welcome Centre (warehouse) in Westbank on Thursday June 18, 2020. Here, we will accept donations from our generous donors at the back of our building. The Donation Welcome Centre will be opened with temporary special operating hours from 10 am to 4 pm, 5 days a week (Monday to Friday). In the second stage, we will open our retail operations on Monday June 22, 2020.

For handling donations, we will only sort, process, price and sell product that has been in our warehouse prior to our June 18, 2020 ‘receiving-of-donations’ date. For new donations received on and after June 18, 2020, they will all be subject to a quarantine period of 5 days. Due to this, we can ensure that the public will not purchase a donated item before the necessary 5 days of quarantine (recommended for some of the product items we sell in our store) has occurred.

1. **We’ve been preparing for our reopening throughout our temporary closure, with our paramount priority being the safety, health, and well-being of our employees, volunteers, guests and donors.**

* As The Salvation Army, which is one of the largest providers of social services in the country, we have people at the core of our mission and it is our responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our staff, volunteers and, ultimately, our communities
* We have sent a press release to Barb Aguire, our local editor of the Westside Weekly newspaper for print on Wednesday June 10, 2020’s distribution, using our BC Director for Public Relations, Mike Leland’s, template
* In addition, we have added signs outside our doors and at the back of the building (4 in total) communicating both our store opening date and the day that we will start welcoming donations. In addition, there is some additional information about our diligence in preparation for opening and our ultimate goal of keeping our community safe
* We have updated our website and have displayed a hard copy of our re-opening plan. This is displayed in between our cash registers at the front of the customer counter so that it is accessible to the public for their reference
* Precautionary measures are being taken at all levels of our operations to protect donors, guests, volunteers, employees and the general public in their interaction with one another and with donations
* To help ensure the health and well-being of our guests, our staff, and the communities we serve, we have implemented enhanced daily cleaning procedures including the deep cleaning of our stores and increased sanitization of commonly touched surfaces
* In addition, we have installed sanitizer dispensers for your comfort and convenience, and have provided our staff and volunteers with PPE for their safety and yours
* Visit [www.westkelownasa.ca](http://www.westkelownasa.ca) for more information on why your donations matter to your community

1. **The Salvation Army Thrift Store remains committed to helping individuals and families in need in our shared communities across Canada.**

* Locally, your Community Life Centre offers emotional and spiritual care through our caseworker and pastoral staff
* We provide food and material assistance to those requiring additional support
* In addition, we collaborate with other agencies and organizations and readily refer individuals in our community to our partners to offer wholistic care to those we encounter on a daily basis
* During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have supported our community by serving the vulnerable population, including seniors, shut-ins, people facing housing insecurities and other households impacted financially and emotionally because of COVID-19
* As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the need for affordable clothing and household items will be very high in the days, weeks, and months ahead as we all work to rebuild from the effects of this pandemic
* Please bring your donations of gently used clothing and household items to our Donation Welcome Centre, where they will be needed more than ever to help support your community
* Your donations support other national Salvation Army programs and services such as our widespread food programs, youth work, including camp ministry, providing emergency relief efforts and immigration services that touch the lives of many diverse communities across Canada
* Thanks to you, we will continue to support our community in the days ahead. If you or anyone you know, are in need of assistance, please contact us at 250-768-1850 x2 or www.westkelownasa.ca for the services we are currently offering to our community

**KEY CONTACT NUMBERS**

* For Thrift Store information and what type of donations we welcome call 250-768-1850 x1
* For questions about general financial and food donations, contact our Community Life Centre at 250-768-1850 x2
* For the Thrift Store Manager call Bette Ludwig 778-484-9792
* For the Corps Officer call Rob Henson 778-484-9795
* Follow us on Facebook (westkelownasa) and Instagram (westkelownasa)
* Visit [www.westkelownasa.ca](http://www.westkelownasa.ca) for local Salvation Army information
* Visit [www.salvationist.ca/covid19](http://www.salvationist.ca/covid19) for regular updates from The Salvation Army

## What are the safety measures and procedures you are putting in place to protect workers (from public, each other, and donated items)?

* During our temporary closure, we have been preparing for our eventual reopening. We want our guests and donors to feel safe in every interaction they have with us, so we have taken extra precautions in accordance with health and safety guidelines to help ensure the well-being of our communities and staff
* In addition to our regular health and safety protocols, here is what you can expect when shopping and donating at the Westbank Salvation Army Thrift Store in the months ahead:
  + We have, with our local WorkSafeBC representative, gone over our plan and have implemented their recommendations in order to remain compliant with WorkSafeBC standards
  + Staff and volunteers will be given an orientation to both health and safety protocols along with new policies and procedures that have been implemented due to COVID-19
  + A single point of entry and exit will be attended by a staff member who will be tracking guests entering the store and stopping entry once capacity has been reached
  + Along the pavement outside, we will install identifying markers (high visibility tape) that will ensure customers maintain the 2-metre physical distancing requirements
  + A second staff member will be assigned to encourage physical distancing measures and guide customer traffic flow in the store
  + We will be limiting the number of individuals accessing common areas throughout the building, including the lunchroom
  + We have recently installed new cameras inside and outside of the building for the security and safety of all
  + Our parking lot has been recently painted for one-way traffic flow and will allow for donations to be dropped off ‘one vehicle at a time’ to ensure the reduction of contact between staff and donors
  + We have recently installed new department signs in order to help customers navigate the store more efficiently
  + Cash counting, at both beginning and end of day, will be conducted with clean hands, a new set of vinyl gloves and by keeping the required physical distance of 6 feet apart from each other. Once counting is complete, gloves are to be discarded and hands will need to be thoroughly washed again. Counting area and supplies are to be sanitized immediately after use
  + We will set up our portable sound system to communicate the safety measures that we are taking to protect our donors, guests, employees and volunteers from the spread of COVID-19
  + In addition, we will display a professionally designed sign that will communicate both the local initiatives along with the general health and safety actions we are implementing in our store
  + Displaying signage in strategic areas that will promote education surrounding COVID-19, publicize social distancing measures and communicate health and safety precautions
  + Encouraging guests to use the in-store hand sanitizing dispensers, along with the utilization of face masks
  + Sanitizing shopping baskets/carts after each use
  + Sanitizing pin pads after each use
  + Installing floor decals to guide guests in-store
  + Both the fitting rooms and the public washroom will be closed
  + Re-usable bags are discouraged - instead, we will provide each guest a bag if they request one
  + Deep cleaning and disinfecting of the store will take place prior to opening along with regular ongoing sanitization
  + Encouraging the use of debit/credit/tap to limit contact between shoppers and staff, but cash will still be accepted if needed
  + Use of PPE by all staff as suitable for the task at hand
  + Plexiglass protection will be erected at the front of each checkout stand and along the sides of the tills
  + Exchange policy continues to apply to electronic items. We will also temporarily offer exchanges on clothing only - everything else will remain a final sale
  + Strict 5-day quarantine protocol will be followed for all donations and returns
  + Removal of some of our merchandise displays will take place to ensure we have enough spacing for physical distancing

## What PPE do you have in place to protect staff?

* Sanitizing stations for all employees, volunteers and guests
* Staff will be provided with PPE suited to provincial legislation as well as the task they are conducting, including:
  + Gloves
  + Masks
  + Face shields
  + Individual spray bottles for disinfecting hands

## Does the public have to wear a mask in your stores or when dropping off a donation?

* It is encouraged as per provincial legislation but not mandatory

## What is the protocol for accepting and dropping off donations?

* In alignment with physical distancing and to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers and donors, shipping containers will be placed outside the store where donors can drop off their donations
* Once donations have been offered, donor attendants will then collect the donations while following a strict quarantine procedure:
  + All product is encouraged to be brought in bags, household boxes or pallet boxes (no loose material) except for larger items like TVs, furniture, etc.
  + Due to the limited space and the anticipated high donation volume, we will not be receiving large furniture items until further notice or unless specific arrangements have been made with and approved by a supervisor/manager prior to arriving
  + Product will be received into the designated shipping container, according to date, to ensure the appropriate and necessary quarantine time is achieved
  + We will put procedures in place to minimize contact between those donating and those receiving
  + To practice an abundance of caution, all donated items will be safely held in quarantine for 5 days (to accommodate the required time for 5 days for ceramics and glass suggested by WebMD)
  + The same procedure will be followed for all returned items
  + In store returned or exchanged product will be placed directly into a lined garbage bin with the lid on. Either when the bin is full, or at end of day, the bag will be tied off and placed into that day’s designated donation container to ensure appropriate quarantine time takes place

## What cleaning requirements are in place to protect employees?

* The Westbank Thrift Store has instituted a cleaning schedule and checklist. We will conduct a thorough sanitization of the entire store on a regular basis each morning before opening to the public and after the store closes each day
* The regular cleaning schedule has been intensified with the expectation that it will happen at a minimum of every two hours in addition to the aforementioned morning and evening cleaning
* We continue to monitor and promote the Public Health Agency of Canada’s instructions in order to keep our communities healthy. This includes:
  + practising good hygiene by washing hands often (for at least 20 seconds with soap)
  + avoiding touching the face with hands
  + proper sneezing/coughing technique (into elbow)
  + encouraging those with possible symptoms or exposure to stay home and reduce the risk of possible transmission
  + staff will be required to fill out the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool each day at the onset of their shift
  + ensuring extra frequent cleaning and sanitizing of our stores and all equipment
  + use of gloves and other personal protective equipment where appropriate

## What is happening for people that have / need to use a voucher?

* We continue to work closely with the Community Life Centre to fulfill voucher support for those in our community requiring assistance
* Vouchers issued prior to store closure, up to and including the month of February, will be accepted for 30 calendar days past the date of re-opening
* New vouchers issued will follow the regular Community Life Centre protocols
* Guests will exit the Community Life Centre's front door and will need to re-enter through the entrance of the Thrift Store, following the regular store procedures

## Are we adjusting our return policy?

* At this time, we are accepting exchanges within 10 business days of purchase on clothing and 5 business days on electronics items - all other items are final sale
* In order for an exchange or in-store credit to be given, the following criteria must be met:
  + Tags must remain on items
  + Guests must bring in their original sales receipt for proof of purchase
  + Returns or exchanges must be completed within 10 business days

## I know that one of my coworkers was recently exposed to someone that has Covid-19 – what are you doing about it?

* The Manager is to be made aware immediately. The Manager is to inform the Ministry Leader(s) and consult with the regional Employee Relations team (haydee\_chantaca@can.salvationarmy.org, [nicolas\_wu@can.salvationarmy.org](mailto:nicolas_wu@can.salvationarmy.org), [fiona\_mclardy@can.salvationarmy.org](mailto:fiona_mclardy@can.salvationarmy.org), [marianne\_lemont@can.salvationarmy.org](mailto:marianne_lemont@can.salvationarmy.org)) for further guidance

## Has anyone at The Salvation Army Thrift Store tested positive for COVID-19?

* As of this moment, there are have been no confirmed cases within or as coming in contact with our organization

## How is the Salvation Army approaching “self-isolation”?

* We are encouraging self-isolation when necessary, including:
  + Anyone who has travelled from outside the country
  + A Team Member exposed to family member with COVID-19 in their household (contact local public health for more direction)
  + A Team Member with symptoms will be encouraged to contact local public health for more direction
* Self-isolation at The Salvation Army Thrift Store includes:
  + 14 days isolation with no symptoms
  + No contact with other people
  + No doctor’s note required

## What steps is The Salvation Army taking if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

* If a Team Member is tested and has COVID-19, the Management Team (Managers and MU Leadership) will report the situation to the Divisional Headquarters Team (ER, Divisional Leaders and Public Relations) who will then notify and communicate the required steps that will need to be taken at that time
* Store will need to be closed immediately, and a thorough cleaning performed by a 3rd party cleaning company, ensuring all surfaces wiped down as soon as possible after notification
* Ask staff and volunteers to self-monitor (watch for symptoms) if they have not been in close contact
* If staff have been in close contact or are presenting symptoms, individuals will need to self-isolate

## Are we accepting monetary donations in-store still?

* Yes, we will still accept cash donations in our stores which are received through the till and then distributed to the Salvation Army Renew Church. These funds directly support The Salvation Army Renew Church’s programs and services in your community.

**Media Inquiries:**

If you receive any media questions please direct them to The Salvation Army's Divisional Headquarters Public Relations team

* Mike Leland: 604-299-3908
* Email: mike\_leland@can.salvationarmy.org