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## Deaf Tenant Living in Squalor Receives Professional Help Instead of Eviction Notice

(Burnaby, BC) – Instead of finding himself on the streets this past holiday season, an elderly New Westminster resident, facing eviction, appealed to The Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Deaf-Blind Well-Being Program (WBP), a government funded mental health service, under the auspices of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH), for assistance. The WBP Coordinator, John Fraser, intervened by convincing the landlord to hold off on eviction while a hoarding clean-up and mental health support team could be pulled together at no cost to the tenant.

“Our client’s apartment was filled with several years’ accumulation of tools, papers, bags of clothing and other debris. Bedbugs had infiltrated and were a cause for concern for the building.”

John contacted Susan Borax, co-owner of Good Riddance Professional Organizing Solutions in Burnaby. Susan and her partner Heather Knittel had helped to develop a series of workshops on de-cluttering in conjunction with the WBP in 2011 for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind community. “We knew from past experience that we would need to reach out for additional expertise to tackle this project including the team from 1st Hoarding Clean-up and the Families in Need Society who donated a sofa bed and other furniture to replace what had to be tossed due to contamination. This situation constituted a crisis. “

The WBP provided a mental health worker to help overcome the communication obstacles and to provide support to the client. Working with chronically disorganized individuals always presents a challenge, but in this case, the tenant was appreciative and cooperative. The clean-up was accomplished by the volunteer team in five hours. A second visit focused on a thorough cleaning and categorizing and organizing his belongings.

Now eviction is no longer a threat. Brian Woronuk, President of 1<sup>st</sup> Hoarding Cleanup added, “Having collaborated with Good Riddance on several projects, we knew that we had an opportunity to provide our assistance to someone in need over the holiday. Our employees graciously stepped up to the plate and donated their time free of charge to make sure that the gentleman remained in his home.”

### **About Good Riddance Professional Organizing Solutions:**

Good Riddance Professional Organizing Solutions is a Vancouver-based organization that helps clients manage household clutter. Borax and Knittel are co-authors of “Good Riddance: Showing Clutter the Door,” a light-hearted and funny book with practical de-cluttering advice. [www.goodriddance.ca](http://www.goodriddance.ca).

### **About 1<sup>st</sup> Hoarding Clean-up**

1<sup>st</sup> Hoarding Clean Up was formed to provide compassionate help for hoarders, along with their families, when their living environment becomes too difficult to manage on their own. 1st Hoarding Clean Up was created by Brian Woronuk, founder of 1st Trauma Scene Clean Up Ltd. <http://1sthoardingcleanup.com/>

### **About The Well-Being Program**

The WBP provides mental health services for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, & Deaf-Blind throughout the Province of British Columbia. The WBP provides accessible services for clients who might otherwise experience significant barriers to receiving mainstream services that do not meet their communication and cultural needs.