



Not everyone has a place to call home. After a cold winter's night in 2004, MaryAnne Connor asked a local pastor to offer the church as a refuge for the homeless – and he handed her the keys. Now, Connor is the founder and president of NightShift Street Ministries, a volunteer-based organization offering counselling, drop-in programs, referral services, shelter and “consistent loving contact.”

by MARISA BARATTA



**NextHome: How would you describe NightShift's main mission?**

**MaryAnne Connor:** The heart of NightShift Street Ministries is reaching out to people living on the street or in extreme poverty with love, hope and purpose. Our mission statement is to “love unconditionally and care for the holistic needs of people, helping each other find hope and purpose through outreach, counselling and education, 365 days a year.” Through nightly meal outreach

and compassionate connection, we are humbled to call the people we serve on the street our friends. These friends are struggling with heartbreaking issues such as addiction, mental illness, loneliness, post-traumatic stress and hopelessness.

**NH: What inspired the name “NightShift”?**

**MC:** The name “NightShift” comes from, of course, the evening hours in which we do our outreach. But more importantly,

it refers to the “shift” we feel in our hearts when we begin to serve those in need in our communities. I have certainly felt the “shift,” along with thousands of others who have served so faithfully in this ministry.

**NH: Which communities does NightShift reach?**

**MC:** NightShift serves Surrey's inner city neighbourhood of Whalley, and recently we have expanded our outreach to a few nights a week in downtown