Eli’s Place Residential Treatment and Transition Centre

Registered Nurse - Position Profile

Eli's Place Residential Treatment and Transition Centre ("Eli's Place") exists because Ontario's mental health system, built around short stays, institutional settings and crisis response, cannot currently offer young adults with serious mental illness what they actually need — sustained recovery, resilience and the life skills to move forward. We are building something different. Canada's first long-term residential therapeutic community, where time, meaningful work and a sense of belonging are the conditions for recovery.

Eli's Place will provide long-term residential care for young adults aged 18 to 35 living with serious mental illness, on a 600-acre farm and conservation property north of Guelph. Guests live and work together as a therapeutic community, with individualized clinical care built alongside real, structured work in horticulture, conservation and land stewardship.



The Registered Nurse is a founding member of the clinical team and the nursing presence in the daily life of the community. Working within the Registered Nurse scope of practice, they help establish how nursing care, medication safety and health teaching work in a program that does not yet exist in Ontario. It is a chance to build nursing practice into that program from the start, and to practise it as one part of the life a Guest is rebuilding.



Eli's Place is pre-operational and on track to open in fall 2026. Founded over a decade ago by a family with lived experience of serious mental illness, the organization has spent years developing its model, securing its location and building the board, partnerships and funding foundation needed to launch. The Registered Nurse will join the team as it prepares to welcome its first Guests.

If this is the kind of work you have been looking for, we want to hear from you.

About Eli’s Place

Eli's Place is a non-profit organization providing long-term residential care for young adults aged 18 to 35 living with serious mental illness. The program is not of a fixed duration, but responds to the therapeutic needs of each individual Guest. We anticipate that, on average, this will involve residential care of approximately six months, integrating individualized clinical treatment, structured meaningful work and community living within a therapeutic community model. This is followed by several months of support for Guests as they transition out of Eli's Place into housing, education and work.

The program is built on the Gould Farm model, a 113-year-old residential therapeutic community on a working farm in rural Massachusetts with a strong evidence base and documented long-term outcomes. Gould Farm was selected as the Eli's Place program reference following a global review of 33 comparable centres.

At Eli's Place, work is real, not simulated — the largest single block of time in a Guest's day, and purposefully therapeutic. It produces something that needs to get done and makes each Guest a functional contributor to community life. It is also continuously adapted to each Guest's circumstances and capability on a given day, with staff working alongside Guests and observations from the work setting feeding directly back into the clinical team.



Eli's Place is designed to feel like a home rather than a facility. The physical environment, the daily rhythms and the relationships between Guests and staff are all understood as mechanisms of the therapeutic model, not backdrop to it. Where clinical safety requirements and therapeutic design intent come into tension, the resolution requires reasoned judgment grounded in the program's values and the needs of the Guest population. That judgment sits with clinical leadership.

Eli's Place was founded by David and Deborah Cooper following the death of their son Eli Nathan Cooper in 2010, after a long struggle with serious mental illness. In their grief, the Coopers committed to building what Eli himself said he needed — a place where people living with serious mental illness could find time, community and meaningful work, especially on the land in a natural setting, as the foundation for recovery. That commitment has driven the organization for over a decade. It is the reason Eli's Place exists and the reason it matters.

Eli's Place is governed by a skilled and experienced board of directors with deep expertise across mental health, clinical practice, finance, law and community leadership — and grounded in the lived experience of serious mental illness and loss that gave the organization its founding purpose. The board has been the driving force behind the organization since its founding and remains actively engaged in its development.

Location



Eli's Place will operate from Loyola House on the grounds of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre (IJC), a 600-acre working farm and conservation property in Guelph/Eramosa Township, just north of the City of Guelph, Ontario. The IJC is a longstanding charitable organization with deep roots in land stewardship, conservation and community agriculture. Eli's Place is a non-religious program — the relationship with the IJC is an operational one, not a religious affiliation.



Under formal agreements with Eli's Place, the IJC provides the residential facility and coordinates access to the farm and conservation lands on which the outdoor work program is delivered. The IJC brings over three decades of experience in regenerative agriculture, agroecological training and ecological land management, and its Farm and Conservation team works directly alongside Eli's Place staff and Guests in facilitating the land-based work program.

The property includes working farm fields, market gardens, an orchard, old-growth forest, conservation lands, wetlands and maintained trails. Guests participate across a range of work streams drawn from the IJC's decades of land-based programming — from crop planting and seasonal harvesting through to ecological restoration, orchard care and trail construction. The work itself is the vehicle through which Guests develop strengths, form working relationships, build resilience and recover a sense of purpose and worth — the real-life skills and confidence needed to move toward greater independence.



Guelph is a mid-sized city with a strong and growing health and social services sector, a well-established community mental health presence and deep institutional connections through the University of Guelph. Consistently ranked among the safest cities in Ontario, it offers over 1,000 hectares of parkland and trails, a vibrant arts community and a strong civic culture. It also offers a more affordable cost of living than Ontario's larger urban centres. Guelph is widely considered one of the best places to live in Canada.

Eli's Place is also within commuting distance of Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Fergus and Milton, and approximately 90 minutes from Toronto.

Role

The Registered Nurse provides day-to-day nursing care at Eli's Place and is a core member of the interdisciplinary clinical team. The role reports to the Clinical Director and works closely with the psychiatry team at Eli's Place, other prescribers, the clinical team and Guest services staff to support the health and wellbeing of Guests within the therapeutic community.



The Registered Nurse practises within the Registered Nurse scope of practice and remains responsible and accountable for their own nursing decisions and actions, in keeping with the standards of the College of Nurses of Ontario. The Registered Nurse works in close collaboration with the Clinical Director, Clinicians, the psychiatry team, other prescribers and Guest services staff to support the health of Guests, and works alongside their families, within the therapeutic community.



Like every founding role, this position carries a program-building mandate that distinguishes it from a steady-state clinical post. In the pre-launch and early operating phases, the Registered Nurse helps establish the nursing intake process, medication administration and storage practices, health and safety protocols and emergency response procedures that will define nursing care at Eli's Place. This requires strong clinical judgment and a builder's orientation, someone comfortable establishing practice in a new setting and working as one part of a small, closely connected team.

At full capacity, Eli's Place will serve up to 30 Guests in residence at any given time, with approximately 40 additional Guests supported through the transition phase as they move into housing, education and work in their community.

Key Accountabilities

Nursing and Mental Health Care

- Provide day-to-day nursing care to Guests, including nursing assessment, monitoring and intervention within the Registered Nurse scope of practice
- Complete nursing assessments at admission and monitor ongoing physical and mental health needs throughout each Guest's stay
- Recognize and respond to changes in physical or mental health presentation, escalating to the psychiatry team, other prescribers or emergency services as appropriate
- Provide wound care, minor first aid and follow-up for injuries or illness arising in daily life and the outdoor work program
- Support Guests' health needs through the transition phase, helping maintain continuity of care as Guests connect with community providers

Medication Administration and Safety

- Administer and document medications according to orders from the psychiatry team or other authorized prescribers
- Monitor and report medication effectiveness, side effects and interactions to the prescribing provider
- Maintain safe medication storage, inventory and reconciliation practices, including for controlled substances
- Support Guests to understand their medications and to build skills toward managing their own medication and health

Assessment and Risk

- Contribute to risk assessments, including suicide and self-harm risk, and respond appropriately to changes in risk in collaboration with the clinical team
- Contribute nursing health information to admissions screening and assessment
- Exercise sound professional and ethical judgment in complex or high-risk situations

Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Health Teaching

- Contribute to treatment planning, progress review and care coordination with the clinical team
- Participate in clinical team meetings and case reviews as an active member of the interdisciplinary team

- Deliver health teaching and health-related programming for Guests and families, in collaboration with the clinical team
- Provide health guidance to Guest services staff to support the day-to-day wellbeing of Guests, within the Registered Nurse scope of practice
- Coordinate appointments, referrals and follow-up with external health care providers

Documentation, Safety and Program Building

- Maintain accurate and timely nursing documentation using the program's electronic health record system
- Contribute to the development of health and safety protocols, infection prevention and control practices and emergency response procedures
- Help establish nursing practices and standards during the pre-launch and early operating phases
- Support outcomes monitoring and continuous quality improvement in collaboration with the clinical and evaluation teams

Ideal Candidate

Education and Registration

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN)
- Registration in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario as a Registered Nurse in the General Class
- Current professional liability protection appropriate to the role

Clinical Experience

- At least three years of nursing experience working with a variety of populations, ideally in a mental health capacity, and a demonstrated ability to lead nursing initiatives
- Experience working with people living with serious mental illness is strongly preferred
- Experience with co-occurring mental health and substance use presentations is an asset
- Experience with medication administration and safe medication management practices
- Proficiency with electronic health record systems

Clinical Judgment and Practice

- Confident practice within the Registered Nurse scope of practice, including knowing when to consult and escalate
- Sound clinical judgment and a calm, effective presence in complex or crisis situations
- Ability to hold therapeutic intent and safety in balance when they come into tension
- Cultural sensitivity and humility in care
- Strong communication with Guests, families and the clinical team

Alignment with the Model

- Genuine openness to or familiarity with the therapeutic community model and recovery-oriented, non-institutional approaches to care
- A collaborative, relationship-based approach to care and comfort working as one member of a small interdisciplinary team
- Innovative and adaptable, with an interest in contributing to a new, first-of-its-kind program model
- Alignment with the mission and values of Eli's Place

Conditions of the Role

The role is full-time and on site, primarily during daytime hours. The Registered Nurse participates as a full member of the daily life of the Eli's Place community. Clinical care at Eli's Place is provided from within the life of the community, not from a removed position.

Except where otherwise approved by Eli's Place or required to fulfil the organization's obligations under applicable human rights or employment legislation, the role cannot be performed remotely or at a distance from the people it serves. The working schedule is determined by clinical and program needs and may occasionally include evenings and weekends.

Any offer of employment will be conditional on a satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Check.

Compensation

The salary range for the Registered Nurse is $78,000–$96,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Eli's Place offers a competitive health and wellness benefits package. The Registered Nurse will receive three weeks of vacation annually.

Eli's Place is committed to the ongoing professional development of its staff. College registration fees are paid by the organization where registration is a condition of employment, and professional development is supported through a dedicated organizational fund.

Compensation at Eli's Place reflects both the financial and non-financial value of the work. This is a small founding team building something that has never existed in Canada, on a 600-acre working farm where the daily environment is unlike anything an institutional or urban clinical setting can offer. For the right person, that context is as much a part of the offer as the salary.

How to Apply

Eli's Place is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and identities and are committed to a fair and accessible hiring process.

To apply, please submit a résumé and a cover letter addressed to Colin McVicker, Clinical Director (he/him). Your cover letter should speak to your experience working with people living with serious mental illness, your understanding of the therapeutic community model and what draws you to Eli's Place specifically. The substance of the cover letter is an important part of the screening process.

Applications should be submitted by email to jobs@elisplace.org

This position will remain open until filled. Applications will be reviewed as they are received and we encourage early submission.

Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. We thank all applicants for their interest in Eli's Place. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The successful candidate should ideally be available to commence employment as soon as possible.