

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Call for Proposals - HPS Funding**
- **Youth Homelessness**
- **Residential Tenancies Act Update**
- **National Homelessness Conference**
- **Organization Profile - Romero House**

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Steering Committee Hosts Youth Homelessness Forum

The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee hosted a Youth Homelessness Forum on Thursday, March 19, 2009 at the Delta Brunswick. The Forum was an opportunity to bring together youth, service providers, government organizations and the private sector to learn from best practices and develop a solution for Saint John and New Brunswick.

There are currently limited facilities in New Brunswick to assist with the issue of youth homelessness. This forum brought together all stakeholders from Southern New Brunswick to discuss the extent of the issue and to begin mapping a course for developing such a facility. The vision for such a facility includes a development with social enterprise and other supports; not a facility to just house the homeless youth, but to assist them in making choices to free them from homelessness.

There were 117 individuals in attendance for the event representing government, non-profit organizations, youth, the faith community, housing providers, and the business community. In conjunction with the forum, the Committee also hosted a Networking Coffee House the evening prior to the forum, which had 32 people who attended.

The event was sponsored by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Department of Social Development, the John Howard Society, the City of Saint John, Enterprise Saint John, Bayview Credit Union, B&N Flooring, Ben's Clothing Ltd., and the Human Development Council.

The event featured two speakers from CMHC Housing Award Winning Projects.

Drew Gourskey (Manager of Housing Initiatives for the Region of Peel) and Brock James (Partner with Levitt Goodman Architects) talked about their experiences with the [Peel Youth Village](#). This project created 48 transitional housing units for at-risk young adults and opened its doors in August 2006.

Brock James also spoke about [Eva's Phoenix](#) in Toronto. Their innovative 2004 award winning initiative converted a 1930s Truck Repair Shop into 10 transitional housing units for youth aged 16 to 24. This project was about more than just creating a residence for youth, it also provided opportunities for youth to learn life and jobs skills so they could get off the streets permanently.



The event also featured a keynote speaker, Richard McNulty - who has experienced homelessness and spoke about his personal story, as well as a panel discussion with front line staff from the John Howard Society, Ridgewood, Mental Health, and the educational system.

The day concluded with participants breaking into small groups to discuss potential solutions to the problem. This information will be used in moving the youth homelessness file forward. If you are interested in participating on the Youth Homelessness Sub-Committee of the Steering Committee please contact Belinda Allen at (506) 636-8541 or belindaallen@rogers.com.



Residential Tenancies Act

In January, the Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee sent a letter to the Minister of Justice and Consumer Affairs regarding the amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. Recently we received a response from Minister Greg Byrne (Service New Brunswick) whose department is now responsible for the Office of the Rentalsman. In it he states,

“Regarding Bill 35, which includes the tenants of rooming and boarding houses under the authority of the Residential Tenancies Act, I have asked my staff to review the issues to ensure that any new legislation will address the needs of roomers and boarders. I understand the need to include roomers and boarders and their landlords within the rentalsman framework and am consulting with colleagues in other government departments to consider this matter in the broader context of government policy.”

In his letter he offered to arrange for a meeting between the Steering Committee and the Office of the Rentalsman to provide information on the current services offered by the Office of the Rentalsman and to discuss ways to collaborate and synergize the efforts of our organizations.

Please contact Belinda Allen at belindaallen@rogers.com or (506) 636-8541 if you would be interested in attending this meeting.

Eye Opening

By: Julia Arsenault

Being a social worker is what I have wanted to do for the past two years of my life and I will be perusing this career next September when I start my post-secondary education in Nova Scotia. For my last year of school I decided to do a Co-op so that I could confirm that this is really what I wanted to do. I am now doing my Co-op with HDC along side Belinda Allen and I love it.

When I first started my Co-op I was very shocked to hear that there is not one single place (shelter) specifically for homeless youth to go in the city. The youth are the future of our world and need an education to succeed. I know that if I don't get enough sleep and a good breakfast, it's hard for me to say focused when I'm at school. So I wonder about the youth that are homeless and that are still trying to go to school to get an education. How do they make it through the day?

On Thursday, March 19th I attended the Homelessness Youth Forum and that day my eyes were opened to how many people need social workers and other people to help them get through issues such as homelessness. That day when I heard Richard McNulty talk to us about his story and how programs and people helped him through everything I knew that this was the right job for me. When he was speaking I could picture myself one day helping someone like him get through their hard times and then later see them succeed.

Throughout my time with the Human Development Council I have learned many things about homelessness and poverty in Saint John. Simple things like what couch surfing means and bigger things like the 5 priority neighborhoods. I think the biggest thing I have learned is that we really need more people who are ready to devote their lives to the people that need support. Also, that helping people in need, whether it be homeless youth or someone having a bad day and needs to talk, is definitely what I want to be doing for the rest of my life.

~ Julia Arsenault is a grade 12 high school student from Centre Scolaire Samuel-de-Champlain. She is completing a work term with the HDC.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Organizations in Saint John are invited to submit proposals for funding under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) for Designated Communities.

To be eligible, projects must be aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness in the community and include efforts to assist homeless persons to achieve autonomy and self-sufficiency. Projects must target clients who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. Projects must also address one or more of the priorities listed in the applicable local community plan.

Successful applicants have until March 31, 2011 to complete their projects. The funding is not guaranteed from year to year and it not intended to be core funding.

An application form and detailed proposals demonstrating that it meets all program requirements must be received no later than **Friday, April 24th at 4:00pm**.

The local advisory board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.

Please contact [Gloria Boyd](#), Senior Development Officer, Service Canada at 636-4073 or [Belinda Allen](#), Community Development Coordinator, Human Development Council at 636-8541 to obtain an application or additional information.

Homeless Youth Count - REMINDER

If you or your organization participated in the Homeless Youth Count in February 2009 we ask that you please submit your count sheets on or before **May 1, 2009** to belindaallen@rogers.com or via fax at (506) 636-8543. You can also mail your completed sheets to Human Development Council, 47 Charlotte Street, 3rd Floor, PO Box 6125, Station A, Saint John, NB E2L 4R6.

Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada



Sue Calhoun (Moncton), Claudette Bradshaw, Belinda Allen (Saint John), Daniel Arsenault (Service Canada), Lisa Ouellette (Bathurst), Lesley Alexander (Service Canada), Fiona Williams (Fredericton), Barbara Lemieux (Social Development)

New Brunswick had strong representation at the *Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada* conference held in Calgary in February. Participants included Community Development Officers for Homelessness Steering Committees in four designated communities (Greater Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton, and Bathurst) and representatives from the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton, Service Canada and NB Social Development.

Held at the University of Calgary, the conference brought together hundreds of participants from across the country to provide “a timely opportunity to move forward on dealing with these issues.” It was the second homelessness conference held; the first was at York University several years ago. One of the first speakers was New Brunswick’s Deputy Minister of Social Development, James Hughes, who participated in a provincial panel. Mr. Hughes noted that to date, the “engine” taking on the issue of homelessness in the province has been a strong, dedicated network of people in each of the four homelessness designated communities (Greater Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton and Bathurst). To date, the province has been happy to let the federal government fund projects through the Homelessness Partnering Initiative, he said, and to let the communities do the work. “But the time has come for that to change.” The province of New Brunswick has initiated a NB

Leadership Group on Homelessness, with a meeting convened in early February, to explore what the province can do “with the tool box of resources that we have” to be more involved in the issue. The department has also launched a Poverty Reduction Strategy, with dialogue sessions being held around the province.

Former Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe MP Claudette Bradshaw was also present. Currently Moncton coordinator for the Mental Health Commission of Canada’s research demonstration project on chronic homelessness and mental illness, Mme Bradshaw spoke on a panel about Moncton’s involvement in the project. She said that she was thrilled that Moncton was chosen as one of five locations in the country because the project is based on two principles: giving people choice and bringing people to their full potential. The project is based on a “Housing First” strategy, where chronically homeless individuals with mental health challenges will be moved into affordable housing, with a support team in place to assist them. An estimated 100 people in Greater Moncton, and another 25 from Kent and Westmorland counties are expected to begin participating in early April, pending approval of funding.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for New Brunswick participants to meet and network with others across the country who are involved in similar work, and to learn about interesting and dynamic projects that are underway elsewhere to address the issue. While a number of jurisdictions have produced 10-year plans to end homelessness, the sense emerging from the conference was, *why wait? Do it now!* There is an urgency to this situation. Despite the economic recession, which will obviously impact everyone, Canada is still one of the richest countries in the world. And, as many delegates agreed, we have the ability to deal with homelessness now. Presentations made at the conference are posted at

www.nhc2009.ca

~Adapted from GMHSC Newsletter



Lisa Ouellette (Bathurst), Belinda Allen (Saint John), Deputy Minister James Hughes (Social Development), Sue Calhoun (Moncton), Fiona Williams (Fredericton)

Help Us Fill the Bowl! - Romero House



**ROMERO HOUSE
SOUP KITCHEN**
647-649 BRENSWICK DRIVE
SAINT JOHN, N.B. E2L 3S9
Phone: 642-7447

Romero House is the only soup kitchen in the City of Saint John but they are much more than just that. Throughout this article you will find out everything they have to offer.

The main goal of Romero House is to serve hot meals - 7 days a week to those in need in our community. They also provide school supplies to any child or adult in need. The service started by being just for the people who lived close to Romero House but over their years of hard work and dedication, this group has grown to include many more people.

Romero House was founded on March 8, 1982, in recognition of Archbishop Oscar A. Romero of San Salvador. Romero House has its own chapel and they assist in Sunday school and confirmation classes.

On their busiest day, the soup kitchen serves approximately 300 meals. They are open 7 days per week, 365 days per year and meals are served from 10:00am to 1:00pm daily. They also have a clothing room that is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm where you can find used clothes, shoes, and other items at no cost. These items come from individuals in the community who donate them. Approximately 100 families per month are served through Emergency Food Orders. They get requests for help when the Food Banks are not open or when a person has already been to the Food Bank and cannot receive anything else. This is available Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Romero House is very fortunate to have approximately 100 volunteers who help out around the building. Even though they have a great amount of volunteers they are always looking for

more help. If you want to become a volunteer for the Romero House call them at 642-7447.

The City of Saint John is very lucky to have a place like Romero House. With all the hard work and time they put into what they do we can see that it helps the people in need in our community.



Human Development Council

Send your comments, ideas and feedback to Belinda Allen, Community Development Coordinator

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Third Floor, City Market, 47 Charlotte Street
PO Box 6125, Station A
Saint John, NB E2L 4R6
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Fax: (506) 636-8543
E-mail: belindaallen@rogers.com

Stay Tuned.....

April 22 2009 - Human Development Council Annual General Meeting

12:00pm - 1:30pm, Chinese Commerce Centre

For more information or to RSVP please contact 634-1673 or email hdc@nbnet.nb.ca

May 19-22, 2009, Calgary Alberta - CCSD Canadian Social Forum

For more information visit www.ccsd.ca/csf/2009/

May 2009, Provincial and Saint John Homelessness Report Card

July 2009, 4th Issue of Perspectives on Homelessness

