



A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER MONCTON HOMELESSNESS STEERING COMMITTEE

MARCH 2008

Graphic design Michelle Sonier

VOL. 1, ISSUE 2

Current members of the GMHSC:

- Atlantic People's Housing Ltd.
- Community Chaplaincy for Ex-Offenders
- John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc.
- Maison Nazareth House
- Mobile One Community Services Inc.
- Moncton Youth Residences Inc
- New Life Mission Inc.
- SIDA/AIDS Moncton Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- YMCA
- YWCA

MANDATE

The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing all agencies in Greater Moncton that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Established in 2000, the GMHSC provides leadership and coordinates communication among stakeholders and service providers to ensure the implementation of the Greater Moncton Community Plan on Homelessness.

It also works to create public awareness about issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and housing.

The Changing Face of Homelessness in Greater Moncton

by Seán L. Tobin, Managing Director, Mobile One Community Services Inc.

With a local economy that does not outwardly appear to be showing signs of slowing down and a “tough love” approach by the Provincial Department administering the Social Assistance program, particularly with those in the employable age group, the face of homelessness is changing in our community. From the perspective of those serving aboard Mobile One, we are definitely seeing fewer people using our services in the early hours of the evening. However, what we are actually watching is a transference of service from our mobile soup kitchen to the stationary food banks and mobile food pantries. This transference should be happening, keeping in mind that a soup kitchen is the last agency to confirm that the situation in the community is improving (i.e., *there are fewer people using the kitchen*), and will also be the first agency to signal that there is something wrong with the economy (i.e. *there more people coming into the kitchen*).

A well-considered strategy developed in the mid-1990s by the municipal and provincial governments set in motion a program to attract call centres to the area and to position Greater Moncton as the retail centre of the three Maritime provinces. The strategy has worked but one of the consequences of this strategy has been that many of the jobs created in retail have been primarily part time, with wages at minimum wage or slightly better and many companies unable to provide their employees with a benefits package.

While we have many more people working today than we had in the mid-to-late 1990’s, many of these people actually belong to a sector of the community known as the “working poor.” The people in this sector often hold down more than one job but, even then, with the combination of low wages, no corporate benefits and rising costs for necessities, they are not able to make it to the end of the month. While they may not need the services of the mobile soup kitchen bus every evening, they will certainly need the services of their local food bank or mobile food pantry to get them through to their next paycheque. Many individuals and families who would be considered in the ranks of the working poor are often only one or, at most, two paycheques from being homelessness.

Guest columnist – Views do not necessarily reflect those of the GMHSC as a whole or Service Canada.

Salvus Clinic ~ Helping you to help yourself
182 High Street, Moncton, NB 506-384-7283

Salvus Clinic opened in November 2007, and provides primary health care to people in the region experiencing difficulty as a result of issues such as homelessness, poverty, addictions etc. Call or e-mail for an appointment. salvus@rogers.com Visit the website www.salvusclinic.com

Greater Moncton designated project site for Canadians with mental health, homelessness issues

Budget 2008 in late February committed \$110 million to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, to support innovative demonstration projects developing best practices to help Canadians facing mental health and homelessness challenges.

The Commission will use the funds to set up five demonstration research projects across Canada in Greater Moncton, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. Each project will focus on a distinct group of people living with mental illness who are homeless such as those who also have a substance abuse problem, Aboriginal Canadians and new immigrants. The demonstration projects will run simultaneously over a four-year period. *“Collectively, the projects will develop a body of evidence that will enable Canada to lead the world in providing services to people living with mental illness who are homeless,”* said Michael Kirby, Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. For more information, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/mhcc.html

SIDA/AIDS Moncton wins Innovation award!

SIDA/AIDS Moncton Inc. has been recognized for its outstanding work with homeless youth. The Eva's Initiatives Award for Innovation is sponsored by CIBC, and each of the three winning organizations receives a prize of \$5,000. This is the third year for Eva's award, and the winners were chosen from among 52 applicants. The organization won for its Youth Asset Program where youth were involved in producing a six-episode television series called Generation Sex, a six-part CBC radio series, a film called *It Won't Happen to Me* as well as theatrical productions, a video about the prevention of HIV/HCV targeted to at-risk youth and a short film about the lives of two youth with HCV. *Bravo to Debby Warren and her team at SIDA/AIDS Moncton for this great accomplishment!* For more, visit www.evasinitiatives.com/innovation_winners.htm

Why is it so tough to get ahead?

“Life is tough for poor people - we know that. Why do we develop public policies that make it even tougher?” A new report by John Stapleton, a Fellow at the Metcalfe Foundation in Toronto, illustrates the tangled web of social programs provided by the silos of governments: *“We cannot claim to have people-centred government policies. Not when an 18-year-old lone parent refugee is considered to be an adult under four policies, a child under two, a student under a third policy, a dependent adult under two others, a non-resident under two and a legal resident of Ontario under four more.”*

Stapleton points out that welfare recipients have to live by a different set of rules from other Canadians, and also face a different tax regime. Download the full report *Why is it so tough to get ahead? How our tangled social programs pathologize the transition to self-reliance* at www.metcalffoundation.com

People touched by homelessness

Nazareth House shelters homeless woman



Patricia dreamed of becoming a dancer from the time she was three, when her grandmother taught her tap dancing and ballet. Her first job, after high school graduation, was at a cabaret in Windsor, Ontario where, in the good times, she was able to clear \$1,000 per week.

Fast forward to 2008, and Patricia, now 25, has been living for the past week at Nazareth House in Moncton, one of the only emergency shelters in the community with beds for women.

It's been a rough road from Ontario, through Quebec and now New Brunswick, dancing in clubs that aren't quite so fancy, living with a boyfriend who has spent much of his life in and out of jail. Three months ago, with the club scene on the downswing, Patricia and James got behind in their rent in Saint John. They picked up and moved to Moncton, where jobs seemed more plentiful, but soon ran out of money to pay their hotel bill.

With few employers willing to hire an ex-offender, James picks up odd jobs through temp agencies. The couple is scrambling to put money aside because Patricia is now pregnant.

“For people on the street, it's not easy to find a job,” says Patricia.

“Employers don't want someone with a criminal record, and you need an address to get social assistance.”

SEND YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS AND FEEDBACK TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER SUE CALHOUN

scalhoun@nbnet.nb.ca

If you have questions about the Homelessness Partnership Strategy, contact Mireille Roy at Service Canada 506-851-3554 or

mireille.roy@servicecanada.gc.ca