



**Current members of
GMHSC:**

- AIDS Moncton Inc.
- Atlantic People's Housing Ltd.
- Blanket Drive
- BUILT Network Moncton Inc.
- CMHC
- Codiac RCMP
- Community Chaplaincy for Ex-Offenders
- Elizabeth Fry Society of NB
- John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc.
- MAGMA
- Maison Nazareth House
- Mobile One Community Services Inc.
- Moncton Youth Residences Inc.
- New Life Mission Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- YMCA
- YWCA

MANDATE

The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing 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.

www.monctonhomelessness.org

Update Poverty Reduction Strategy

Social Development Minister calls current social assistance levels "a disgrace"

The final forum on poverty, held in Saint John in mid-November, cobbled together what may become a "New Deal" for the province's poor. Social Development Minister Kelly Lamrock, one of the co-chairs of the Poverty Reduction Initiative, was widely quoted in the media as saying that NB social assistance levels are "a disgrace," and that they will be raised by 80% over five years. NB currently has the lowest social assistance rates in the region. Some of the other priority actions in the *NB Economic and Social Inclusion Plan* (available at www.gnb.ca/0017/promos/0001/index-e.asp) include the following:

Immediate actions:

- Elimination of the interim social assistance rate program (single employable people);
- Extend health card for persons exiting social assistance for up to three years until prescription drug program is introduced; and
- The household income policy will only be applied to social assistance recipients who are in spousal relationships.

Some other key actions to be accomplished over five years:

- Significant overhaul of household income policy;
- Introduction of vision and dental care for children in low-income families by April 1, 2011;
- Provide more opportunities to keep earned income as individuals transition to work;
- Raise the minimum wage to the Atlantic average by September 1st, 2011, and adjust for inflation annually thereafter;
- Provide stable funding for homeless shelters within five years;
- Include protection for roomers and boarders in the Residential Tenancies Act.

New Brunswick's first-ever poverty reduction plan, which has been just over a year in the making, is the culmination of a public engagement exercise that saw the involvement of more than 2,500 New Brunswickers from all walks of life. *We'll keep you posted on the progress.*

Being homeless is always lonely and never more so than at Christmas. Think of those less fortunate this holiday season.



Men in rooming houses four times more likely to die prematurely

Poor Canadians at risk of early death

Canadians living in homeless shelters and rooming houses have a much shorter life expectancy than the general population, according to a new 10-year study carried out by a research team at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto and published in the British Medical Journal. Researchers found the chance of surviving to age 75 among the homeless or inadequately housed is 32 per cent for men and 60 per cent for women, compared with 51 per cent and 72 per cent respectively for the lowest income group in Canada's population.

To put that in perspective, the chance that a 25-year-old man living today in marginal housing would make it to age 75 is equal to the life expectancy of the average young male in **1921** – long before the advent of antibiotics and other life-saving treatments. For homeless or poorly-housed women, their chance of surviving to 75 is the same as women in the general population of Canada in **1956**. Some other findings:

- Men living in rooming houses are four times more likely to die prematurely than people in the general population;
- Illnesses linked to alcohol and drug use, as well as tobacco-related diseases, are greatly increased in this population;
- People living in marginal housing situations have much more precarious access to health care.

Read the full report on the GMHSC website.

A study of women's homelessness in the NWT

For women in the north, being homeless is getting to be normal

In the North West Territories, all women can be considered at risk of homelessness because a small change in their circumstances can jeopardize the fragile structure of their lives that allows them to meet their basic needs. Although everyone living in the Canada's three Northern territories recognizes that housing is a "big problem," few understand the complex constellation of factors, many of which go well beyond the shortage of housing stock, that conspire to keep thousands of women and their children in a condition of absolute or hidden homelessness. The authors of this report are convinced that the story of women and homelessness in the North must be told in such a way that it will inspire political and social will for action. Research is one way to give voice to women whose experience has so far remained on the "margins" of society. (Read the full report at www.homelesshub.ca/)

Measuring poverty in Ontario

The Deprivation Index

Measuring poverty is not easy or simple. The only "measuring tool" we have in Canada is Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-off. Yet the LICO suffers from serious flaws. It is cumbersome to explain; it's a relative measure of poverty that ignores absolute need. Statscan actually discourages its use as a poverty indicator.

Ontario has just come up with a 'Deprivation Index,' a list of items or activities considered necessary to have an adequate standard of living, but those who are poor are unlikely to be able to afford. The items in a Deprivation Index are not a comprehensive list of basic needs since in a wealthy society such as Ontario most households, even the poor, are likely to have most of the basic necessities. The items in the Index are intended to distinguish the poor from the non-poor.

According to research, the items in Ontario's Index are all widely seen by Ontarians as being necessary for a household to have a standard of living above the poverty level.

WHAT ITEMS ARE INCLUDED?

- * Do you eat fresh fruit and vegetables every day?
- * Are you able to get dental care if needed?
- * Do you eat meat, fish or a vegetarian equivalent at least every other day?
- * Are you able to replace or repair broken or damaged appliances such as a vacuum or a toaster?
- * Do you have appropriate clothes for job interviews?
- * Are you able to get around your community, either by having a car or by taking the bus or an equivalent mode of transportation?
- * Are you able to have friends or family over for a meal at least once a month?
- * Is your house or apartment free of pests, such as cockroaches?
- * Are you able to buy some small gifts for family or friends at least once a year?
- * Do you have a hobby or leisure activity?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Ontario Deprivation Index identifies a child as having a poverty-level standard of living if at least two out of the 10 items in the Index are missing in the child's household because the family cannot afford them. A survey conducted in March and April of 2009, found that 12.5 per cent of Ontario children were lacking two or more items. How would we measure up in New Brunswick? More at

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2009/12/ontario-deprivation-index.html>

GMHSC Affordable Housing Day – Focus on Women



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee's Affordable Housing Day on November 20th was a great success. More than 80 people attended the luncheon, which focused on the need for emergency, transitional and supportive housing for women in Greater Moncton. From right, Kit Hickey (right), Housing Alternatives Inc. and Sharon Amirault (Executive Director, First Steps Housing Project Inc.), both from Saint John, were keynote speakers. Francine DiMambro, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the sponsor of the event; and far left, Laura Selig (New Life Mission and member of the GMHSC) who emceed the event. The event highlighted the desperate need for emergency and supportive housing for women in Greater Moncton.

RAISING THE ROOF
CHEZ TOIT

Warm your Head & your Heart!

Moncton Youth Residences (MYR) believes that everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. For the fourth year in a row, MYR is a partner agency with Raising the Roof – Canada's only national charity solely dedicated to long-term solutions to homelessness – to sell toques in New Brunswick. The funds raised for Raising the Roof's toque campaign will go to support programs and initiatives, offered by partner agencies across the country, that make a difference in the lives of thousands of men, women and youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In Greater Moncton, the proceeds will go to Youth QUEST Central and the Transitional Housing Program.

WHERE CAN I GET A TOQUE?

Toques are available in classic black or driftwood (beige) - in exchange for a minimum \$10 donation. Currently they can be purchased at Lounsbury Furniture Ltd.



(Mountain Rd.), Read's Newstand (Moncton/Riverview), Timothy's (Main St.), Video Tech (Mountain Rd.), RBC Branches (Greater Moncton), Youth QUEST Central (199 St. George Street) and Moncton Youth Residences Inc. (536 Mountain Rd.). Toque champions are also required to help MYR reach its goal of selling 2,400 toques. If you are interested in displaying / selling toques in your business or organization or

would like to volunteer at one of our events please contact us at developmentoffice@myrinc.com.

On Toque Tuesday – **February 2, 2010** – show that you care about Canada's homeless and proudly wear your toque.

GMHSC members attend World AIDS Day breakfast in Fredericton



From right, Sue Calhoun, Community Development Officer for the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee, Debby Warren, Executive Director of AIDS Moncton Inc. and Laura Selig, Executive Director of New Life Mission, attended the World AIDS Day breakfast in Fredericton on December 1st. With them is Graydon Nicholas, NB Lieutenant-Governor and the Honourary Patron of the Partnership of Community-Based AIDS Organizations in NB.

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS AND FEEDBACK.

SEND TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER SUE CALHOUN moncton.homelessness@gmail.com

If you have questions about the Homelessness Partnership Strategy, contact Mireille Roy at Service Canada 506-851-3554 or mireille.roy@servicecanada.gc.ca

The Second Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton now available at

www.moncton.homelessness.org