



GREATER MONCTON
HOMELESSNESS
STEERING COMMITTEE



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A place to call home: Housing, women and hidden homelessness



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee (GMHSC) Affordable Housing Luncheon in November focused on the need for supportive, affordable housing for homeless and at risk women in Greater Moncton, and in particular, those facing mental health and addictions challenges. A big thanks again this year to our sponsor Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (Photos: Nadine Lipton)



Laura Selig, chair of the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee, welcomed guests.



Crystal Scott, emergency shelter coordinator at the Coverdale Centre for Women in Saint John, gave an overview of their programs for women.



Mike Légère of CMHC spoke about the work that the agency does to support affordable housing in Greater Moncton and New Brunswick.

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



“It’s lonely...people go into survival mode”

Nathalie was a guest speaker at our Affordable Housing luncheon. She was interviewed by At Home/Chez Soi home economist Lois Gray.



Q: How long had you been homeless?

A: On and off since the age of 12.

Q: What was your life like growing up?

A: I grew up in a single parent home on income assistance. Food was scarce, and we never had proper clothing. My mother was mentally ill, which brought up a lot of issues that were hard to deal with...one being that she abandoned me when I was 12. That’s when I had my first taste of homelessness, and stayed that way until my late teens. I then got on [income] assistance so I could return to school. I graduated with honours, and later bought a home, opened a business, and did very well for a few years until I got into a serious vehicle accident.

I was prescribed a strong pain medication due to my injuries. I could no longer work. I had no income, no family, no support. I lost my home, became addicted to opiates, and spent my savings and everything I worked so hard for. Before I knew it, I was homeless once again.

Q: What is it like to be homeless and living with an addiction on a day-to-day basis?

A: It’s a constant battle to find money to support your habit, to find food and clean clothes, a place to sleep, to stay healthy. It’s lonely. People become very resourceful. They go into survival mode. You beg, borrow and steal to stay alive. Stealing and prostitution ... both for men and women becomes a cruel reality that, in turn, results in greater problems down the road, for example, with the legal system, health issues. One of the biggest issues is trying to find shelter, whether it be an abandoned house or a vehicle. It could mean the difference between life and death during the winter month or being robbed. Or the difference between waking up and not waking up if you’re sleeping in the porch during summer months. After you’ve lived a certain way and have grown up in less than perfect circumstances, you learn to accept and believe that the way you live is normal and that there are people worse off than you. I didn’t really seek help. I was lucky enough that there were people out there that approached me and offered me help. I’m grateful that someone realized that I was in need, and could benefit from programs that were available to me.

Q: So how’s it going today?

A: It’s going really well. I’m in the At Home/Chez Soi program. It all started with affordable housing support from professional people who treat you with respect and dignity. They’ve given me the opportunity to find a renewed interest in things that make me happy, hobbies that I had long forgotten about. My favourite one being the community gardens [that we had at the YMCA], cooking classes, art classes, help with budgeting, just to name a few. It’s all helped me in becoming an active member of society.

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 surround homelessness, poverty and housing. Visit our website at www.monctonhomelessness.org

CURRENT MEMBERS

- AIDS Moncton Inc.
- Elizabeth Fry Society of NB
- NB Aboriginal Peoples Council
- Atlantic People’s Housing Ltd.
- John Howard Society of Southeastern NB
- NB Social Development
- Blankets for Moncton Inc.
- MAGMA
- New Life Mission Inc.
- BUILT Network Moncton Inc.
- Maison Nazareth House
- Salvus Clinic
- CMHC
- Mobile One Community Services Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- Codiac RCMP
- Moncton Youth Residences Inc.
- YMCA
- Community Chaplaincy for Ex-Offenders
- YWCA

New in 2012 from Findmyway.ca Community Network Inc. www.findmyway.ca

Preparing for reintegration supported by community volunteer mentors

The new crime bill that will be in place very soon will increase the number of people who will be incarcerated and returning to our community. With a criminal record, many face a myriad of challenges that will hinder their ability to become law-abiding citizens. Some are homeless, unemployed, illiterate, victims of abuse, suffering from an addiction or in need of health or mental health care. What is significant is that as a community, we have the means to help these men and women who had been incarcerated at a fraction of the cost of returning to prison.

While there are agencies, programs and services that provide assistance to those who are at risk, the fact remains that many do not take advantage of these resources. Factors such as fear, having the wrong or no information, distrust or skill deficiencies can be strong barriers to many people.

In collaboration with the Correctional Service of Canada, the Findmyway Network is putting in place a project that will help those who have been in conflict with the law to make the transition from incarceration to the community.

- In the latter part of 2009 and in the beginning of 2010, a pilot project was conducted at Dorchester Penitentiary with offenders who were preparing for release to the Greater Moncton community. (The March 22, 2010 Forum Report following the Dorchester pilot project is available upon request.)

A partnership with the District Parole Office and the Volunteer Centre of Southeastern N.B./ Findmyway.ca Community Network, this new project will be offered to candidates who have been released from a correctional institution, and are living in our community. The following briefly describes the steps that will be used to provide community support to these individuals in making a positive reintegration:

Step 1 – A meeting with the candidate, the parole officer and the Findmyway facilitator.

Step 2 – The candidate completes a questionnaire to identify his/her needs and goals.

Step 3 – Research is undertaken to identify programs and services specific to candidates' needs.

Step 4 – A Plan of Action is in place to begin the process of linking the candidate to community services and resources.

Step 5 – The candidate is matched with a volunteer mentor who will provide support.

Step 6 – Follow-Up

It is important to note that the candidate will be fully engaged in all phases of his/her goal setting and personal achievement plan.

- **Findmyway is seeking local community volunteer mentors who will receive orientation and training to assist with this project. Please contact Awa Niang at 506-869-6533**

Special Note: *A meeting will be scheduled for early January 2012 for all members of the Findmyway.ca Community Network.*

By working together we can make Greater Moncton a better and safer community.

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 506-533-5882 or mireille.roy@servicecanada.gc.ca

The 4th Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton is now available at
[w www.moncton.homelessness.org](http://www.moncton.homelessness.org)