

Breaking the Cycle



St. John's
HOUSING
& HOMELESSNESS
N · E · T · W · O · R · K

A Community

REPORT CARD

on the state of
Youth Homelessness
in St. John's

April 16-17, 2008



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Breaking the Cycle

“Breaking the Cycle” A Conference on Youth Homelessness

The St. John’s Housing and Homelessness Network is pleased to welcome you to our 2008 Youth Conference entitled “Breaking the Cycle”. This gathering is a great opportunity for all stakeholders to come together and discuss strategies for creating solutions to youth homelessness in our community.

In addition, the Network is very pleased to be presenting its first community report card developed by our members on the state of youth homelessness in St. John’s. Together with our guest speakers from St. John’s, Toronto and Vancouver, we will discuss solutions that can help us break the cycle of youth homelessness and contribute to a long term strategy for our city and province.

We welcome the Hon. Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, who brings greetings to the conference on behalf of the Provincial government. We look forward to the continued commitment of all three levels of government as we work together on long-term solutions to the complex problems of youth homelessness.

Please become engaged over the next two days and share with the group your thoughts, experiences and insights as we work toward solutions. We are stronger together as our strength lies in our collective efforts.

Thank you for participating!

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Photo: Dennis Flynn

SHELTER STATISTICS

1) Choices For Youth – Young Men’s Shelter 07-08:

- Total number of bed days occupied: 2557¹
- Occupancy Rate 86%¹

2) Tommy Sexton Centre 07-08²

Single Males:

55% (Qty: 46) were youth (aged 15-28)

Single Females:

51% (Qty: 41) were youth (aged 15-28)

Reasons for Services:

- Referral from another Shelter
- Eviction by Landlord
- Methadone Users/ High Risk for Hep C/HIV

3) Naomi Centre 07-08³

- Total Number of admissions: 106
- New admissions: 35
- Repeat admissions: 71
- Requests for Service: 1216

Of the street youth interviewed 43% were staying in shelters or completely homeless⁵

Of youth admitted to youth shelters in St. John’s last year, approximately 50% were repeat admissions. It is agreed that the longer one remains “street involved” the more difficult it is find solutions. In a recent survey among homeless youth⁴, it was revealed that males averaged 5.4 years of street life and females 2.4 years.

72% of the street-involved youth interviewed were between the ages of 16-21⁵

¹ Source: – Choices for Youth - Young Men’s Shelter statistics 2007-08

² Source: AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador

³ Source: Stella Burry Community Services

⁴ Source: CASEY Survey: “Take a Picture”, Summer 2006

⁵ Source: Choices for Youth - Outreach and Youth Engagement Program 2006-08

Organization 2007-08	# of Admissions	Repeat Users (%)	Length of Stay	Turn-Aways
Choices for Youth (CFY) Young Men’s Shelter (ages 16-29)	176	56%	7.75 days	260
Naomi Centre Shelter for Homeless Women (ages 16-30)	106	67%	24 days	168
Tommy Sexton Centre	87	16%	6 days	218
Iris Kirby	38	--	--	--
Total	407	--	--	646

In addition to the outreach services being provided to street-entrenched youth, city shelters also provide a level of outreach including the following:

Type of Outreach Services Requested	CFY	Naomi Centre
Food	229	129
Outreach Programs	48	60
Housing Support	98	47
Information/Resources	109	288
Supplies, Transportation, Phone	48	--
Supports (Counseling, Social Work or Family)	--	183

VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

SANE – Sexual Assault Nurses Evaluation, Eastern Health 2007¹

	Male	Female	Total	
AGE				
16-19	1 (2%)	8 (13%)	9	¹ Source: Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, Eastern Health Contact: Tina Whalen, Coordinator, Ph: 777-5865
20-22	0	18 (29%)	18	
23-25	0	14 (23%)	14	
26-29	3 (4%)	22 (35%)	25	
Total	4 (6%)	62 (94%)	66	
Drug facilitated:	4 (6%)	40 (65%)	44	MORE on this issue: p12
Known Assailant:	3 (4%)	39 (63%)	42	
Referred by:				
Victim Services	0	9 (14%)	9	
Sexual Assault Crisis & Prevention Centre	0	9 (14%)	8	
Mental Health Crisis Line and Centre	0	8 (12%)	8	

YOUTH WITH COMPLEX NEEDS ¹

Total 52
Gender 24 male 28 female

Age:
16-18 52%
19-21 35%
22-24 12%
25-26 1%
Total 100%

Education:
24 attending school 48%
26 not attending school 52%

Addictions:

40 of 52 clients (77%) were users of drugs and alcohol.

Housing Instability:

- Clients averaged 5.3 housing moves over 3 years
- Average stay at one location was 142 days

Mental Health Admissions:

- 17 of 52 clients (33%) were admitted to a mental health institution.
- They were admitted an average of 3.4 times with an average stay per visit of 69 days.

Criminal Justice Involvement:

- 42 of 52 clients (81%) had involvement with the criminal justice system.

¹ Source: Youth Services Working Group – April 2007, Sub-committee on youth with complex needs.
Contact: Kristy Piercey, Youth and Family Services,
Ph: 752-4625

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Choices for Youth – Outreach and Youth Engagement Program (2006-08)

Male	59%
Female	41%
Total	454 Youth
Total # of contacts	7980

Age:

16-18	38%
19-21	34%
22-24	18%
25-29	10%

Parental Status: .19% have a child

Current Living Situation:

Shelter	35%
Apartment	19%
Rooming house	27%
Family	12%
Absolutely homeless	8%

Length of time being “Street-Involved”:

Under 3 months	21%
3-6 months	22%
6 months – 1 year	25%
1-2 years	16%
2-3 years	12%
3-4 years	---
4-5 years	---
Over 5 years	4%

Family Context:

Disrupted connection	68%
Chaotic home environment	65%
Substance abuse in family	53%
Early family breakup	46%
Family violence	41%
Single parent family	38%
Low income in the family	33%
History of offending in the family	31%
Consistent connection	13%

Housing History:

Inconsistent family housing situation	67%
Difficulty maintaining housing	66%
Foster care	38%
Group home placement	22%
Youth centre	23%

Education: .68% Dropped out

Drug/Alcohol Issues: .59%

Unemployed: .73%

Previous Involvement in:

Children’s Aid	57%
Criminal Justice System	74%

Barriers and Issues:

Housing	50%
Financial issues	55%
Food / healthy diet	61%
Lack of essential life skills	47%
Employment issues	37%
Impulsivity	45%
Family conflict	33%
Relationship issues	36%
Substance abuse	50%
Lack of confidence/self-esteem	31%
Victim of violence/abuse	32%
Lack of motivation	36%
Education supports	28%
Lack of positive role model	32%
Legal issues	28%
Physical or emotional abuse	25%
Health issues	21%
Prostitution	18%
Suicide ideation	10%
Sexual assault / rape	7%
Sexuality / orientation	6%
Eating disorder	1%
Mental health counseling	1%
Parenting assistance	5%

Streetreach – Community Youth Network (2006-08)

Male	60%
Female	40%
Total # of contacts	3006

Main Issues:

Food shortage	17.2%
Prostitution	12.9%
Sexual health	11.9%
Financial	11.0%
Housing	8.6%
Addictions	5.5%
Clothing shortage	5.2%
Employment	3.8%

Female:

Prostitution	24.0%
Sexual health	17.3%
Food shortage	10.7%
Financial	7.8%
Addictions	6.2%
Housing	6.1%
Clothing shortage	4.1%
Family	3.5%

Male:

Food shortage	22.9%
Financial	13.8%
Housing	10.7%
Sexual health	7.1%
Clothing shortage	6.2%
Employment	5.1%
Addictions	4.9%
Homelessness	4.4%



Breaking the Cycle

BREAKING THE CYCLE **The First Report Card on** **Youth Homelessness in St. John's**

What is Homelessness?

Homelessness is the absence of a stable and secure place to live. A person who has no regular place to live stays in an overnight emergency shelter, an abandoned building, an all-night coffee shop, a car, couch surfing, outdoors, or other such places not meant to be living spaces.

Who is at Risk of Homelessness?

Did you know that almost a third of Canada's homeless population are between the ages of 16-24? That's about 65,000 young people without a place to call home.¹

In St. John's, youth homelessness has been identified as a growing problem. Through statistics collected at local youth shelters and through data received from existing outreach programs throughout the city, a clearer picture is emerging.

CYCLES OF HOMELESSNESS

Cycles of Homelessness refers to those individuals who require supports in housing and specialized programming on a continual or repeated basis. They have not found stability in their lives and continue to rely on the supports of others. Breaking this trend and identifying timely solutions is a top priority for the Network.

Youth are without housing for a variety of reasons. They include:

- 🏠 Family breakdown/disconnect
- 🏠 Complex needs
- 🏠 Poverty
- 🏠 Substance abuse/addictions
- 🏠 Lack of supportive/affordable housing
- 🏠 Education and employment barriers

¹ (Source: Raising the Roof)

SUPPORTIVE and AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing

Within the cycle of homelessness, the lack of affordable housing continues to be a major obstacle for street entrenched youth on their road to independence and healthy living. Affordable Housing is generally defined as social housing or other housing that has been built under a government affordable housing program. Social housing includes public housing, non-profit housing, co-op housing and rent supplement units in the private rental sector. Housing is affordable if it costs less than 30% of before-tax household income.

A recent survey conducted by the St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness, in partnership with the NL Statistics Agency, found 13,500 people are at risk of homelessness because of affordability issues. That number does not include those individuals and families who are at risk due to health, disability and other factors.

In addition, the 2007-08 St. John's Community Plan on Homelessness identifies that, between 1998 and 2006, St. John's lost 48% of all existing affordable private rental units (under \$500/mo) due to rising rents and conversions. The latest rental vacancy rate released by the CMHC for St. John's sits at 2.5%, a drop of 2.6% from the 5.1% rate in 2006. As is the case in many urban centre's across the country, this trend severely hampers the ability of those on low incomes to afford decent housing.

Supportive Affordable Housing

The lack of supportive affordable housing in St. John's is a major concern among Housing and Homelessness Network members.

Supportive affordable housing is generally defined as housing for individuals and families which is integrated with supports and services. Services depend on clients' needs and are provided to help residents maintain independence and stability to promote social inclusion.

For youth, this includes skills many of us take for granted in carrying out our day to day lives. When housing is not supplemented with supports and services based on the needs of youth, housing can very quickly break down. Statistics from the Choices for Youth Outreach and Youth Engagement Program show that 66% of the youth accessing the program have difficulty maintaining housing. The need for supportive housing options is further evidenced by the fact that over half of the youth staying in our youth shelters have stayed there before.

Choices for Youth Supportive Housing Program (2007-08)

Total Youth 55*

Main Issues:

Youth expecting or with children	14 (25%)
Current referrals/waiting list	17
Identified with complex issues	21 (38%)
Difficulty maintaining housing	22 (40%)
Identified with addictions issues	23 (42%)
Requests for individual supports	5 (9%)

* Represents 17% of the 325 youth under Youth Care Agreements (Eastern Health) in 2007-08.



In addition, Choices for Youth, the Tommy Sexton Centre and Naomi Centre report a high volume of turn-aways. Clearly, if the housing options for youth continue to break down there is a need for integrated approaches to providing both affordable and supportive housing options.

Many of these youth face an uncertain future where, even when they are able to find housing, they are stuck in spiraling cycles of housing breakdown as the supports required are not available.

Further evidence of youth housing issues has been provided through information pertaining to the needs of youth with complex needs. For this population, housing instability means an average of 5.3 housing moves over a three year period. This is accentuated by repeated hospitalizations and/or incarcerations.

The Choices for Youth Supportive Housing Program has provided support to 55 youth in 2007-08. These youth form a part of the 325 youth eligible for Youth Services Agreements through Youth and Family Services (Eastern Health). These youth are broadly defined as those for whom living at home is not an option and require support as they live in the community. Although these numbers do include many youth who are able to manage living independently, they also include youth who face the broad range of issues as found in information provided through shelter and outreach programs. Once again, statistics show a significant population of youth who struggle with housing stability (40%).

BRIDGING THE GAP – The Lilly Building Project

Choices for Youth (CFY) is undertaking an innovative new housing model that will provide longer-term housing and skills development to marginalized youth in the St. John's Metro area. The model (based on the Eva's Phoenix model in Toronto) focuses on the critical link between skills development, employment opportunities and safe housing as key elements involved in reducing cycles of homelessness and housing instability for youth. This project will fill a significant gap in housing for youth in St. John's by combining safe, affordable housing with on-site support and programs.

The facility, once completed, will accommodate 14 youth in one and two-bedroom apartments. The focus on skills development and employment opportunities will begin with the provision of a basic carpentry skills program, leading to the employment of youth as part of the construction team which will renovate the properties located at 52-58 Bond Street. Through this process, youth will learn valuable employment skills in a supportive environment where they are given the necessary balance of flexibility, direction and independence that they need to succeed. The employment skills portion of the project will be non-traditional in its use of an outreach philosophy, where youth are supported 'where and when' they are most at-risk.

Current Lilly Building



Planned Renovations



EDUCATION and EMPLOYMENT

The statistics indicate that youth who have been forced to discontinue their schooling due to personal instability, a tumultuous home life or other limiting factors, experience major barriers in obtaining employment and housing.

As referenced in the information provided under Supportive and Affordable Housing, youth require supports which directly address their needs in ways which reflect their current circumstances. Once again statistics show that among youth who experience significant housing instability, 68% are not in school and 73% are unemployed. Among youth identified as having complex needs, 52% were not in school.



Similarly, programs aimed at addressing the employment needs of youth have to reflect the issues and circumstances youth are living with. In a 2005 evaluation of the Youth at Promise Program, it was identified that 44% of youth referred to Skills Link Programs (employment) were screened out due to personal barriers which were deemed too complex or extreme.

To address this problem, the educational and employment component of working with street involved or homeless youth continues to gain importance in all the work we do. New innovative programs are being created and showing great

results. By designing programs which more appropriately respond to their needs, youth are more likely to engage in activities which can enable them to make positive changes in their lives.

Case Study of an Effective Response - Youth at Promise

The Youth at Promise Program is a basic math and literacy skills program which is operated through a partnership between the Community Youth Network - St. John's and Choices for Youth.

As fragmented educational experiences are often a significant employment and housing barrier for youth, the Youth at Promise Program is integral to the continuum of supports available to youth in the area. The project was launched in response to a growing need for a basic educational option for youth who do not fit traditional programs and services. The primary goal of the program is to assist youth in obtaining the basic skills necessary for successful transition into further educational or employment related programming.

The basic philosophy of the program is to meet young people where they are. Giving them a gradual introduction to the program, some youth opt to work with the Youth at Promise instructor for only one hour per week, then gradually build up to several hours a week. Youth set their own goals and are given the supports to achieve those goals on their own time and at a level they are comfortable with. Along with addressing their educational challenges (specifically in language and math), youth involved in the program experience increased self-confidence, esteem, and pride in their accomplishments.

Education and Employment

- 8% (2477) of all high school kids in Newfoundland and Labrador dropped out of school in 2003-04.¹
- 68% of the street-involved youth interviewed had dropped out of school.²
- 60% of those males interviewed quit school with the remaining 40% being expelled.³
- 100% of females interviewed quit school due to an unstable family life.³
- The average grade completed was 9.7 for males and 10 for females.³
- 94% of females and 100% of males reported wanting to go back and complete their high school education.³
- In 2005, 160 local youth were assessed by the Murphy Centre in order to qualify for Skills Link Programs (federal programs focusing on the employment needs of at-risk youth). Of the 160 assessed, 70 (44%) did not qualify due to low literacy in combination with other barriers such as learning disabilities, substance abuse or mental health concerns.⁴

Youth at Promise - CYN 2007-08⁵

Participants	72
Male	34
Female	38

Prior or current involvement with:

Youth & Family Services	44%
HRLE	43%
Families of Origin with HRLE	74%

Barriers and issues:

Addictions	78%
Justice System	74%
Mental Health	74%
Housing	76%
Unemployed	97%
Pregnancy	48% of 38 females

¹ Source: Department of Education statistics 2003-04

² Source: Choices for Youth – Outreach & Youth Engagement Program 2006-08; Contact: Kerri Collins, Choices for Youth, Ph: 754-3047

³ Source: CASEY Survey: "Take a Picture", Summer 2006; Contact: Kerri Collins, Choices for Youth, Ph: 754-3047

⁴ Source: "Changing Courses", Youth at Promise Challenge Program May 2005, Community Youth Network; Contact: Paul Donovan, Ph: 757-0843

⁵ Source: Youth at Promise Challenge 2007-08 Final Report; Community Youth Network; Contact: Paul Donovan, Ph: 757-0843

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The third priority of the 2007-08 St. John's Community Plan on Homelessness is the creation of "Innovative, community-based outreach services that link homeless persons to housing and individualized supports"

Outreach programs provide a key access point in reaching some of the most at-risk youth in our community. For many, outreach programs are the only places designed to respond to their most basic needs in a way which can accommodate their often complex lifestyles. An integral component of this work is in providing a place for youth to form relationships and trust as a first step in the process.

Community organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have developed a wide variety of outreach programs that are making a real difference in the lives of our youth. Again, the capacity to deliver these programs is stretched due to a lack of resources and staff. Finding the capacity for further creation and expansion of outreach programming continues to be a priority for the Network.

As evidenced by the statistics provided in this report, these programs provide a tremendous opportunity to understand the full range of issues affecting youth. The information collected is vital to designing long-term strategies which have a sustainable impact on youth.

A final note regarding outreach services involves the role of youth shelters in responding during times when outreach programs are not operating. Both youth specific shelters in the city report significant activity in responding during these periods.

Case Study of an Effective Response - Choices for Youth: Outreach and Youth Engagement Program

Through the Youth Outreach and Engagement Program, young people are met "where they are" in a relaxed, welcoming environment. The program offers guidance and support in achieving goals that youth identify for themselves. Projects and activities are created to provide a variety of ways to engage young people. The Youth Outreach and Engagement Program is flexible in its efforts to find supportive options that are innovative and address the varying complexities of the issues faced by youth.

Through the drop-in service provided at the Youth Services Centre (five days per week), youth can access something as simple as a decent meal, personal care items, use of a phone, or access to shower facilities. From there, youth may seek support addressing a financial issue, help with a resume or assistance in finding a place to live. As a young person chooses to engage with outreach staff, options are provided regarding referrals for a wide variety of programs and opportunities to further address their needs.

Case Study of an Effective Response - Community Youth Network: Street Reach Program

Street life is a harsh reality for a growing number of youth in this province and the Street Reach program is devoted to assisting these at-risk youth. The program enlists the support of community volunteers in providing street outreach services two evening per week.

Formed in 2004 and operating in the downtown core of St. John's, Street Reach targets youth with multiple issues. These issues include addictions, housing, prostitution, poverty, justice, and health. The individuals which this program supports reflect a population that is least likely to access services due to multiple barriers. This service provides a mechanism to connect our most vulnerable youth to programs that can help them.

The goals of Street Reach include:

- Providing youth with information and referrals to appropriate services
- Act as a link between youth on the streets and community resources
- Provide food, resources, information and support to youth and anyone in need of our service
- Document issues, needs and gaps in services and then share this information with the broader community

Drug Use/Addictions

Throughout all programming reported on by the Housing and Homelessness Network, substance use and addictions plays a significant harmful role in the lives of youth.

Information provided by the Choices for Youth Outreach and Youth Engagement Program indicates that 59% of the youth involved, self-disclosed issues with drugs and alcohol. In a targeted survey of 44 street involved youth, 79% had a drug dependency or problem that had affected their personal housing situation.

Among participants in the Youth at Promise Program in 2007-08, 78% of youth had issues with drugs and alcohol which impacted on many aspects of their lives, while 77% of youth with complex needs were identified as using drugs and alcohol.

Although the information is anecdotal at this time, youth serving shelters also report high rates (estimated at 80% in the case of the Young Men's Shelter) of substance abuse as contributing to cycles of homelessness.

Based on the information provided, it is apparent that the inclusion of harm reduction and lifestyle stabilization approaches must be incorporated into all programs targeting youth. In doing so, these programs can effectively address what is a significant issue which cuts across all program areas.

Health and Well Being

Within our community, youth at risk for homelessness are faced with an increased risk to their health and well being. They are prone to higher rates of injury and violence and endure a higher risk of suicide, mental health problems, alcohol and substance abuse.

In recognition of this reality, a number of supports need to be in place as a part of an overall prevention strategy. They include:

- Transitional housing
- Transitional supports: relieving symptoms/reduce suffering/restoring some measure of stability
- Emotional and social support
- Financial support
- Education/tuition coverage
- Access to medical/dental services
- Access to mental health/addiction services
- Transition from Child welfare to adulthood (education/skills)
- Familiar and friendly staff/supports
- Prevention strategies
- Health recovery (nutrition, rest, good hygiene)

Drug Use/Addictions

Drug Usage in Youth:

In the summer of 2006, 44 street entrenched youth (22 males and 22 females) were interviewed and asked about their drug usage. Of the 44 individuals interviewed, 86% of males and 71% of females admitted to being users.

TOPIC	MALE	FEMALE
Use drugs	86%	71%
Use needles and/or pipes	31%	65%
Use harm reduction services	30%	19%
Share drug equipment	20%	20%

Drug	Male	Female
Marijuana	100%	93%
Ecstasy	55%	36%
Cocaine	40%	20%
Crack	20%	20%
Morphine	5%	--
Meth	10%	--
Heroin	5%	--
Alcohol	70%	36%
Other	25%	11%

HOW YOUTH OBTAIN MONEY FOR DRUGS

* Percentages reflect multiple responses

Method	Male	Female
Pan	25%	7%
Steal	25%	21%
Sex trade	5%	10%
Deal	30%	7%
Other	60%	93%

¹ Source: CASEY Survey: "Take a Picture," Summer 2006 Contact: Kerri Collins, Choices for Youth, Ph: 754-3047



Sexual Exploitation

Those who fall victim to sexual exploitation do so out of a sense of survival and the result is both emotionally and physically devastating.

Sexual exploitation can be defined as an older youth or adult taking advantage of a younger child or youth for sexual purposes, including for participation in prostitution, pornographic performances, and in the production of pornography.

Youth who are involved in the sex trade (prostitution, phone sex, stripping, pornography) are sexually exploited. They are being victimized and abused by those who either buy sex from them or profit from their sex trade activities.

As a result of information collected from Street Reach contacts, 12.9% reported involvement in sex trade activities (24% for young women), while Outreach and Youth Engagement Program statistics show 18% of youth reported involvement.

It is important to note that when youth were also asked if they have ever had sex in exchange for food, drugs or a place to stay, this number grew to 32%.

When compared to information provided by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, that there were only 6 youth related sex crimes reported in 2007, the issue clearly becomes one of under reporting. This fact is also evidenced by statistics compiled through the Sexual Assault Nurses Examiner Program, where there were a total of 66 reported cases in the same time period.

The Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CASEY, a coalition of community and government services that work with vulnerable youth) are working together to address this growing issue within the community. There is a wide spectrum of members that understand the issue, are concerned and want to take action. CASEY was re-formed in 2007 with a mission to address issues relating to the sexual exploitation of youth.

The Coalition aims to increase awareness of youth sexual exploitation, increase adult involvement in working with youth to prevent sexual exploitation, and ultimately reduce youth sexual exploitation.

Below are statistics aimed at highlighting the prevalence of the sex trade among youth in our community. ¹

Topic	Male	Female
Number of participants interviewed	22	22
Involved in sex trade	17%	15%
Includes youth who have exchanged sex for money, food, shelter, drugs and clothing/personal items. ¹		
Have been tested for STI/STD	61%	72%
Length of street involvement	5.4 years	2.4 years
Number of moves in the last year	7	3.4
Highest grade completed	9.7	10
Ran away	9%	10%
Kicked out	35%	38%
Experienced abuse	73%	90%
Abused before streets	50%	77%
Abused after streets	11%	44%
Abused both	39%	33%
Have a criminal record	68%	50%

² There were 6 youth-related sex crimes reported to the RNC in 2007. ²

¹ Source: CASEY Survey: "Take a Picture", Summer 2006; Contact: Kerri Collins, Choices for Youth, Ph: 754-3047

² Source: RNC Information Management Division: Contact: Cost. Steve Knight 729-8852

PROPOSED STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

When identifying solutions to youth homelessness it is important to realize the complexity of the issues. Many youth are struggling with employment issues while tackling a drug dependency. Others are facing family turmoil with nowhere to turn. Many times, the issues are interwoven and solutions can only come from the realization that youth require a variety of programs and supports to meet the complexity of their needs. Having the supports in place will allow them to start down the road to independent living, complete with education, employment and secure and safe housing.

The following proposed strategic directions were drafted from the analysis of current data and through ongoing community research. It is our goal to collectively review and fine tune the message and prepare a subsequent document which will include policy recommendations for government. Your feedback is vital in this exercise.

To be considered:

- Work towards a Provincial Housing Strategy that provides youth with specialized age-appropriate programs, housing and employment options that address their unique and specific needs and to involve them in the decision making process.
- Renew and expand the Federal-Provincial Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and the Canada-Newfoundland Affordable Housing Program (AHF) in 2009 to include youth as a priority.
- Provide more responsive programs and financial supports to individuals who are transitioning from youth to adult systems.
- Provide specific program options for those youth with complex needs.
- Continue to work towards a more complete and accurate collection of statistics from all partnering organizations on a go-forward basis.
- Increase resources and staffing for programming that encompasses a Provincial Youth Outreach Strategy aimed at poverty reduction.
- Implement a multi-sector approach to assessing the needs of youth with regard to drugs and drug-usage with the ultimate goal of creating a provincial drug strategy complete with programs that focus on harm reduction, lifestyle stabilization and inclusion.
- Create local opportunities for training and professional development in the area of youth sexual exploitation for professionals working in the youth sector (including training for social workers and law enforcement agencies).



Glossary of Terms

At Risk of Homelessness:

The term refers to individuals or families who are at imminent risk of eviction from their current housing, who pay too high a proportion of their income for housing or who live in unacceptable housing or housing circumstances. At risk of homelessness also includes those who will be discharged from the criminal justice system, those who are leaving a health facility after an extended stay, as well as youth exiting the child welfare system, and who do not have suitable housing in place prior to their discharge.

Hidden Homeless:

The term refers to individuals or families living in locations not intended for human habitation (e.g. abandoned buildings) and/or continuously moving among temporary housing arrangements provided by strangers, friends or family.

Short-Term or Crisis Sheltered:

The term refers to individuals or families who stay temporarily in emergency and/or transitional housing and do not return once they secure stable housing (one- or two-time users).

Affordable Housing:

Social housing or other housing which has been built under a government affordable housing program. Social housing includes public housing, non-profit housing, co-op housing and rent supplement units in the private rental sector. Housing is affordable if it costs less than 30% of before-tax household income. Costs for renters include: rent and any payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services. Costs for owners include: mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, and any condominium fees, along with payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.

Supportive Housing:

Housing for individuals and families that include supports and services integrated into the housing. Services depend on clients' needs and are provided to help residents maintain independence and stability to promote social inclusion.

Transitional Housing:

Housing facilities that provide services beyond basic needs and that, while not permanent, generally allow for a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities (up to three years). These facilities offer more privacy to residents than emergency housing, and place greater emphasis on participation. They are targeted to those in need of structure, support, and/or skill-building to move from homelessness to housing stability, and ultimately to prevent a return to homelessness.

Emergency Shelter:

Facilities providing temporary and short-term accommodation (from a few days up to six months) to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness; it may include supports such as food, clothing and counseling. Typically these facilities provide single or shared bedrooms or dorm-type sleeping arrangements that can include seasonal beds/mats. It may also include motels and other types of temporary sheltering facilities.

Rent Supplement:

Subsidy that enables a low income renter to live in acceptable housing owned by private landlords, non-profit or co-operative housing groups.

Appendix B

Sources

- Youth at Promise Challenge 2005 & 2007-08
- CASEY Survey: "Take a Picture" 2006
- Choices for Youth - Young Men's Shelter Statistics 2007-08
- Youth and Family Services
- AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Stella Burry Community Services - Naomi Centre 2007-08
- Choices for Youth - Supportive Housing Program 2007-08
- www.coalitionagainstviolence.ca
- Choices for Youth - Outreach & Youth Engagement Program 2006-08
- Department of Education Statistics 2003-04
- Community Plan on Homelessness 2007-08
- RNC Information Management Division
- Community Youth Network - Street Reach Program 2006-08
- SJHHN Community Meeting - Drug Strategy, 2007
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Note: Statistics in this document are a snapshot of today's homelessness environment for youth and we continue to implement new measures for more complete and accurate statistical collection.

Appendix C

List of Agencies/Support Groups

The St. John's Housing and Homelessness Network would like to thank all our members for their continued commitment and support.

- Service Canada
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL (COD-NL)
- Eastern Health
- Recovering Addicts Fellowship Team
- Jan Peters Foundation
- AIDS Committee of NL
- National Anti Poverty Organization
- Stella Burry Community Services
- Wiseman Centre - Salvation Army
- Canadian Mental Health Association – NL
- Choices For Youth
- NL Seniors Resource Centre
- Community Youth Network - St John's
- Transition House Association of NL
- Crisis Counseling Centre
- Independent Living Resource Centre
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- City of St John's
- Correctional Services Canada
- Recovering Addicts Fellowship Team
- Newfoundland & Labrador Housing Corporation
- Housing Development Facilitator - Outreach Communities
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Department of Health & Community Services
- St. Francis Foundation
- St John's Native Friendship Centre Association
- Community Care & Family Care
- Department of Human Resources Labour & Employment
- Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness
- Naomi Centre for Women
- Emmanuel House
- NL Aging Issues Network
- Iris Kirby House
- St John's Status of Women Council



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Service
Canada



Human Resources
Labour & Employment