



4<sup>th</sup>  
Annual

# Report Card on Homelessness for Nelson BC

2012 Edition | Using Jan-Dec 2011 Data | Researched & Produced by the Nelson Committee on Homelessness



The ANKORS Housing Initiative event made a strong statement in October 2011, drawing attention to the need for more affordable and supportive housing in Nelson. Photo Courtesy of the Nelson Star.

This year's report documents the state of poverty and homelessness in Nelson, using indicators that will be monitored over time.

Profiled are some of the issues we face as a community, along with successes we have demonstrated on a local level.

**Nelson BC: Our Community.** With beautiful scenery, heritage buildings, and a vibrant culture, Nelson is truly an amazing place; a picturesque mountain town of 10,230.

Less visible are the realities of poverty and homelessness. Here, homelessness is real, yet often goes unseen. The truth is, most local residents facing poverty, housing insecurity issues and homelessness are invisible or have a very low profile.

Our community isn't alone. The UN states that homelessness and housing in Canada is a national emergency.

Here, as anywhere else across the country, homelessness is inextricably linked to three factors: lack of affordable housing, inadequate access to support services and not enough income for those working and receiving assistance.

Local indicators, including statistics on emergency food and shelter use, demonstrate that community members are impacted. Research also speaks to a diverse mix of residents affected, including working people, families, seniors and youth. {Find out more in this year's report...}

## Inside This Year's Report...

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# Beyond every local statistic there is a voice and a story that belongs to one of us, to one of our neighbours...

## Indicators - 2011

### Homelessness & Poverty

# Of Emergency Shelter Stays	414
# Of Individuals Who Stayed At The Shelter	207
Average Length Of Stay At The Shelter	9.5 Days
# Of Food Bank Visits	18, 306
Meals Served At Our Daily Bread	11, 700

### Housing

# Of Affordable Housing Units*	488
Average Advertised Rate For A Bachelor Rental	\$600
Average Advertised Rate For A 1 Bedroom Rental	\$776
Average Advertised Rate For A 2 Bedroom Rental	\$1038
Average Advertised Rate For A 3 Bedroom Rental	\$1320
Shelter Allowance For A Single Person Receiving BC Income Assistance Or Disability Benefits	\$375
Rental Vacancy Rate	1.9%

### Income

BC Income Assistance Monthly Rate For A Single Person	\$610
# Of Individuals Receiving Income Assistance In Nelson (Does Not Include Those In Receipt Of PWD Or PPMB)	440
Disability Assistance Monthly Rate For A Single Person (PWD)	\$906.42
Minimum Wage	\$9.50
Increase In The Consumer Price Index	2.4%

#### About These Indicators

This report card marks the first to specifically include indicators. These indicators will be revisited in each upcoming year, to monitor progress or lack of progress in homelessness, housing and income over time.

#### Indicator Sources:

Nelson Committee on Homelessness Affordable Housing Inventory 2011, Stepping Stones For Success 2011 Annual Statistics Report, Nelson Committee on Homelessness Rental Market Snapshot 2011, Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC), Statistics Canada, Food Cupboard, Salvation Army and Anglican Food Cupboard 2011 Annual Statistics, Our Daily Bread 2011 Annual Statistics

\* Affordable Housing units : geared-to-income rental units that are government or non-profit supported to ensure adequate living standards and rates that allow low income households to sustainably meet their basic needs.



# H

## omelessness: What Does it Really Mean?

The definition of homelessness is broader than we might think...

### Homelessness Defined:

To be homeless is to be without safe and affordable housing. It's common to think of homelessness in terms of those staying at the shelter, or those who are visible on the street, but it actually includes a diverse spectrum of situations.

**Absolute homelessness** = an individual or family has no housing at all, or is staying in a temporary form of shelter.

This can include:

- Living outdoors or on the street
- Moving continuously among temporary accommodation, such as that provided by friends, family or strangers
- Staying overnight in an emergency shelter
- Living in places not meant for human habitation

(continued)

**Relative homelessness** = an individual or family has a home but it does not meet basic standards because it is unsafe, unaffordable or unsustainable for any other reason.

This includes a range of situations, such as:

- Households spending over 50% of total income on rent
- Housing without essential services like heat or running water

### Who is at risk?

Almost anyone can face a risk of becoming homeless; for example a child whose parent becomes unemployed, a senior facing a rent increase, a woman leaving an abusive relationship. Many households are one illness, one paycheque, one crisis away from homelessness.



### Why are people homeless here?

Each person experiencing homelessness, or living at risk of homelessness, has a story. Each story typically links to one or more of the following factors:

- **Lack of affordable housing.** A person cannot find housing that costs a reasonable amount compared to his or her income.
- **Not enough income.** A person does not have enough money to pay for the basic necessities of life.
- **No access to health care or social support services.** A person cannot find, or is not receiving, the services she or he needs in order to find and keep housing. Support services can include drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services, victim's services, counseling and assistance with daily living.

### Hidden Homelessness

#### Lisa's Story

***Lisa is 26 years old. She is a single parent and works two part time jobs to make ends meet. When Lisa's son gets sick she has to take time off work.***

***When she gets behind on the rent she is evicted.***

***For the past month, Lisa and her son have been staying with a friend. Lisa is looking hard for housing but she can't find anything she can afford.***

***She isn't sure what will happen next.***

**Solutions Are Possible.  
& You Can Get Involved,  
turn to page 15 to find out more.**

**Did You Know?** *Poverty & Lack Of Affordable Housing Are The Leading Causes Of Homelessness*



## **“Homelessness in Nelson has many faces, many stories...**

**This is a situation that any one of us might be effected by, given circumstances. No one willingly chooses this lifestyle.”**

- Bev Derby, Since 2008 Bev has worked as the Residential Transition Worker at Stepping Stones, assisting people to transition from homelessness to secure housing and greater quality of life.



### ***Snapshot: 2011 Emergency Shelter Use***

207: the number of people who stayed at the shelter in 2011

11 months old: the youngest child who stayed at the shelter

75 %: female emergency shelter users with a diagnosed mental health condition

53 %: male emergency shelter users with a diagnosed mental health condition

68 %: emergency shelter users living on provincial disability or social assistance benefits

15 %: people employed and living at the shelter

36 %: people that found housing during their stay at Stepping Stones

69 years old: most senior client supported by Stepping Stones

Source: 2011 Stepping Stones for Success Annual Statistics

## No Place Like Home: Housing Affordability in Nelson

A safe, secure, suitable home: a place to rest your head, raise your children, keep warm, and find some solitude. Yet for many in Nelson, affordable housing remains out of reach...



## High Housing Costs, Low Vacancies And A Tough Job Market Continue To Impact Residents

CMHC Statistics indicate that Nelson continues to have the highest rent rates in the West Kootenay. As well Nelson has one of the lowest vacancy rates in the province at 1.9%; compare this to Nelson's vacancy rate in 2003 of 5.3%.

Additionally, the lack of long-term living wage employment in the area compounds the issues for residents. Those with low incomes are most challenged to find suitable housing.

In 2011, the average advertised rent for a one bedroom apartment was \$776 per month. To pay this, someone working 35 hours a week at \$10/hr would need to spend over half of what they earn on rent before paying taxes or other deductions.

When it comes to housing affordability the generally accepted measure is that which costs no more than 30% of a household's before tax income. When households are forced to pay a disproportionate amount of income on rent, they have less money available for all other necessities of life including nutritious food, transportation and quality child care.

Those eligible for affordable housing units are faced with long waits. "In the past 3 years we have had one vacancy", reports Links Co-op Housing Executive Director Vanessa Shields. The Nelson Committee on Homelessness 2011 Affordable Housing Inventory reveals 488 affordable units in the community. However demand for these units exceeds supply and waitlists continue to climb.

(continued)

## Affordable Housing Waitlists Climb:

### A Closer Look...

- **Cicada Place Youth Transitional Housing: Waitlist Up 121% since 2007.** 2011 marked an all time high for this waitlist with 42 youth and 5 dependent children waiting for support and housing.
- **Nelson & District Housing Society Units: Waitlist Up 59% since 2007.**
- **Kiwanis Society Units: Waitlist Up 150% since 2009**
- **Links Housing Coop – Waitlisted Closed.** Since 2008 this waitlist has been closed at 42 families, due to low turnover and unlikelihood of any further people on the list being offered a vacant unit



## \$375 Shelter Allowance Leaves Locals Out In The Cold

BC provincial social assistance and disability rates provide a \$375 shelter allowance for rent. This is inadequate to ensure a safe, healthy home in our city, where the average advertised rate for a one bedroom is \$776. Consider, at this rate, an individual with a life-long disability receiving provincial PWD benefits will be required to spend 85% of their income on rent. This leaves just \$130.42 left over for everything else, including food and all other costs of living.

“Increased affordable housing is essential to the sustainability of our community; Families need a roof over their heads and children need the security of knowing that a home is safe and stable. It is difficult to make positive community contributions if you are struggling to find adequate shelter.”

– Jennifer Sebastian, Kootenay Kid’s Society, Family Place Program Manager – on the need for more affordable housing for families.



### Did You Know?

Nelson is the smallest community across Canada to receive funding under the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

In 2004, the city of Nelson was deemed a designated community to receive federal homelessness funding because Nelson has one of the highest proportions in the province of households paying over 50% of their income on rent.

# Food Bank Use:

## Record High Remains for 2011

Food Bank use, on a steady incline in Nelson for many years, reached record high in 2010, and 2011 statistics reveal no decrease in use.

Most disheartening, 1 in every 4 individuals helped by local food banks are children.

More working people are also turning to food banks. Data collected by the Nelson Food Cupboard indicated that 1 in 4 adults relying on their food bank were employed at some level.

Our most vulnerable, including those with lifelong disabilities, are most at risk. 60% of respondents in the Food Cupboard's spring survey were receiving either provincial disability or social assistance. Provincial benefit levels do not allow people to meet their most basic needs for food and housing.

Despite the tremendous dedication of local food programs and the incredible support of local businesses and community, food insecurity deeply impacts many residents.

# 18,306

### Visits To Nelson Food Banks In 2011

How is this number counted? The total reflects combined data from all three Nelson food banks. Salvation Army and The Nelson Food Cupboard count every food bank visit throughout the year, tallying the food bank in-person visitor, plus their family members at home helped by the food. St. Savior's Food Pantry counts their visits a different way, tallying only the person who comes through the door.

# \$868.43

### This Is The Monthly Cost Of Nutritious Food For A Family Of Four

"In 2011, the BC provincial average cost of a nutritious food basket for a family of four is \$868.43 per month. Those earning minimum wage, receiving income assistance, or facing other challenges (high rents, child care, or transportation costs for example) struggle to find ways to purchase food as well as meet other basic needs". – Dieticians of Canada. The Cost of Eating in BC, 2011.

**"Hunger is real in our community; lack of affordable housing, lack of adequate, sustainable income and employment and lack of childcare all contribute to the problem of food insecurity.**

**There is no typical Food Cupboard customer. We serve a very diverse population including seniors, families with young children, students, working people and people receiving disability assistance.**

**There are myths about food bank customers. For instance, there is a common belief that our local food banks serve a mostly transient population. Our recent customer survey reveals that 99% of our customers reside in and around Nelson. Close to half of our customers have lived in this area for more than a decade". – Anna Kirkpatrick, Nelson Food Cupboard Coordinator.**

**The Nelson Food Cupboard is a barrier-free food bank that provides emergency food relief while working to address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity.**



# Voices from Our Streets:

## Local Youth Shed Light on Homelessness

*Undeniably, youth are the future. Every youth has potential; and the right to a safe, stable home. And yet, across Canada, it is estimated that 65,000 youth are without a roof over their head on any given night.*

*This spring, local youth under the age of 24 with experiences of homelessness and housing issues, participated in a survey and focus group to shed light on the issues right here at home.*

*With courage and openness, youth shared their struggles, experiences and perspectives on solutions. This is what they had to say....*

**“Youth are at risk –  
when you don’t have a  
place to sleep – people  
will take you in but will  
also exploit you.**

**Youth need safe places  
to sleep”.**

*– female youth focus group  
member speaking on  
exploitation and the need  
for emergency youth shelter  
options in Nelson*



### Youth Survey Results:

Age of youngest respondent experiencing homelessness in Nelson BC: 13 years old

Homelessness: 67% of respondents reported being currently homeless. Responses to where do you sleep included: “wherever I can, outside, in a tent, on the streets”.

Home Community: Most respondents reported Nelson as their home community. While 16% of respondents reported living in Nelson for less than a year, the majority reported living here for more than 5 years with others reporting growing up here in the community.

Stable Housing: 33% reported being currently housed. Of significance, these youth were more likely to report being involved in school or employment and more likely to demonstrate positive responses in regard to their current outlook.

Mental health and substance use challenges as well as abuse factored significantly. 78% reported being impacted by emotional or mental health issues. 55% reported experiencing negative health effects due to drug and alcohol use. 78% reported being impacted by experiences of physical abuse, sexual abuse or violence.

Making ends meet: 55% received income through social assistance or disability, 22% through employment and 22% indicated that they had no income and made ends meet through other means, noted means included “panhandling”.

Family connections and support: 33% reported being connected to their family, with 66% reporting no or minimal connection.

**“A lot of people look at the youth here with discrimination, instead taking the time to hear our stories. It would make a big difference if we were met with support, not judgment”. – 20 year old youth survey respondent, speaking on a message for the community about the youth homelessness experience**

**“Being outside all year round leaves a lot of people vulnerable to disease and can also take its toll mentally & emotionally”. – 24 year old youth survey respondent, homeless since the age of 15, on the health impacts of homelessness**

**“It’s hard to get information on where to go for help. Outreach works because it helps us where we are at in the community. We need more resources - the outreach workers we do have are so busy and there is no outreach worker for youth under 19” – youth focus group member speaking on what is needed in the community to better support vulnerable youth. Overwhelmingly, other focus group members echoed the message that “outreach works”.**



**National Findings On Youth Homelessness:**

Abuse and neglect are two of the major reasons why young people leave home. Several studies show that nearly 70% of homeless youth have experienced some form of sexual, physical or emotional abuse.

Mental health issues figure prominently; and addiction is a major factor in coping with homelessness as well as triggering relapses into street life.

Early intervention is critical to solving the problem - youth who stay on the street for two years are less likely to leave.

Street involved youth often require diverse, multi faceted, intensive models of support to address complex needs.

**Best Practice Solutions Are Tied To:**

**Prevention:** includes family supports and systems reform which address the triggers of youth homelessness

**Emergency response:** includes outreach and emergency shelters which address the immediate needs of street involved youth to stabilize their situation.

**Transitions out of homelessness:** affordable supported accommodation and an array of supports to help youth fulfill their potential and reintegrate into society.

Sources: Youth Homelessness In Canada: The Road To Solutions, Raising The Roof, 2009. [raisingtheroof.org](http://raisingtheroof.org)

**Taking Stock...Designated Local Resources For Homeless Youth:**

- **Transitional Housing with Supports For Youth: 10 units**
- **Homelessness Outreach Workers for Youth under 19: none**
- **Emergency Shelter Beds For Youth Under 19: none**

# Housing as Health

**“We rarely talk about housing as a health care strategy. Yet it is perhaps the single-most effective determinant in improving a person’s health and well-being. Housing our most vulnerable, marginalized citizens is both effective in improving health outcomes and an economically sound investment”. –Karen Leman, Outreach Social Worker with ANKORS**

**An Interview with Karen Leman, Outreach Social Worker. Karen provides a lens on the challenges of homelessness and the positive health effects of housing from her experience as a front line social worker.**



## **Q. What is your role in the community?**

A. To provide support, counseling, advocacy and referrals to individuals living with or at risk of contracting HIV and/or Hep-C. Support is focused on income security, housing, food security, health promotion and accessing and coordinating services such as specialized health-care and other supports such as mental health and substance use.

## **Q. What Do You See From Your Experience? In what specific ways do you see community members you support being affected by issues of poverty and homelessness?**

A. What is often seen can be termed as “structured homelessness”; this is where people cycle through a variety of temporary arrangements, for example staying with a relative, going to detox, staying at a friend’s, going to jail, staying with a friend in another community, the shelter etc. When people are homeless they can never rest. You are constantly living with uncertainty and anxiety, struggling to survive. Conversely when people are housed their emotional and physical health improves which is evident in a decrease in acute care needs, increased adherence in taking medications and attending appointments. Stability and visible and positive health effects are evident. If we gave everyone a home – a meaningful home, specific to the individual’s needs– we would see increased stability in our communities and neighborhoods, less crisis and chaos, fewer hospitalizations, decreased emergency room visits, time in custody and so on.



## **Q. What Isn’t Working? What issues or barriers are contributing to the problems?**

A. The \$610 / month social assistance rates and the portion allowed for shelter (\$375) is never enough, in any community in BC.

Barriers include the lack of safe, affordable, accessible housing in our community and the absence of a continuum of housing options, including more supportive housing. Some people need more than just a safe, affordable rental. More options are needed for our chronically ‘hard to house’ – people who facing chronic challenges with mental health, substance use, chaotic and unstable relationships.

Additional barriers include the general stigmatization of people without a home. As well, the perception that homelessness is a choice – it isn’t. Also, transportation; better bus service to outlying areas would enable people to access less expensive housing outside of city limits.

## **Q. What Is Working? What factors and/or supports do you see as effective in helping vulnerable people?**

A. Housing Outreach is effective. Also, Ward Street Place provides low barrier housing as well as supportive housing - we need more units and options like this. Personal factors like resilience and social connections can make a difference. When people are fortunate to have these factors they can fare better when faced with challenges.

**Q. Any other thoughts?** A. Poverty and homelessness are fixable “problems” – marginalized people and people who have no home are not the problem. A willingness to accept the status quo of poverty and the economic marginalization of our citizens will only ensure that homelessness remains as part of our society.



## Social Determinants of Health

Public Health Agency of Canada

What is the impact of poverty on health? What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy?

These key determinants are shown to have deep influence on the health of citizens.

### Key Determinants

1. Income and Social Status
2. Social Support Networks
3. Education and Literacy
4. Employment/Working Conditions
5. Social Environments
6. Physical Environments
7. Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills
8. Healthy Child Development
9. Biology and Genetic Endowment
10. Health Services
11. Gender



**“A Stay At The Daly (Psychiatric Unit): Estimated **\$3000 Per Day****

**Supported Housing: **\$85 Per Day**”**

-Randy Theissen, MSW, Team Leader, Mental Health And Substance Use Services, Interior Health – on the effectiveness and economic advantages of affordable supported housing for those with chronic mental health conditions

*There are very few supportive housing units for those with mental health, substance use challenges and other disabilities in Nelson. Increased supportive housing is a crucial piece of long-term solutions for our community.*



## A LENS INTO THE CHALLENGES OF POVERTY FOR WOMEN

Contributed By: Hannah Hadikin

Adequate shelter is a basic human right for all.

Yet women, who comprise more than half of humanity, suffer in terms of inadequate housing conditions. Women and children are highly affected by poor living conditions, as more time is spent at home due to the greater unpaid domestic responsibilities which fall to mothers. Poverty is the single greatest obstacle to long-term, safe, stable housing. Other factors such as the lack of affordable housing play a significant role, but poverty entraps individuals in a cycle with little opportunity for escape.

Although poverty affects both women and men, most low income people are women according to Stats Canada. Corresponding with this, are the children. As of 2011, BC holds the record for the highest child poverty rate in Canada, eight years running.

Women's lives are characterized by multiple roles of community involvement, reproductive and economic engagement and a variety of social and cultural activities. Women and their families deserve shelter and living surroundings that offer reasonably-priced housing, infrastructure that offers supports to women. These may include women's health care centers with affordable alternative health options, leisure facilities with adjoining child care, sustainable means of transport and sufficient land allowances for lively social spaces. These features are not utopian images. These constitute realistic community responses and initiatives that can safeguard and foster quality of life and the overall health of the women and their families. Housing projects are more likely to fail, when they ignore the social, economic and cultural roles assigned to women.

A gender-sensitive approach to settlement and housing, would take into account the root causes of women's poverty, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making and policy implementation, the inequality that still permeates much of society.

The alternative of keeping poverty in place comes at a huge cost to community in human life and potential with untold lost opportunity. So long as the needs of women for security, affordability, hospitable and ecological living environments and quality of life, are kept out of the equation, neglected or ignored, women will be left out in the cold.

If "community" is to have meaning, we must surely embrace our collective responsibility for those who subsist below the *de facto* poverty line and who stand an excellent chance of remaining in this web of poverty, unless we truly are prepared to do better.

*Hannah is a representative of The Nelson Women's Centre and advocate for women's rights in Nelson.*

**“Most low income people are women according to Stats Canada. Corresponding with this, are the children. As of 2011, BC holds the record for the highest child poverty rate in Canada, eight years running”.**

# MADE IN NELSON SOLUTIONS

## SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE...

There are solutions. It takes three things to end homelessness:

- Affordable housing
- Adequate income for those working and receiving assistance
- Support services for those who need them

**Here's a closer look at some best practice solutions happening right here in our community...**

### Ward Street Place



Klee Hunter, Manager of Affordable Housing, Nelson Cares Society, welcomes visitors to Ward Street Place



Ward Street Place is located at 567 Ward St in Nelson

**Ward Street Place offers a continuum of affordable housing options with supports for Nelson's low income and vulnerable residents.**

In March 2002 Nelson CARES Society purchased Ward Street Place to preserve affordable housing for Nelson residents with low and limited income.

In addition to the 34 Single Residential Occupancy (SRO) units, the 3 one-bedroom apartments on Victoria St., and Stepping Stones emergency shelter, the 500 block of Ward Street is home to five thriving commercial tenants including Vadim Kristopher Hair Salon, Still Eagle, Hairlines, Fisherman's Market and the Dock Restaurant. Building operations are solely funded by rental income. Ward Street Place is a social enterprise and commercial tenants on the ground floor are important partners.

Best practices indicate that affordable housing plus supports works to break the cycle of homelessness. This model is successful in re-integrating long-term homeless individuals into the housing market. This model is also successful in assisting those with chronic challenges to maintain their housing and stability over the long term.

Within its 37 affordable housing units, Ward Street Place houses four Supported Housing Independence Program (SHIP) units. This program, delivered in partnership with Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use, provides supported housing for individuals with diagnosed chronic mental health conditions.

Also housed are four units under the Transitional Support Program. This program works to assist Stepping Stones clients to move forward from homelessness along the housing continuum. While in the program, the Transitional Support Worker assists individuals to secure long term housing and to maintain it. Support is offered to access income and housing, build life skills; access needed health services and other activities that support people to achieve greater housing independence and quality of life. The Transitional Support Worker is funded through the Service Canada Homelessness Partnering Strategy.



Stacey Lock, Homelessness Outreach Worker supports community members to secure and maintain housing

### **Homelessness Outreach: Community members agree that this program is a success.**

The Homeless Outreach Program is delivered through Nelson Community Services Centre with funding through BC Housing. The outreach worker supports people that are homeless and at risk of homelessness to secure and maintain housing. Support is provided to mediate situations, provide rent supplements, host house meetings for shared accommodations and provide referrals to appropriate community resources. The program is available to individuals aged 19 and up.

Stacey Lock explains that, "The outreach worker meets clients where they are at and helps clients by encouraging them, and helping them with practical goals. Assisting clients with finding housing can take time, but as they are looking and connecting with landlords they are learning along the way".

The program has prove successful in preventing homelessness by assisting locals to maintain their housing through difficult periods. Local landlords have offered praise for this program for this reason.

Through this program, in 2011, 44 local households were able to access more secure housing after contact. 118 rent supplements were provided which helped households to maintain housing through difficult periods while working on goals to achieve greater sustainability and housing independence.



Cicada Place photo courtesy of Nelson Community Services website

### **Cicada Place: A first of its kind program that continues to provide much needed housing and supports.**

Cicada Place provides transitional housing with supports for local youth. Nelson Community Services Centre opened Cicada in May of 1999. It is a first of its kind program in BC, providing 10 housing units plus on-site support to youth ages 16-22 years.

This transitional housing supports youth to prepare for full independence. Two years is generally the average stay. Youth participate in a weekly life skills group and staff are available for individual support. In 2011, Cicada housed 17 youth between the ages of 16 and 22 years old.

***Solutions are Possible. To end poverty and homelessness strategic and dedicated action is required at all levels of government.***



# Making a Difference

There are many exceptional people, programs and organizations whose passion, innovation and resourcefulness make a huge difference in our community.

## Community Champions

Community champions are people from all walks of life who use their skills and influence to make a positive impact in the community and in the lives of others. Nelson is extremely lucky to have many dedicated community champions.

This past November local dentist Dr. Osepchook along with local hygienists Shelley and Katie Sapriken volunteered at Community Connect Day. They worked together to provide 40 free dental exams to community members in need.

After seeing that more help was required, Dr. Ospechook and his team donated a full day in clinic for free follow up. Those in need were able to get the additional work they required.

“It is refreshing to see a community come together to support those in need”, said Dr. Osepchook of his experience at Community Connect Day 2011. Dr. Osepchook practices at 300 Baker Street in Nelson.

Community Connect Day is a free annual event that connects those who are struggling to make ends meet with access to a wide range of services and supports all under one roof. For more information or to get involved in this year's event contact Katie at [ncoh@nelsoncares.ca](mailto:ncoh@nelsoncares.ca)



Every day, volunteers and front line staff throughout our community work to reduce the impacts of homelessness and poverty.



*Be Part Of The Solution. Working Together We Can Make A Difference.*

# We can all affect positive change and solutions in our community...

## Here's 8 Great Ways To Get Involved:

1. Learn More About Homelessness. Visit [www.nelsoncares.ca](http://www.nelsoncares.ca) to download copies of this report and fact sheets on homelessness
2. Volunteer. It's a fantastic way to learn and to give back at the same time – contact a local organization that interests you and ask how you can help.
3. Be Compassionate. Truly, everyone has a story. You never know what someone's life circumstances have been. Exercising compassion and respect for people from all walks of life makes a big difference.
4. Share local facts on homelessness with your family, friends co-workers and networks ~ you can help to change the conversation about homelessness.
5. Write a letter to the elected officials that represent your area. (*Personal letters that describe how homelessness affects you and your community are generally more effective than form letters*).
6. Support local projects that provide homes for people who need them.
7. Donate your skills. Volunteer for a Nelson Committee on Homelessness event like Community Connect Day – contact [ncoh@nelsoncares.ca](mailto:ncoh@nelsoncares.ca) to find out more.
8. Share this report with your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and others.



The Annual Report Card on Homelessness is researched produced by the Nelson Committee on Homelessness. The Nelson Committee on Homelessness is a coalition of citizens and stakeholders dedicated to long-term solutions to homelessness and poverty in Nelson BC.

For inquiries on this report or to find out more about the work of the Nelson Committee on Homelessness, contact Katie Tabor, Community Coordinator at [ncoh@nelsoncares.ca](mailto:ncoh@nelsoncares.ca)



## About NCOH...

The [Nelson Committee on Homelessness](#) is a coalition of citizens and stakeholders dedicated to long-term solutions to poverty and homelessness in Nelson BC. We envision a healthy and inclusive community in which each member has access to a safe, suitable home, along with the supports and resources to sustain it.

We Work Together To:

- **Promote collaboration** within the community and amongst service providers to best address the needs of those who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness in Nelson
- **Actively support funding and resource development** to prevent and address homelessness here in our community
- **Lead community research** that enables a better understanding of local homelessness issues and best practice solutions
- **Facilitate information sharing and knowledge building** throughout the community on local poverty and homelessness issues
- **Build partnerships** that give people, businesses and organizations the opportunity to participate in solutions

NCOH has successfully supported resource development and funding for community programs including the Nelson Food Cupboard, Stepping Stones, Ward Street Place, Winter Emergency Bed Programs and the Residential Transitional Support Program.

Each year NCOH researches and produces the Report Card on Homelessness for Nelson BC. In addition, NCOH leads annual community events and initiatives including Homelessness Action Week and Community Connect Day.

NCOH Membership is inclusive and open to any citizens, businesses and organizations and representatives in the community interested in taking part in local homelessness solutions.

*Thank You!*

The Nelson Committee on Homelessness wishes to thank all the people, organizations and volunteers who contributed to this year's report card through sharing their experiences, information and statistical data.

### Nelson Committee on Homelessness

#### Our Members Represent:

Community Volunteers \*  
Local Residents Who Have Experienced Homelessness \*  
ANKORS \* Nelson Cares Society \* Our Daily Bread \*  
Stepping Stones for Success  
Emergency Shelter \* Nelson City Council \* Service Canada Homelessness Partnering Strategy \*  
Salvation Army \* Kootenay Kids Society \* The Nelson & District Women's Centre \*  
Nelson City Police \* Homelessness Outreach \*  
West Kootenay Women's Association \* Nelson & District Youth Centre \* Ward Street Place \* Canadian Mental Health Association \*  
Interior Health - Mental Health & Substance Use \*  
Kootenay Career Development Services \*  
Nelson Community Services Centre \* Nelson Food Cupboard \* Association des francophones des Kootenays Ouest \* Senior's Coordinating Society\* BC Housing

#### 2011 Community Partners & Supporters:

The Hume Hotel \* Global Underground \* Tribute Board Shop\* Thor's Pizza \* Gerrick's Cycle & Sport \* Ourglass \*  
Oso Negro \* Vadim  
Kristopher Hair Salon \* 103.5 The Bridge \* Dr. Osepchook's Dental Office \* Save On Foods \* Stuff Professional Organizing \* RBC Royal Bank Nelson Branch \* Kootenay Bakery \* Kootenay Country Store Cooperative\* Cowan's \* Mountain Water Spa \*  
Waves On The Lake Hair Salon \* Offer Books \* Nelson Soccer Quest \* Nelson Community Acupuncture Clinic \* Kutenai Art Therapy Institute \* Nelson & District Credit Union