



# May 2014 Newsletter

## Peninsula Homeless to Housing Task Force

*Our Mission is to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on the South Surrey White Rock Peninsula to live in safe and appropriate housing*

**NEXT MEETING:** Next scheduled meeting is Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:45am White Rock Baptist Church, 1657-140<sup>th</sup> St. Surrey.

### **Regional Homeless Count Results Released**

The 5<sup>th</sup> regional homeless count was completed on March 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>. There is no systematic information collected at either the federal or provincial level – the best information we have is from these locally organized counts. This enumeration had volunteers across Metro Vancouver interviewing people in shelters and on the street asking 22 questions about their homelessness.

What does the count tell us about homelessness in Surrey? It tells us the minimum number of people who are in shelters or on the street is still over 400. But with Surrey it is particularly important to remember this is the MINIMUM. Outreach workers have said, since the day of the count, they expected that the eventual number would be an undercount – partly because of the huge territory they need to cover in Surrey.

The count also tells us that homelessness remains a regional problem: Burnaby, Ridge Meadows, Northshore Langley and Surrey all have more than 40 people living on the street. The count also tells us that shelter services are still lacking in some municipalities with Burnaby, Richmond, Delta and White Rock having some transition housing available but no homeless shelters.

To read the initial report with details on gender, Aboriginal and youth homeless information please see the following link: <http://stophomelessness.ca/>

### **South Surrey/White Rock Demographic Info: Housing and Income**

In the last few newsletters we've been highlighting some of the unique demographic realities of South Surrey/White Rock compared with the rest of Surrey and BC. While we live in a community that is richer – on average – than either Surrey or BC – it is also *more unequal*.

One measure of inequality is the total income received by the bottom 50% of all income earners. From the 2011 Census in BC the bottom 50% received 20.7% of income, in Surrey the figure was 23.6% and in South Surrey/White Rock it was 19.4%. This income differential is probably a reflection of the large number of seniors on fixed pension incomes in our community. The other forms of fixed income – income assistance and employment insurance – are not nearly as significant in South Surrey/White Rock as in Surrey generally.

At the time of the 2011 Census Surrey had 10,213 people that relied on income assistance – this represents almost 1 out of every 7 recipients in all of BC. South Surrey White Rock had 451 residents that depended on income assistance – about 1 in every 200 B.C. recipients. Most people who rely on income assistance are children and youth.

In Surrey 1 of every 25 children under the age of 14 lives in a household depending on ministry assistance, in B.C. it is 1 of every 35 and in South Surrey/White Rock it is 1 of every 125. For youth 15 – 24 years old the numbers are 1 of every 40 in Surrey, 1 in 60 for BC as a whole, and 1 in 200 in South Surrey/White Rock.

We know the rate of housing stress in South Surrey/White Rock is 45.6% (those who pay more than 30% of their income on rent) higher than the BC average and the rest of Surrey. The average rent is \$1,046 for a 1–bedroom and the SAFER rent supplement is frozen at \$700; a contributing factor to housing stress.

Issues such as livable wages and income supports that keep up with increasing housing costs (such as SAFER) are important in addressing homeless prevention.

**Support Challenge for PH2H** – A local congregation has extended a challenge to the community to make a donation to PH2H for its modest operating budget of \$5,000. Donations will be matched up to \$2,500 for up to 4 years. Cheques would be made out to Sources (fund manager) for PH2H.

### **Food Security Fund**

PH2H Definition of Food Security – Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life; a food secure community ensures nutritious food and access for Peninsula residents, raises poverty awareness and includes the community in creating sustainable food solutions.

Working with the Peninsula Community Foundation (PCF), PH2H has developed a fund to support low-income food security. Charitable Tax Receipts available. Contact PCF: Tel: 778-292-1367

Email: [info@peninsulafoundation.ca](mailto:info@peninsulafoundation.ca)  
[www.peninsulafoundation.ca](http://www.peninsulafoundation.ca)

Thank you to the Van Dusen Fund of the United Church, Linda Klitch Legacy Fund, Peninsula Community Foundation, VanCity White Rock Branch and Surrey Housing and Homeless Foundation for financial support.

**Please circulate our newsletter to your congregations and members. Send feedback or news to:**  
[ph2htaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:ph2htaskforce@gmail.com)