

March 2011 Newsletter

Peninsula Homeless to Housing (PH2H) Round Table

Providing leadership in the South Surrey White Rock communities

This March 16th regional homeless count is our focus this month. Please circulate our newsletter to your members and congregations. We welcome your feedback. The PH2H Roundtable meets at 9:30am on the first Friday of each month at the White Rock Baptist Church at 1657-140th St Surrey. Our next meeting is March 4th. *Please send news items to:* petergreenwell@telus.net

Regional Homeless Count 2011

The 4th regional homeless count will happen on March 16th. It is an important initiative undertaken by community groups and service providers who work with people who are homeless. Homeless counts have resulted in the most comprehensive information on homelessness Metro Vancouver. The first regional count was done in 2002.

Margaret Eberle, one of the original organizers, said: "It was done after we did the regional homeless plan *Three Ways to Home* for the Greater Vancouver Regional District and Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH). The reasons behind the count were that numbers speak and to show the geographic spread of homelessness beyond the City of Vancouver to elsewhere in the region." Eberle Planning, Jim Woodward and Associates, Debora Kraus and Judy Graves develop the method for the original counts.

The information we have gained through the 2002, 2005 and 2008 counts have shown the changing nature of homeless; from predominately sheltered homelessness in 2002 to today's situation where the majority of homeless are surviving, on the street.

From the counts we know that the homeless population is aging and have more profound health issues. From the 2008 count we know an entrenched community of people who have been homeless for more than a year has been developing.

Service agencies and governments use count information to change how services are delivered. In 2005 it was found that a large number of homeless individuals had no source of income; they had fallen through the cracks of a complicated social assistance system that was not providing services in a manner that worked for those on the street.

Homeless Outreach Services, developed and expanded over the last 5 years, were partly a response to this issue and have significantly addressed it. By the 2008

count the number of individuals with no income of any kind fell significantly. Outreach is an example how well targeted and funded programs can be effective and have positive results.

In South Surrey White Rock outreach workers can be reached through Options at 604-765-6751 for either direct assistance or for making referrals for individuals who are homeless.

The homeless counts have identified the significant levels of homelessness in the Aboriginal community. In the 2006 Census 2% of Metro Vancouver residents identified as Aboriginal. In the 2008 homeless count 32% of people identified as Aboriginal; the number rose to 45% amongst women. And we still have no Aboriginal operated shelter services.

The homeless counts have relied on volunteers to conduct this enumeration; volunteer participation has increased from 100 people in 2002 to 800 people in 2008. The RSCH has contracted with OrgCode Consulting, of Toronto, to conduct the count. For more information on the count please call the RSCH at 604-451-6065 or go to their website: www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness

Homeless Count in South Surrey White Rock

For the upcoming count SOURCES has stepped forward to coordinate volunteers and Options Outreach is managing the overall coordination on the peninsula. We have 20 volunteers who will participate in this year's count in White Rock South Surrey.



PH2H Food Security Initiative

The White Rock South Surrey (WRSS) Community Foundation is pleased to grant \$500 to the PH2H; this is seed money to provide PH2H an opportunity to start a Food Security Fund and leverage matching funds.

The WRSS Community Foundation is a Champion of Philanthropy. Community Foundations act as your partner in Philanthropy, building and managing endowment and flow through funds for a stronger and better community for today and tomorrow.

April's Newsletter will focus on the work volunteers do in our extreme weather shelters