



HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK 2014 – FINAL REPORT



I. Introduction & Overview

This year marked the ninth annual Homelessness Action Week (HAW) which took place across Metro Vancouver the week of October 12th, 2014. HAW is an annual event focused on bringing public awareness and understanding to the issue of homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region. During HAW the public is invited to participate in a variety of events across the region.

Due to funding changes, the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) did not have the capacity to organize or coordinate HAW (costs projected to be \$45,000 for consultant fees, administrative support and coordination, including \$9000 for supplies). As such, 2014 HAW was solely organized by the Community Homeless Table HAW Committee without this funding. Special thanks goes to the 2014 HAW Planning Committee (members from the Council of Community Homelessness Tables), who came up with this year's theme "Opening Doors Opening Hearts". The planning committee provided templates for printed materials, key messages and proclamations for HAW.

One area observed to be affected by the funding cuts was the prominent media coverage that has been seen in past years (due to extra PR effort/consultants being retained for HAW). Despite efforts made by the NSHTF, there was an observed decrease in media coverage on the North Shore, and it seemed less overall coverage for the region as a whole. As public awareness is one of the main objectives of HAW, it was unfortunate that this opportunity was not leveraged to its full potential this year.

Due to the lack of funding, additional work was required to secure private and corporate sponsors and donations. However, with extra efforts and help from local volunteers, the necessary funding was secured. We wish to warmly thank all of our partners, sponsors and donors (see pgs. 3 & 4) for their generous support. A special mention goes out to London Drugs who donated many items for the Connect Day hygiene kits this year.

II. North Shore Activities & Outcomes

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) pulled together an exciting program designed to build partnerships with the business community, and to provide opportunities for people to make a meaningful difference within their community, and to increase public awareness about homelessness on the North Shore.

Many community organizations and churches cooperated to host a variety of events during Homelessness Action Week. Events provided a variety of services for youth, seniors, families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Aside from the events, a number of activities were taken on to increase the public and overall awareness on the North Shore including:

- Council delegations took place at all three North Shore municipalities
- A local NSHTF media release was distributed and while the North Shore News did attend Connect Day and published photos after the event, the intention of the release and media outreach was to get the event information out in advance, and to raise awareness of the issues of homelessness on the North Shore.
- The NSHTF website, www.northshorehomelessness.org, was updated regularly and leveraged to communicate events to both agencies and the public. Traffic to the site doubled during this time frame.
- Twitter @nshomelessness was updated regularly to 400 followers, up from 200 this same time last year.
- Many community and faith organizations and volunteers helped to spread the word about North Shore events. These efforts helped to ensure client participation in events, as well as to attract local business and sponsors, donors, and volunteers. Initiatives included hanging posters in key locations, calling on local businesses, and getting information out through various targeted e-newsletters and distribution lists.

- Over 32 people volunteered for North Shore Connect Day and the Street Soccer game. A number of Douglas College and BCIT nursing students also volunteered again this year to assist with healthcare services at Connect Day.

North Shore Events:

Kicking off on the North Shore on October 13th and running through October 18th, the following report presents the events and highlights of Homelessness Action Week 2014 on the North Shore.

OCTOBER 13 - Thanksgiving Dinner at the Lookout Shelter, 5:00PM

A community Thanksgiving meal was hosted by the Lookout Shelter, 100 people enjoyed a warm meal.

OCTOBER 14 – Community Dinner, North Lonsdale United Church, 5:30PM

A community dinner was served in cooperation with Sharing Abundance, at the North Lonsdale United Church.

OCTOBER 15 - North Shore Connect Day, John Braithwaite Community Centre, 9:00AM – 2:30PM

Connect Day was held at John Braithwaite Community Centre in Lower Lonsdale again this year. This venue provided an open atmosphere where community attendees and resource providers could connect in a comfortable, welcoming setting to access meals, healthcare and a variety of other services. This year the Mother and Kids' luncheon, previously held in a separate location, was held at the same venue. Babysitting was offered for several hours so parents could access the lunch and health care/support services.

The check-in Desk registered 122 people (attendees who opted to fill in the form). This is slightly down from 135, the number of attendees who attended Connect Day last year. The Salvation Army hosted a wonderful Thanksgiving meal with all of the trimmings, and a free bus service staffed by outreach workers was offered again this year to transport street homeless to the event. Similar to past years, there was a high percentage of seniors and people from the Farsi community who attended the event. The event included the following services below, for more information, please see Appendix A.

Breakfast at 9am • Lunch at 1pm • Health Clinics • Foot Care • Optometrist • Flu vaccines • Clothing vouchers • Shoes • Socks • Hygiene Kits • Hair Cuts • Housing outreach • Employment programs • Fitness access cards • Leisure Access Counsellor • Counselling and Mental Health Programs • Drug/Alcohol Programs • Smoking Cessation

OCTOBER 15 - Youth Safe House Dinner, Youth Safe House, 5:00PM

8 youth attended the Safe House Dinner.

OCTOBER 16 - Movie, Snacks and Chat at Ambleside Youth Centre, 7:00PM

Event highlights as provided by staff at Ambleside Youth Centre:

The event began with a meaningful keynote address, by one of our youth clients. This young girl's life has been very difficult and it required tremendous courage for her to speak. Hearing the story was very moving for our community participants. It is worth noting that her struggles are not over yet. She remains in the local safehouses, where she has been for the past 6 months, going to and from West Van Secondary.

We then enjoyed Nance Akerman's acclaimed documentary, Four Feet Up, about the cycle of poverty in Canada. All agreed this film offers viewers poignant insight into the lives of those for whom challenges such as unstable housing, mental health, and poverty, are faced every day. After the film, youth facilitators separated participants into small groups, where efforts were made to problem solve real-life scenarios related to homelessness. While attendance was lower than expected, the energy and enthusiasm of the roughly 30 who participated more than compensated.

OCTOBER 17TH – Rocktoberfest at Capilano University

Peak Performance competition band finalists David Newberry and The Tourist Company, along with very special guests, Peter from the North Shore Shelter, and David P. Smith who volunteered at this inaugural event to play music while highlighting issues around homelessness to Capilano U students, staff and the public.

OCTOBER 18 - Street Soccer Exhibition, John Braithwaite Gym, 4:30PM - 6:30PM

This year over 35 players and spectators attended the Street Soccer tournament. Thanks to Charles MacGregor, staff from the District of North Vancouver, and several volunteers who helped to organize, promote, and coordinate the event. North Shore soccer team, 'Team Awareness', was joined by other players including the City of North Vancouver Firefighters (who played until duty called). DNV Councillor Hicks and CNV Mayor Mussatto also joined the fun. A hot meal was served afterwards to 50+ people (the players were joined by the youth club next door for the meal).

OCTOBER 19 - BBQ Dinner at the Lookout Shelter, 5:00PM

III. HAW Community Partners & Sponsors:

A very special thank you goes out to our community partners, sponsors and community volunteers. Homelessness Action Week would not be possible without your support! Our community partners include:

*Canadian Mental Health Association
City of North Vancouver
Council of Community Homeless Tables
District of North Vancouver
District of West Vancouver
Harvest Project
Hollyburn Family Services Society
Lookout Emergency Aid Society
North Lonsdale United Church
North Shore Community Resources Society
North Shore Crisis Services Society
North Shore Multicultural Society
North Shore Neighbourhood House
North Shore Salvation Army
North Vancouver Recreation Commission
Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
Sharing Abundance
Soroptimist International of North & West Vancouver
Vancouver Coastal Health
YWCA One Stop Career Shop*

HAW 2014 Sponsors:



BeautifulEyes in the Cove
Optometry

Additional Sponsors & Supporters:

- Dr. Alnoon Somji Inc.
- Ms. Dolly Visram
- Cobb's Bread, Capilano Mall
- Whistler Water
- Copper Alley Catering
- Take a Break Coffee
- Anonymous donors
- 35+ community volunteers

Appendix A:

Homeless Connect Event 2014 Outcomes Report Form:

	#		#
Total Number of Clients*:	122	Number of adults (19 – 64):	120
Number of men:	50	Number of seniors (65+):	26
Number of women:	62	Number who don't have a place they pay rent for:	18
Number of youth (under 19):	2	Number of at-risk clients: (pay more than 1/3 of income on rent):	39
Answered 'Yes' to the question: Have you stayed in a Shelter over the past 12 months?	27	Identified 'Yes' for being of Aboriginal descent:	23

* A number of the forms and questions were not fully completed.

2013 Connect Event numbers (for comparison):

	#		#
Total Number of Clients:	131	Number of adults (19 – 64):	97
Number of men:	57	Number of seniors (65+):	30
Number of women:	74	Number who don't have a place they pay rent for:	16
Number of youth (under 19):	4	Number of at-risk clients: (pay more than 1/3 of income on rent):	67
Answered 'Yes' to the question: Have you stayed in a Shelter over the past 12 months?	21	Identified 'Yes' for being of Aboriginal descent:	14

Connect Day 2014 Services Attendance & Outcomes:

Number of clients who received the following services offered at North Shore Connect Day 2014:

#	Service/Organization	#	Service/Organization
30+	Lookout Society – housing, outreach	25	North Shore Multicultural Society <i>Note: This service was helpful especially for participants (many Farsi speaking) whose English skills were minimal.</i>
38	NS Neighbourhood House	40	NS Crisis Services Society
57	Haircuts - Zazou Salon		Harvest Project <i>Numbers not supplied.</i>

20	Optometrist - Dr. Wong, BeautifulEyes in the Cove 20 patients were seen; 2 were approved for eyeglasses by the Min. of Health. One additional client was referred to Ophthalmologist for another issue).		Canadian Mental Health Services Outreach <i>Numbers not supplied.</i>
118	Salvation Army – Clothing vouchers, outreach	70-80	Foot Care - VCH OT/ Shoe Fit/Hand out – Douglas College nursing students supported the foot care shoe distribution.
20	Diabetes, Nurse/Dietitian - VCH	50	Diabetes CanRisk – VCH with support from BCIT nursing Students
0	Dental Hygienist – <i>Unfortunately could not attend the event this year.</i>	14 5	Foot Care Tx, RN - VCH Foot Care Tx, OT - VCH
37	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention – VCH and Douglas College nursing Students	32	Health Literacy/Tobacco Cessation - VCH with support from BCIT nursing students
12	Lung Testing – Respiratory - VCH	12	Nurse Practitioner - VCH
5	Nutrition – (Margaret Broughton)	0	Stop HIV/AIDS Testing – <i>Note: Unfortunately this service was cancelled this year.</i>
30	Immunizations and Harm Reduction/Communicable Disease – VCH:	200 meals served	Soup kitchen /food: Breakfast: 100 Thanksgiving Lunch: 100 clients (+ 29 Connect Day volunteers and Agency staff)
0	Tax Services – HR Block <i>We couldn't offer this service based on the volunteer's availability, but we had many requests for it.</i>	150	Comfort/hygiene kits distributed