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HOMELESS NUMBERS REMAIN SIMILAR ON THE NORTH SHORE
Preliminary 2014 Homeless Count report results finds 119 homeless

The preliminary results of the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count for the North Shore showed a small decrease in total numbers of homeless at 119. The report found 60 unsheltered, 54 in emergency facilities/shelters, and 5 with no fixed address. This is down from 122 total homeless reported in 2011 when the last homeless count was conducted.

Outreach workers on the North Shore estimate that the numbers of homeless are much higher than 119 as the figures reflected from the count do not capture many hidden homeless who are couch surfing, living deep in the bush, in other inappropriate housing, or those who are on the brink of losing their homes.

Homeless on the North Shore include every demographic – youth, families, adults and seniors, the full report to be released in July 2014 will provide more in-depth results and analysis of the data.

“We didn't see an increase in numbers as were seen in Vancouver and Surrey which is a sign that current services are working. However, we didn't see a substantial decrease in any category, which continues to show that there is a need for more affordable housing and the services to support those who are homeless in our community,” said Sandra Edelman, Chair, North Shore Homelessness Task Force.

Regional preliminary results showed a five percent increase in the number of people who are homeless in Metro Vancouver overall. There were 2,770 people found homeless on March 12, 2014 compared to 2,650 in the 2011 count.

A total of 957 homeless people were identified as unsheltered in the Metro Vancouver region on March 12. This was a 26% increase compared to 2011 when 758 unsheltered homeless people were counted.

“We were alarmed to hear that there are more unsheltered homeless than sheltered homeless in this year's count,” commented David Newberry, Community Liaison with the Lookout Shelter in North Vancouver. “This demonstrates a need to continue developing outreach services. And our shelters are full, so the only way to alleviate pressure on the shelters is to ensure there is adequate affordable and supportive housing.”

Some additional regional findings follow:

- A total of 410 youth (under the age of 25) were counted as homeless compared to 397 in 2011. Despite the higher number, the proportion of youth homelessness decreased to 20 percent in 2014 from 24 percent in 2011.
- A total of 371 seniors (55 years and older) were counted as homeless in the Metro Vancouver region on March 12. This is a 38% increase compared to 2011 when 268 seniors were identified and a 75% increase compared to 2008 when 212 seniors were identified. Seniors represented 18% of the homeless population in 2014, compared to 16% in 2011 and 9% in 2008.
- Aboriginal people continue to make up nearly one third, or 31 percent, of the total homeless population. This year's count identified 582 Aboriginal people who were homeless, compared to 394 in 2011.

The preliminary report of the 2014 Homeless Count is available on <http://stophomelessness.ca>. The final report is scheduled for release in July 2014. It will provide a more complete analysis of the count data and survey questions, including how long people have been homeless, health issues, barriers to ending homelessness, sources of income, and services that people who are homeless tend to use.

About the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count:

Conducted on March 12, 2014, the 24-hour survey provides a snapshot of homelessness in Metro Vancouver. On the North Shore about 50 volunteers were out covering the whole North Shore to document and interview homeless people in streets, shelters, hospitals, jails and plus couch surfers and people who used homelessness services on the day of the count. Homeless counts have taken place in Metro Vancouver every three years since 2002 and every year in Vancouver since 2010.

About The North Shore Homelessness Task Force

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) was formed in 1998 in response to reports of people living outdoors. The Task Force spearheaded the establishment of the Youth Safe House and the North Shore Shelter and Transitional Housing.

Beyond the establishment of the shelters, the NSHTF meets as a service network on a regular basis to address homelessness and poverty on the North Shore. The Task Force focuses on areas related to support services, communications and information, and the continuum of housing on the North Shore. The group includes a broad range of community, government, business, and service organizations from the North Shore. For more information and previous homeless count reports, please visit: <http://northshorehomelessness.org/community/homelessness-count/>.

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