



2017 Year in Review

North Shore Homelessness Task Force

Overview

Homelessness continues to be a reality on the North Shore and a pressing issue that requires ongoing action. The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) was formed to provide coordinated, collaborative leadership and action on this issue. Since homelessness is a systemic issue, the NSHTF will continue to exist as long as it is considered necessary.

The NSHTF meets as an open service network on a quarterly basis to address issues relating to 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.

Members of the Task Force include municipal employees, Vancouver Coastal Health, service providers, faith community members, law enforcement, interested North Shore residents, and more.

Highlight of Activities

In 2017, the NSHTF coordinated and participated in many activities. In addition to our quarterly meetings, we also participated in the regional Homeless Count, conducted every three years; assisted in coordinating the Housing First Innovation Lab, hosted by Lookout and Vantage Point; and organized the annual Homelessness Action Week activities, including Connect Day.

Highlights from partner organizations

Dundarave Festival of Lights

The Dundarave Festival raised a record breaking \$40,000 for Lookout through the Forest of Miracles and direct donations this year. The Lookout Foundation will double these donations and add them to 2016's donations. This brings us up to \$140,000. The Lookout Housing & Health Society will use these funds to purchase housing units on the North Shore, allowing permanent exiting from homelessness. With representatives from all levels of government attending the free Saturday Concert series, we drew attention to the needs of the most vulnerable members of our community. Pam Goldsmith Jones, MP West Vancouver, Sea-to-Sky, Sunshine Coast and Bowinn Ma, MLA for North Vancouver Lonsdale have agreed to participate together with local government in a forum on housing security.

The Four Saturdays of concerts and performances drew large crowds to see performances such as Marcus Moseley's Chorale, Sentinel High School's RnB band, dance a Ceilidh, and greet the Grinch. The Bonfire night on December 23rd was a spectacular night with the biggest attendance of up to 500 people on a frosty night before Christmas.



Harvest Project

2017 was a year of positive change for the many North Shore individuals and families in need who are reaching out to Harvest Project.

With close to 1,000 individuals and families engaging with Harvest Project's coaching and counsel and receiving grocery and clothing support, it was also a busy year. Each month, Harvest Project celebrated with those who are moving forward to reconnect with jobs, training, school and community life on the North Shore.

Their Adopt A Family funding campaign is ongoing: Across the North Shore, households, businesses, schools and community groups are stepping up to help 'sponsor' the individuals and families for whom Harvest Project is 'extending a hand up, not a hand-out.' As neighbours continue to face the threat of poverty, Harvest Project is seeing a generous response from across the North Shore. They are looking to a diverse community of volunteers, donors, and partners to ensure that they can continue to provide a tangible 'hand-up' that will save lives, close to home.

Hollyburn Family Services Society

In 2017, the North Shore Youth Safe House underwent significant renovations, funded by HPS. The kitchen and two bathrooms were transformed to create welcoming, safe and functional

spaces for youth. In addition to the beautification, a transgender bedroom was created, ensuring all youth had a space where they belonged and felt safe.

Hollyburn Family Services Society continues to work on its three pillars through its strategic planning. These include:

- *Financial Stability and Self Sustainability*: Ensuring an effective infrastructure, and multiyear and sustainable funding through diverse funding sources.
- *Effective Integrated Continuum of Services and Programs*: Ensuring services are accessible and effective for vulnerable people wherever they may be in their journey.
- *Future Impact*: Identifying trends in the community resulting in offering support to homeless families.

Lookout Emergency Aid Society

Lookout experienced a noticeable increase in people of all socio-economic demographics in need of shelter services in 2017, with an average occupancy rate at the shelter of 104% and many people being turned away.

There has also been a rise in people who are experiencing extreme homelessness on the North Shore who live outside or in their vehicles. As a result of these increases, Lookout is incorporating a suite of new programming and services to help enable their guests to move forward in securing appropriate and affordable housing. Some examples of these programs include: employment related programming; additional clinical services from VCH, and the addition of clinical mental health supports on site.

North Shore Crisis Services Society

2017 was another busy one for North Shore Crisis Services Society. By the end of the year, they housed about 200 women and children at SAGE Transition House and in their second stage programs, as well as the many women and families that have been helped through the Homeless Prevention Program and other various outreach services.

NSCSS's community programs and administrative office moved to a bright new (to them) office at 200 – 147 West 16th Street. They are easy to find across the street from the Cazba Restaurant.

The Good Stuff Connection Clothing Program and Thrift Store almost doubled in size. Check out the store at 154 West 3rd Street and talk to Manisha if your program's client could use clothing gift certificates.

North Shore Disability Resource Centre

The NSDRC's report on engagement sessions around housing for people with disabilities on the North Shore called [Options for Us](#) was released. As a result of this process, they updated and expanded their housing listings for families, adults and seniors with disabilities in their online [Resource Guide](#). NSDRC was also very pleased to welcome 4 new tenants into their brand new wheelchair accessible Millhouse apartments. These four one-bedroom rent-geared-to-income units were completed in Dec 2016 and fully occupied by February 2017.

In a quote, one of the new NSDRRC tenants says: "I was part of a 'rent eviction', my friends and family helped me search for over 6 months – there was nothing accessible and/or affordable on North Shore until Millhouse. My life has changed at Mill House and I have to pinch myself each day to make sure it's not a dream."

North Shore Salvation Army

The North Shore Salvation Army had a very busy year, examining how they are best utilized within the North Shore region and how they fit into the equation of homelessness. They have been concentrating their efforts on creating policies and procedures that will benefit all persons in need. Salvation Army collects approximately 1-4 tons of food daily, and redistributes this throughout the lower mainland. One of their main focuses for the North Shore going forward is to assist as many agencies on the region with the resources they have available. On average Salvation Army is currently providing groceries to 10-16 families daily on a two week rotation. In addition they also provided clothing vouchers to persons in need.

This year Salvation Army also hosted the annual Dignity Day and provided the lunch for Connect Day which took place during Homelessness Action Week. North Shore Salvation Army is committed to being part of dealing with homelessness on the North Shore and assisting in any way they can.

North Shore Neighbourhood House

2017 was an exciting year for the North Shore Neighbourhood House as food security became a major priority in their programs and services. They began focusing on nutrition through serving food weekly at the food bank/community food hub, Saturday community lunch, and in all childcare programs, senior lunches and special events.

Both the Edible Garden project and Loutet Farm have strong educational components, as well as an education coordinator that works with the community, specifically with the schools on the North Shore. Each NSNH childcare centre has their own garden which provides fresh produce to the children. The sharing gardens such as the one at Sutherland school, provide fresh produce every week to the food bank. NSNH feeds 175 people every week at their community food hub on Wednesdays.

The family resource centre has many special events with a mandate to provide nutritious meals and snacks. They have a free Christmas turkey dinner on Christmas day for approximately 200 people who are often without family, or the support to have a dinner. This gesture provides not only nourishment, but truly continues NSNH's tradition of being the heart of the community for the many North Shore residents who are our most vulnerable. Healthy food is no longer an option, it is a MUST in every aspect of food distributed throughout the organization.

Food and nutrition has been the focus this year for building a healthy stronger community. NSNH believes that everyone deserves and needs healthy food, and they are committed to that goal.

2017 Homeless Count

Every three years in Metro Vancouver, a Point-in-Time Homeless Count is conducted to estimate the number of homeless individuals in a region on a certain day of the year.

The Metro Vancouver regional Homeless Count provides critical information on the number and characteristics of our region's homeless population and how this population has changed over time. Service providers, planners, community groups, health authorities, municipalities and funders use information from the Homeless Counts to assist in policy development, planning, and prioritizing programs and services to address the needs of people who are homeless.

In 2017 BC Non-Profit Housing Association's (BCNPHA) research department conducted the Homeless Count on behalf of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy's Community Entity Metro Vancouver in partnership with Community Homelessness Tables across the region.

Over a 24-hour period between March 7 and March 8, 42 North Shore volunteers counted and obtained demographic information from people who do not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and do not pay rent. This includes people who stayed overnight, on the night of March 7, in homeless shelters including transition houses for women fleeing violence and youth safe houses, people with no fixed address staying temporarily in hospitals, jails or detox facilities, live outside or stayed temporarily with others (couch-surfing) and/or those using homelessness services on March 8.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate and to those who were able to help make the count possible this year. We could not do it without you!

The 2017 North Shore Homeless Count found 89 sheltered respondents and 11 unsheltered respondents to make a total of 100 counted homeless individuals on the North Shore. This represents a 16% decrease from the previous Count, conducted in 2014. Of this number 14 respondents were identified as youth, and 21 respondents were identified as seniors.

Limitations of the Homeless Count

The Count took place over a 24-hour period to provide a "snapshot" of homelessness in the region during that time and included both a shelter and street count. To ensure consistency with previous research, the Count was conducted in early/mid-March.

Homeless Counts are inherently undercounts and the 2017 Homeless Count in the Metro Vancouver region was no exception. Despite best efforts to include everyone who was homeless during the Count, it is understood that some people who are homeless will be missed and some do not wish to participate. A number of service providers have expressed concern that the numbers underestimate the true extent of homelessness and are not consistent with community perceptions based on the number of people seeking services.

A number of factors including a lack of willingness to participate, hidden homelessness, weather, geography in the community, counting in shelters, and the length of the survey, have been identified that may have affected the results of the 2017 Homeless Count. Some of them apply to Homeless Counts in general while others are specific to the 2017 Homeless Count.

In response to concerns brought forward by the NSHTF regarding the undercount of homeless individuals in this year's Count, the NSHTF compiled the 2016 North Shore Homelessness Service Use Data Report.

2016 North Shore Homelessness Service Use Data Report

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) released the [North Shore Homelessness Service Use Data Report](#) that details the number of people who are homeless who accessed services in one of

the North Shore communities in 2016. Based on a solid data gathering process, the report found 736 unique individuals were homeless at some point in 2016, a far greater number than the snapshot count of 100 provided by the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count.

Housing First Innovation Lab

This year, the North Shore was selected to be the second of eight Innovation Labs in Metro Vancouver, hosted by Lookout Housing and Health Society and Vantage Point. The Innovation Labs are Housing First focused, and look to solve community specific issues related to homelessness.

Each community has unique challenges in addressing homelessness. The Housing First Innovation Labs project will engage with eight different communities in Metro Vancouver, collaborating to find solutions solutions to their unique issues.

An Innovation Lab is designed for a diverse group of people to address a complex social challenge. This project brings together community partners (both HPS and non-HPS funded) to review compiled research and provide feedback that will aid in the development of an Innovation Lab in their community.

The Housing First Innovation Lab Team collaborated to design and convene a full day lab. The lab focused on understanding homelessness in the North Shore at a system level, creating an open space for new problem solving methods. Participants worked together with lab facilitators to co-design solutions addressing homelessness. Groups worked through activities, facilitated discussion, and guided action-planning to develop solutions that integrates organizational partners and resources in the community. Following the lab, the Housing First Innovation Labs Team worked with community partners to develop an action plan to execute the solutions. Vantage Point provided two workshops in each community to support the action plans established from the lab process.

Six solutions were discussed from the initial innovation lab:

1. Host a forum for a Community Land Trust on the North Shore.
2. Connect Housing First participants with secondary suites not being used.
3. Identify and utilize empty housing stock.
4. Create a homelessness awareness campaign to reduce stigma around homelessness.
5. Increase immediate access to mental health resources/outreach resources.
6. Coordinate advocacy opportunities to influence affordable housing policy.

Of these solutions number 1, “Host a forum for a Community Land Trust on the North Shore” was selected as the focus for follow-up meetings. However, the NSHTF identified the need to carry some of the other solutions forward in our future work, potentially as additional task groups.

2017 Homelessness Action Week

Each year, the North Shore joins communities and organizations throughout the region to mark Homelessness Action Week. The week’s purpose is to raise public awareness on issues of homelessness and rally local solutions.

Homelessness Action Week is organized by the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. The Committee is a coalition of community organizations and all levels of government.

Homelessness Action Week 2017 was held during the week of October 8 to 14.

North Shore Activities

Various organizations on the North Shore hosted activities during Homelessness Action Week:

- *Monday, October 9* - Thanksgiving Dinner at the Lookout Shelter, 5:00PM
- *Tuesday, October 10* - Community Dinner, North Lonsdale United Church, 5:30PM
- *Thursday, October 12* - Connect Day, John Braithwaite Community Centre, 9:00AM – 2:00PM
 - Medical services, foot care, hearing testing, community support resources, haircuts, meals and more - all in one location, on one day.
- *Thursday, October 12* – Free Community Meal/Drop-In at St. Andrew’s United Church
The following events were free and everyone was invited:
 - Community drop-in at the church from 10 am-noon (coffee, tea, snacks and a place to relax and talk); along with fresh bread and baked goods from Cobs Bread.
 - Community lunch from noon to 1 pm in the Friendship Room: homemade soup, garlic bread, sandwiches, desserts, coffee, tea.
- *Thursday, October 12* – Flicks and Forum, Ambleside Youth Centre, 6:30PM – 8:30PM
This free event featured the films “Invisible City” by Capilano University student Desiree Wallace, and “Four Feet Up”, by Nancy Ackerman.

Connect Day

This year we had around 90 guests attend Connect Day to receive services from Vancouver Coastal Health, connect with organizations in the community, and share a meal together. Every year we have breakfast fruit and pastries donated generously by Guli and Munira. Salvation Army also served 149 meals for lunch, including those for volunteers and folks who received seconds. We are so grateful to have donations of food for this event.

The weather outside was unusually rainy which may have impacted our numbers this year.

18 organizations gathered with tables along with 10 services offered by Vancouver Coastal Health including flu shots and foot care. Participating organizations offered guests information about their services, items to take away, such as socks and winter jackets, and services such as haircuts and hearing testing. 55 people received haircuts from our partners at Zazou Hair Salon who generously donate their time doing haircuts for this event.

The appendix provides full information on the services provided by VCH.

Contact

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**HAW-NS CONNECT DAY: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2017 @ JBCC
VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH SERVICES
9:00 am to 2:00 pm
(4 hrs of service)**

Vancouver Coastal Health Services & Programs

Service &/or Program	# Clients Served	M	F	Referrals to other services
BCIT Students Health Table: "Why Get A Flu Shot?" (partnered with Public Health Nurse)	32	9	23	1 to NP
BCIT Students: Diabetes (CanRisk Screening)	24	5	19	10 to Diabetes Education 2 to Chronic Disease Team
Diabetes Education (Dianne Allan - Dietitian)	11	3	8	?NR
Foot Care Team: 3 Nurses 1 OT 1 Foot Massage (Laura RN, Emma OT)	All Clients Triageed by OT: 15 <u>Breakdown</u> No RN Service Required: 4 RN Treatment: 11 OT Service: 8 clients (received shoe liners, moulds, foot ware adjustments etc.) NOTE: Multiple clients missed foot massage service	6	9	2 (1 to NP)
Nurse Practitioner (Jenn Buck or Shelia Turris)	10	4	6	3 to other services.
Public Health – Active Living (Margaret Broughton)	0 (drops in to event)	0	0	No clients seen. Visited other tables for collaboration.
Respiratory: Spirometry Lung Testing Asthma Education (Barb Moore) Tobacco Cessation (Brandon Biln)	Total Clients: 33 <u>Breakdown:</u> Spirometry/asthma: 9 Tobacco Cessation: 24	15	18	5 to Pam Dr 1 to NP
Public Health Early Years Team (Farzana Juma)	17	3	14	Also distributed Dental Kits
VCH Overdose Response Team	14 <u>Breakdown:</u> 12 Kits distributed (with training) 2 (training only)	2	12	First time at event.
Public Health Nurse: Vaccinations/Flu Shots Stop HIV (Monique Catala)	45 <u>Breakdown:</u> Flu/Vaccine: 46 (1 flu-mist) Pneumonia: 6 HIV Tests: 2 (all negative) (some clients may have received service for both HIV & Flu/Vacc)	?NR	?NR	1 to Stop HIV 2 to HCC
Vancouver Coastal Health Total Clients Served	201			(#s reflect clients who may have received multiple services)