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The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee (GSJHSC) is an inter-agency committee representing all agencies in Greater Saint John that work with the homeless population and those at-risk of becoming homeless. To comment on the content in *Perspectives* or provide ideas and suggestion for future issues, contact coordinator Mark Leger at 636-8541. E-mail: mark@sjhdc.ca

## Youth awareness, participation highlights housing week

Area high school students learned a lot and lent a helping hand during National Housing Week events Nov. 24-25.

As part of the Homelessness Education and Learning Party (H.E.L.P.), more than 50 students brainstormed ideas for a proposed emergency housing facility for homeless youth. "The place needs warm colours, it needs to feel like a community, a family," said one student.

The students also volunteered their time with organizations that serve the homeless population. Some of them served lunch at the Saint John Community Chaplaincy. Others hit the streets with food coupons for homeless people.

Students from Saint John High, St. Malachy's and Harbour View high schools also took part in the third annual Tin Can Challenge, a sculpture building contest that also brings in much-needed food for area food banks. Harbour View won the competition at UNBSJ's Grand Hall uptown, with past winners St. Malachy's and Saint John High building strong entries as well.

*Check out Page 2 for more photos on the week's activities.*



*Above: Harbour View High School won this year's Tin Can Challenge, a sculpture building contest that also brings in much-needed food for area food banks. (photo by Laurie Kindred)*

*Below: High School students helped serve lunch at the Saint John Community Chaplaincy on Youth Conference Day, Nov. 24. (photo by Sue Furlong)*



## Community Planning Session On Homelessness Jan. 7

The federal government recently announced that the national Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) has been renewed for three more years at the current funding level of \$134.8-million per year. As part of the HPS process, The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee is coordinating the development of a new Community Plan to combat homelessness in the region. On Jan. 7, we are holding a planning session to define our priorities for 2011-2014. We would very much like you to take part, even if you don't work directly or in the homelessness sector. This is a community plan, and we invite input from a variety of community organizations and groups.

The community planning session will take place Jan. 7 from 9 am – 12 pm at The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC), 28 Richmond St. Please confirm your attendance with me so we have an idea of how many people can attend. We want broad participation in this process, so please feel free to pass this invitation along to organizations or individuals that might be interested in attending.

If you have any questions, or if you can't attend but want to provide feedback on homelessness issues in Saint John, please contact Mark Leger. Phone: 636-8541. E-mail: mark@sjhdc.ca

## Youth Think Creatively About Homelessness



Above: The students from Saint John High, St. Malachy's and Harbour View pose for a picture after the Tin Can Challenge Nov. 25 at the UNBSJ Grand Hall uptown.

Right: St. John High students pose with their sculpture project. Bottom right St. Malachy's stand next to their entry. Bottom left: Some students show off their plans for a proposed youth homelessness housing facility in Saint John as part of Youth Conference Day, Nov. 24. The committee planning the youth housing project will incorporate the ideas proposed during this conference. (photos by Laurie Kindred)



## New Shelter To Help Homeless On Cold Nights

An uptown church has opened its doors to homeless men on cold winter nights. Grace Presbyterian Church on Coburg St. started an “Out of the Cold” program in the new year after hearing stories of men sleeping outside with inadequate protection against the elements, or huddled in the heated entryways of area buildings. Modelled after similar programs in cities across the country, including Halifax, Vancouver, Toronto, and Hamilton, Ontario, the church will operate a 15-bed shelter between now and the end of March, when the temperature falls below -10 Celsius. They will open at 10:30 pm and offer a hot soup and breakfast in the morning. There is an existing men’s shelter at The Salvation Army, but it is often at capacity and must turn away people on many winter nights. While it will be a men’s shelter, it won’t turn away women who seek its help. Volunteers will help women find other accommodations. The shelter will be operated entirely by volunteers from the church and from the rest of the Saint John region. In future years, church volunteers hope to enlist the involvement of more area churches and remain open more regularly. People interested in volunteering can contact Lue Bowes-McCutcheon. E-mail: [lbowesmccutcheon@rogers.com](mailto:lbowesmccutcheon@rogers.com). Phone: 214-1294.



Volunteers prepare for a night at the new cold weather shelter at Grace Presbyterian Church on Coburg St. (Photo contributed by Mark Leger)

## Citizens Sleep Outside To Raise Awareness



(Photo contributed by Andrew Tidby)

About 10 hardy souls braved the cold on a night in late November, sleeping outside in King’s Square to raise awareness about homeless people with nowhere safe and warm to stay on the coldest nights of the winter. The event was organized by the local chapter of Make Poverty History and The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee, and took place during National Housing Week, which is held every year to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues across the country. The event was a success, attracting attention from media outlets province-wide. People in the area also took notice. Many walking outside that night stopped by to offer support; one uptown resident read one of our on-site Facebook updates, grabbed a sleeping bag out of his closet and came out to join us! With the opening of the new cold weather shelter in the city centre at the beginning of January, we hope this won’t be an annual event.

## Saint John Services

### Shelters

Coverdale Centre for Women Inc.  
 Halfway House - 634-1649  
 Emergency Wet Shelter - 672-6285  
 The Salvation Army - Booth Residential Services - 634-7021  
 Hestia House (women and children leaving domestic violence) - 634-7571  
 First Steps Housing Project (pregnant and parenting mothers age 16-29) - 693-2228  
 Out of the Cold shelter for men - 214-1294

### Youth

The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC) - 632-5531  
 (The Oasis Room, Switch 180 Case Management)  
 Youth Choices - 634-0788  
 ONE Change - ONE L.I.F.E. Program - 635-2035

### Housing

Saint John Non-Profit Housing Inc. - 658-1925  
 Housing Alternatives Inc. - 632-9393  
 Second Stage Safe Haven - 632-9289

### Food Services

Food Banks (for a full list of food banks and those who provide food services please visit  
[www.saintjohninfo.ca](http://www.saintjohninfo.ca) or [www.sjhdc.ca](http://www.sjhdc.ca))  
 Romero House - 642-7447  
 Outflow - jayme@sure-stone.com

### Health

AIDS Saint John - 652-2437  
 Community Health Centre - 632-5537  
 Open Door Club - 658-3196  
 Ridgewood Addiction Services - 674-4300

### Other

Family Resource Centre - 633-2182  
 Urban Core Support Network - 642-9033  
 John Howard Society - 657-5547  
 Saint John Community Chaplaincy - 634-8218  
 PASAGE Saint John - 642-4035

For information on other community services call the INFO-Line at 633-4636 or search our online database at [www.saintjohninfo.ca](http://www.saintjohninfo.ca)

## News and Notes

- **The Coverdale Centre for Women** completed their facelift project last year, thanks in large part to a \$5,000 gift from The Home Depot Canada Foundation. Coverdale received a cash donation of \$2,500 and a \$2,500 gift card from The Home Depot. Cash and card in hand, Coverdale repainted the centre and installed new stair coverings.



The Home Depot gift helped give Coverdale a warm and inviting feel for the women it serves. New photography also adorns the walls, donated by shelter coordinator and photographer Crystal Scott.



- In November, the Saint John Human Development Council (HDC) released the **2010 Child Poverty Report Card** for New Brunswick. In 2008, approximately one in eight children still lived below the poverty line in New Brunswick. While this number is still too high, the report showed signs of improvement for children in the province. Between 2007 and 2008, the child poverty rate decreased from 16.7% to 12%, which is below the national average and the third lowest rate in Canada. Since the House of Commons resolution in 1989 to eliminate child poverty, the province has had one of the biggest decreases (5.9%), bettered only by Saskatchewan and Alberta. In addition to the fact that the rate is still too high despite this progress, there were also some other worrisome trends. Food bank

usage is up between 2009 and 2010, and 34% of those served were children. The number of social assistance recipients is also up 4.2% since 2009. You can find the complete report on the HDC website: [sjhdc.ca](http://sjhdc.ca)

- The numbers on food bank usage came from **Hunger Count 2010**, a report card published by Food Banks Canada. Here are some of the other findings for N.B.:
  - 18,517 individuals were assisted by food banks in March 2010, an 18% increase over two years.
  - 13% reported employment income.
  - 9% received Employment Insurance.
  - 61% received Social Assistance
  - 6% received disability-related income supports.
  - 66% of food banks recorded an increase in usage.

You can find the complete report online: [foodbankscanada.ca](http://foodbankscanada.ca)

