



HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK 2013 REPORT

HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK 2013

Regional & North Shore Activities



I. Regional Activities

This year marked the eighth annual Homelessness Action Week (HAW) which took place across Metro Vancouver from October 13 -19th, 2013. This is an annual event focuses on bringing public awareness and understanding to the issue of homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region. The week was officially proclaimed Homelessness Action Week by the provincial government and many municipal governments including the City of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver.

This year's theme was 'Invisible Homelessness' and was chosen to draw awareness to those who are homeless, but often not visible and living without safe, adequate housing – couch surfing, in cars or vans, etc. This theme was also chosen to align with the Housing First initiatives and was a relevant theme for communities such as the North Shore where there are not large numbers of street homeless and many members of the general public are not aware that this is an issue locally.

During HAW the public is invited to participate in events across the region and in order to facilitate this a number of communication tools were created including posters, bus shelter ads and bookmarks. The www.Stophomelessness.ca website (below) was a primary call to action and provided information and how the public could get involved. New this year, a social media toolkit was created which included Tweets, a Twitter hashtag #startwithhome, and images which could be downloaded and used by the public and with a goal to get more young people engaged.

The screenshot shows the website of the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. The header includes the organization's name and a '3 WAYS TO HOME' logo. A navigation bar contains links: Home, About Us, Learn More, Metro Vancouver Homeless Counts, Homelessness Action Week 2013, and RSCH Business. A banner at the top states, 'Only one in three residents are satisfied with the progress we have made in solving homelessness.' The main content area features a large green box for 'HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK OCTOBER 13 - 19, 2013'. It includes a description of the event and a call to action: 'Learn more by clicking on the images below.' Below this are three images with labels: 'UNDERSTAND' (a person sleeping), 'LEARN ABOUT' (a young man), and 'TAKE ACTION!' (an older woman). To the right of the main content is a sidebar titled 'Learn More about Homelessness and Solutions' with a list of links to various organizations and resources. At the bottom right, there is a section titled 'Take the Survey! Find out how much you know'.

Additionally, there was a successful media and PR campaign which featured four spokespersons including the RSCH Chair, AHSC Chair, and two community action leaders from the North Shore and Richmond.

The full regional report is available upon request, please contact Lynne Henshaw, North Shore Homelessness Task Force at lhenshaw@telus.net.

II. North Shore Activities & Outcomes

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) pulled together an exciting program this year 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 resulting in the following City of North Vancouver Council Resolution:



October 10, 2013

File: 5040-04-01

Lynne Henshaw
North Shore Homelessness Task Force Coordinator
<lenshaw@telus.net>

Dear Ms. Henshaw:

Re: *Homelessness Action Week 2013*

The City Council at its regular meeting of Monday, October 7, 2013, unanimously endorsed the following resolution:

"**THAT** the correspondence of Lynne Henshaw, North Shore Homelessness Task Force Coordinator, October 2, 2013, regarding Homelessness Action Week 2013 – Schedule of Events, be received and filed with thanks;

THAT correspondence be forwarded to the District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Provincial MLA's and Federal MP's on the North Shore, and to the Provincial and Federal Ministers responsible for Housing;

THAT a report of City initiatives in affordable housing be prepared and, subject to receipt by Council, be forwarded to the District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, and to the Provincial MLA's and Federal MP's on the North Shore;

AND THAT the City request a meeting to include representation from the North Shore municipalities, the Province and the Federal Government to discuss homelessness on the North Shore."

- In addition, two subsequent media articles regarding Council delegations were covered and published in the North Shore News.
- A local NSHTF media release was distributed and complemented the regional PR efforts by getting the word out about the local North Shore events which were published in local papers.
- A front page story in the North Shore Outlook engaged discussions locally about the issues. Follow up conversations with reporters for both local papers happened and ideas for stories on the topic of homelessness in the future were discussed.

<http://www.northshoreoutlook.com/news/228073671.html>



- A homeless person met at NS Connect Day by the NSHTF Coordinator, was interested in speaking out to the media and therefore was connected to the Metro Vancouver HAW PR team. This homeless person subsequently spoke (anonymously) on a segment on News 1130 radio; he may be interested in speaking out again locally and could serve as a spokesperson for future media stories;

- A special thank you goes to Charles Macgregor who works with Salvation Army. Charles volunteered to be a regional media spokesperson; He spoke about homelessness issues in general, as well as highlighting the upcoming Canadian Street Soccer Championships which will be happening on the North Shore in 2014;

<http://globalnews.ca/video/902901/homelessness-action-week-2013>



- www.northshorehomelessness.org was updated regularly and leveraged to communicate events to both agencies and the public;
- Twitter @nshomelessness was used and updated regularly and since then followers have doubled. Twitter and the website will continue to be improved and updated so these can be leveraged more effectively going forward.
- The District of West Vancouver provided space and hanging fees required for 6 bus shelter ads
- 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 attracting local business and sponsors, donors, and volunteers needed for Connect Day and other events. Initiatives included hanging posters in key locations, calling on local businesses, and getting our key messages out through various e-newsletters and distribution lists.
- Postings for volunteers were put on Craigslist which resulted in over 30 people volunteering for North Shore Connect and led to a substantial donation of shampoos, soaps and lotions.
- Following HAW, the NSHTF Coordinator was contacted directly regarding a CBC Radio show post-HAW. The reporter indicated this was due to other local media stories on homelessness: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/north-vancouver-faces-affordable-housing-crisis-1.2418983>

North Shore Events:

Kicking off on the North Shore on October 10th and running through October 19th, the following report presents the highlights and outcomes of Homelessness Action Week 2013 on the North Shore.

OCTOBER 10 (Thursday) – Movie, Dinner & Discussion Night 6:00pm – 9:00pm

HAW on the North Shore kicked off at Ambleside Youth Centre in West Vancouver where 40+ youth enjoyed a meal, and film: “Something to Eat, A Place to Sleep and Someone Who Gives A Damn” followed by discussions on the topic of homelessness. An inspiring young woman who has faced many challenges in her life, including jail and homelessness, gave a Keynote address. She is currently a client at Hollyburn Family Services and has expressed interest in being a media spokesperson for NSHTF media outreach in the future. Organizers noted that the youth would have liked to have seen more adults and attend to take part in the discussion.

OCTOBER 14 (MONDAY) - Thanksgiving Dinner 5:00pm

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

OCTOBER 15 (TUESDAY) – Community Dinner and Music at 5:30pm

A community dinner was served in cooperation with Sharing Abundance, at the North Lonsdale United Church. Meals were served to music, provided by members of the church community and dinner attendees.

OCTOBER 16 (WEDNESDAY) – North Shore Connect Day, 8:30am – 3:00pm

This year Connect Day was held at John Braithwaite Community Centre in Lower Lonsdale. 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. Community members found the event to be very helpful in accessing many hard to reach services in one location and learning about new services.

The Salvation Army hosted a full Thanksgiving meal with all of the trimmings. This year's Connect Day had 131 people attend, the most who have ever attended. This was due in part to increased communications and adding a bus service which had outreach workers on board to get the word out and to transport more street homeless to the event. Similar to past years, there was a high percentage of seniors in addition to participants from the Farsi community. The event included the following services, *for the full report, please see Appendix A.*

Breakfast at 8:30am • Lunch at 1pm • Health Clinics • Foot Care • Flu vaccines • Clothing vouchers • Shoes • Socks • Hygiene Kits • Hair Cuts Housing outreach • Employment programs • Income assistance advocacy/Tax assistance • Swim/Skate/Fitness access cards • Leisure Access Counsellor • Counselling and Mental Health Programs • Drug/Alcohol Programs • Smoking Cessation

OCTOBER 16 (WEDNESDAY) - Youth Dinner – 5:00pm -9:00pm

An event was hosted by Hollyburn Family Services Youth Safe House which was open to present and past youth. 15 youth attended and took part in a dinner plus planned activities and access to housing/shelter outreach. A public health nurse was also in attendance and the youth took advantage of flu shots and other health care needs.

OCTOBER 17 (THURSDAY) – Mothers & Kids Lunch, 11:00am - 2:00pm

Held at the Salvation Army this year, this event was attended by 27 women of all ages, 6 young children attended. A warm meal complete with festive decorations was provided. An additional benefit was the opportunity for the various service agency representatives and outreach workers to meet, connect and have the opportunity to network. The following services were provided:

Lunch • Hair Cuts • Clothing vouchers • Employment advice • Counselling/Mental Health Programs • Public Health Nurses/Flu Shots • Free child minding provided

OCTOBER 18 (FRIDAY) – Senior's Tea, 10:00am - 12:00pm

This event was held at North Shore Neighbourhood House, 12 seniors enjoyed tea, snacks and conversation.

OCTOBER 18 (FRIDAY) – Open Mic at Lookout Shelter, 12:30PM

Open Mic at the Lookout Shelter had 8 participants and another 15 audience members enjoyed the music and performances.

OCTOBER 19 (SATURDAY) – Street Soccer Exhibition Game – 4:30pm

Street soccer was held indoors this year at John Braithwaite Community Centre. Teams from the North Shore & across the Lower Mainland were invited. 11 male players came for soccer and pizza dinner. City North Vancouver Councillor Craig Keating attended, he chatted with the players and watched the game.

Feedback from agencies, volunteers and the HAW sub-committee has been compiled detailing ideas and recommendations for HAW/Connect Day next year. Thank you letters and emails were sent to sponsors, donors and volunteers.

A special thank you goes out to our community partners, sponsors, donors and community volunteers, Homelessness Action Week would not be possible without this support.

Our Community Partners:

Vancouver Coastal Health
Lookout Emergency Aid Society
Rotary Clubs of the North Shore
Tiddly Cove Lions Club
Canadian Mental Health Association
Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
District of North Vancouver
City of North Vancouver
District of West Vancouver
Hollyburn Family Services Society
Harvest Project
North Shore Crisis Services Society
North Vancouver Recreation Commission
North Shore Neighbourhood House
North Shore Salvation Army
YWCA One Stop Career Shop
Soroptimist International of North & West Vancouver
Cove Community Church
North Shore Unitarian Church
Mt. Seymour United Church

Our Sponsors:



Additional Sponsors & Supporters:

- Holly's Hair Salon
- Starbucks Coffee
- Private Donor who contributed 5 boxes of shampoos, soap and beauty products
- Preceptor Alpha Kappa Sorority
- Dr. Alnoon Somji Inc.
- Domino's Pizza
- Cobb's Bread, Edgemont Village
- Anonymous donors
- 35+ community volunteers

Appendix A:

Homeless Connect Event 2013 Outcomes Report Form as submitted to Metro Vancouver:

	#		#
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

Services Attendance & Outcomes:

Number of clients who received the following services offered at North Shore Connect Day 2013:

#		#	
200	Soup kitchen /food: Breakfast: 100 Thanksgiving Lunch: 100 clients (+ 30 Connect Day volunteers/Agency staff) <i>(note: many of the same people attended and stayed for both meals)</i>	5	Tax Services
100	Hygiene Kits were created and given away	24	Hope in the Shadows
15	Employment services - YWCA/WorkBC - 15 clients were seen who they felt would go on to access services through them	120+	Used Clothing Tables
25+	Housing referral or placement	120	Salvation Army Clothing Vouchers

60	Lookout Shelter – provided advice in a number of different areas: - Re-connection with current/past clients: 32 - New connections with people who need/may need services in the future or sought advice: 28 Total: 60	15	North Shore Multicultural Society – <i>Note: This was helpful especially for participants (many Farsi speaking) whose English skills were minimal. This helped them to learn about the different services available in their language.</i>
40+	Hair cuts	31	Immunizations
0	Optometrist – <i>Note: We couldn't offer this service based on the volunteer's availability this year, but we had many requests and people asking for it.</i>	80	Foot Care OT/ Shoe Fit/Hand out
30	Diabetes, Nurse/Dietitian	14	Diabetes CanRisk - BCIT Nursing Students
44	Dental Hygienist	16	Foot Care Tx, RN – <i>Note: 21 people signed up but only 16 could be seen based on supplies/time. Those not seen were made aware of other options for this.</i>
52	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention BCIT Nursing Students	28	Health Literacy
13	Lung Testing - Respiratory	20	Nurse Practitioner
30	Nutrition	23	Tobacco Cessation
34	Stop HIV/AIDS Testing		

Other outcomes/information you tracked for your Connect Event:

Where/How did you hear about Connect?

	#
Church	2
Salvation Army	10
Friends/Work of Mouth	14
Through John Braithwaite Comm. Centre	5
Posters	9
Shelter (Lookout)	10
Food Bank (NSNH)	16
Mental Health Program	2
North Shore News	1

Safe House	1
Internet	1