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**Renfrew Collingwood**  
**Homelessness Panel Presentation**  
July 8, 2009

**How and Why Got Involved**

- Identified as an issue in various neighbourhood meetings. Visible presence on the street was increasing.
- Have a history in our neighbourhood of working together so invited people to a meeting to see what we could do (both local service providers and residents).

**Process and Evolution**

- Only neighbourhood model outside of Downtown Eastside was Kitsilano Community Centre
- Began to do research and develop our capacity; visited other programs
- Consultation and training meetings with Judy Graves
- Advice from Health – cleaning and prevention of disease as well as Vets for Pet Care.
- Held a series of training for committee and volunteers

**Initial**

- Addictions
- Sensitivity
- Non-violent crisis intervention

## Later

- De-escalating situation
- Emergency First Aid
- Mental Health First Aid

Training is continuous and ongoing. It involves those most closely connected (volunteers, committee and staff that work directly) as well as custodians, receptions, senior staff.

- Developed mission, later we needed to develop parameters outside of program
- Safety and behaviours guidelines.

## **Mobilization of the Neighbourhood**

- Food Security provide breakfasts, invited homeless in
- Focus on the local – people and agencies in our neighbourhood

Examples:

- Local chiropractors and acupuncturist
- Local businesses contributed supplies, toiletries, dinners, food
- Evergreen has nurse practitioners
- High school and elementary schools have fundraising drives
- Developed, with SPARC a sensitivity manual to start kitchen table discussions - continue to raise awareness
- Exposed people through relationships
  - Story of Jenny, story of volunteer

- Engaged a coalition of churches, provide volunteers, funds and exploring a second meeting place.
- Broadening involvement in community, some gardening, others volunteering, accessing more recreation. People in the program – Entertained (flute at Senior's Christmas Party)
- Housed many (19) through connections/networks

### **Conflict Resolution**

- Monitor situation and incidents weekly. Change practices and approaches based on learning.
- Operate in a mix used facility, had conflict with some parents and participants, others were more accepting
  - Change times, building access policies, educated homeless on outcomes of behaviour
- Held meetings listened – bring in facilitators
- Educate on real situation – not speculation (i.e. numbers, incidents, reported needles)
- Had to reduce numbers, explored membership system. Careful on expanding too quickly

### **New Areas of Development**

- Homeless Street Outreach (contract with the Province) – partner with Coast Mental Health
- Target limited resource in large area so will be holding a homeless count

- Share materials developed: sensitivity manual, research paper and mapping document and action plan.
- Bring in more services (more recreation, mental health support)
- Advocate and be creative around housing
- Mapped housing for advocacy and appropriate referral

### **Lesson Learning**

- Worth doing – we have grown as a neighbourhood and community
- Skill development is ongoing
- Can't do it alone – need lots of partners and sometimes they come from places we never expected
- We learn by sharing stories (the challenges, the positive impacts).
- Resources are a challenge however, using creativity as well as tenacity does bring support forward. Our sources have been: City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, local businesses and institutions, United Way, Province of BC, neighbourhood initiatives.

## Collingwood Neighbourhood House's Homeless Breakfast and Shower Program

### Timeline of Events 2002 –2007

- Oct 2002 • CNH Food Security Institute starts to brainstorm the idea of a community breakfast
- April 2003 • **"Wednesday and Saturday Breakfast Program" is started for community members**
- Sept 03-04 • Strategic Planning and Community Building
- May 2004 • Task Groups formed – Shower, laundry support, identifying local meal programs, etc
- June 2004 • Visited Kitsilano Community Centre Saturday Breakfast/Shower Program Food Outreach
- Developed mission statement
- Oct 2004 • **Homeless Program Coordinator hired**
- Nov 2004 • Discussions with Evergreen Health Centre for nurse practitioner support in program
- Devised guidelines for behaviour
- Jan 2005 • **Started "Breakfast and Shower Program for Homeless"**. Community members continue to attend and be involved with the Breakfast Program.
- Clothing exchange available
- Public health tour to identify appropriate cleaning procedures to prevent spread of diseases
- Feb 2005 • Received \$10,000 from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
- Apr 2005 • Training received from Evergreen Addictions Team. Sensitivity training workshops scheduled
- **Averaging about 8 people showering each week**
- April 2005 • Intoxicants & Patrons workshop held
- Community Policing Centre reports complaints, increase in found needles, and people sleeping outside
- May 2005 • Evergreen agrees to have a nurse practitioner present during the Wed's breakfast program
- Non Violent Crisis Intervention training workshops (held again in March 2006)
- Aug 2005 • Discussions around need to set parameters for participants during non program hours
- Oct 2005 • Received \$15,000 City Innovations grant
- Hosted citywide info session on Meal/Shower programs
- Nov 2005 • Safety & Guidelines of Behaviour paper developed
- Jan 2006 • Local Chiropractor begins volunteering services in program
- Received \$5,000 through food security funding and \$8,000 from United Way
- Mar 2006 • **Sensitivity Training Curriculum and Manual developed**
- May 2006 • Beginning to hear concerns from childcare parents and staff on issues related to Breakfast Program participants. Developed strategies for addressing concerns
- Staff and volunteers participate in Mental Health First Aid course
- Aug 2006 • Coordinator reports increase in violent incidents
- Coordinator building relationship with St. Mary's Church and interfaith communities
- Oct 2006 • Concerns from childcare parents and residents related to Wednesday Program continue
- Held "town hall" meeting with parents to hear all the concerns and explain how CNH will address them.
- Committee discusses possibility of incorporating a membership system for program
- Nov 2006 • Wed Breakfast Program running smoothly since changes made but childcare parents still have concerns
- Recommendation to CNH Board to end Wednesday program in December 2006
- Dec 2006 • **Wed Breakfast Program is closed**
- Jan 2007 • Running out of funding – looking at options
- Feb 2007 • Saturday Breakfast and Shower running smoothly
- Program participants no longer have access to health practitioner in program and are not following through on the medical appointments
- April 2007 • New support from community partners, i.e. Knights of Columbus, Muslim community
- Nov 2007 • Continuing to develop partnership with faith communities, i.e. St Mary's Church interested in starting a mid-week Breakfast Program
- Mental health services interested in connecting with program and supporting participants