

Alliance to End Homelessness



REPORT CARD ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN OTTAWA JAN TO DEC 2011

The Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa (ATEH) established targets in 2009 which would, if met for ten years, end homelessness.

Increased investment by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments in targeted spending can make a difference!

1. REDUCE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EMERGENCY SHELTER

Annual target: 500 fewer people a year. Meeting this target for ten years would end homelessness for all but 2000 people¹.

2. SHORTER SHELTER STAYS

Annual target: a 3 day reduction per year in average stays could reduce stays to 30 day stay in 10 years.

3. CREATE HOUSING THAT'S AFFORDABLE

Annual target: 1000 new built units and/or rent supplements. Over 10 years, the community would have 10,000 new units with 4,000 on the social housing wait list.

4. HOUSING IS MORE AFFORDABLE

Annual target: a 10 year goal and constant movement towards it could reach 30% of income spent on rent for a bachelor apartment for a single person on low income.

2010	ATEH Indicator	2011	Grade
------	----------------	------	-------

7,049 **INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS** (Total) 7,299

D+

SUBGROUPS ²	2010	2011
Families	807	841
–Children ³	1,382	1,499
–Adults	1,069	1,137
Youth	441	401
Single Women	1,010	1,087
Single Men	3,284	3,223

63 **AVERAGE DAYS STAYED** 67

72 days	Families	82 days
36 days	Youth	37 days
52 days	Single Women	55 days
60 days	Single Men	60 days

F

331 **NEW AFFORDABLE UNITS** 739

331 newly created units 203 newly created units & 536 households helped with rent

A

No **HOUSING IS AFFORDABLE** (Percent Income to Pay Rent) No

44%	Minimum Wage	44%
121%	Ontario Works	121%
69%	Ontario Disability Support Program	68%

F

- Emergencies like fire, family breakdown, illness, etc. will continue to displace some people temporarily each year.
- The sum total of people in the sub groups is different from the total of unique people by 48 due to occasional changes in age or family status over the course of the year.
- Dependents 18 & under.
- The 536 includes rent supplements / housing allowances

Ottawa agencies and volunteers continue to provide services and supports for homeless people by creating innovative new programs and maintaining existing ones. These efforts led to the positive reduction in the number of men!

Affordable Housing Gets 1st Ever **A**

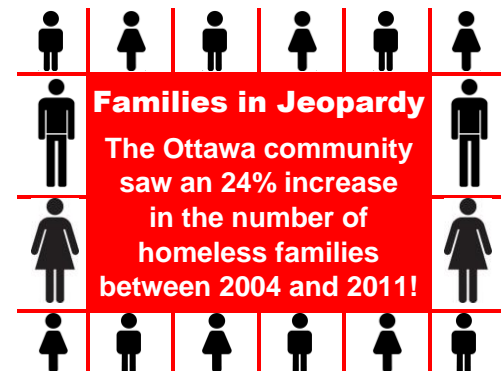
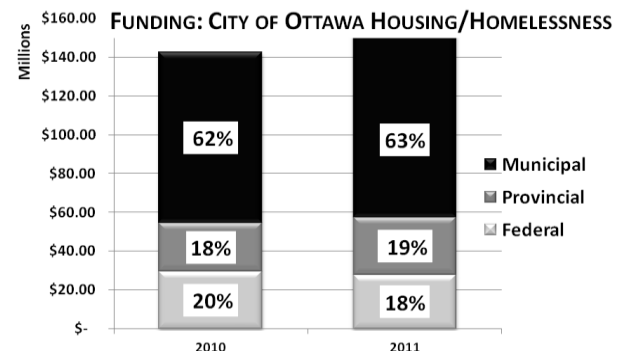
Community partners met ATEH target for increases in affordable housing!

Notably, the Ottawa Municipal government used a good part of its new \$14 million in 2011 to invest in housing and homelessness and helped 508 of the 536 households assisted with paying rent.

Three levels of government together provided funded the community to create 203 new units.

Why the two F's?

Length of shelter stay and affordability both received an F. Each of the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments will need to increase investments to create more new affordable housing and to see advances for those with the lowest incomes.



DATA CENTREFOLD – on pgs. 8 & 9 – see the trends & numbers behind the grades

Download the full Report Card in English or French at www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

IN THIS REPORT CARD

On page

1. 2011 grades: affordable housing gets 1st ever "A"
2. About the Alliance...
3. A better journey: family shelter to permanent housing
4. The City's investment
5. Investment equals real change for people
6. The Province of Ontario can do more
7. Federal issues update
8. 2011 shelter use & length of stay; 8-year trend
9. 2011 affordable housing & affordability; 8-year trend
10. The Health and Housing in Transition Study
12. Community Forum on Homelessness
13. Aboriginal families in Ottawa
14. Renting a home in Ottawa
15. Remembering
16. ASK ME – *We need your help*

Report Card Data Sources

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

City of Ottawa

Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), City of Ottawa.
Shelter use data revised to 2011 methodology

Province of Ontario

Social Housing Registry of Ottawa

Statistics Canada

Supportive Housing Network of Ottawa

What is homelessness?

- Living on the street
- Staying overnight in temporary shelters
- Staying in places not meant for human habitation
- Moving continuously among temporary housing arrangements provided by strangers, friends or family ("couch surfing").

Who is at risk of becoming homeless?

Families, youth and adults can lose their housing for any number of reasons: losing a job, having an income too low to stay in suitable housing, fleeing abuse. Some are at risk because of mental illness or substance use problems. Others lack the life skills or ability to live on their own.

2011 Highlights

Message from the Alliance to End Homelessness

1. **The community ended the year with a powerful message for senior levels of government that increasing investment tied to targets results in real gains.**
 - **An additional investment by the Municipal government meant the community gained 739 new affordable units in 2011 through a mix of 203 newly created units and rent supplements or housing allowances for another 536 households.**
 - **The increase in the availability of housing for those on low incomes combined with existing services and supports shows the power of targeted additional spending.**
2. **Unfortunately at the same time, families stayed in shelters an average of 82 days due to the lack of appropriate rental stock; that meant an 8.5% increase in children who stayed in shelters**
 - **The number of homeless households increased from 5,542 to 5,552. There was a 4.2 % increase in families. There was also a 7.6% increase in single women even with the opening of Cornerstone's 43 new spaces in 2011.**
3. **Increases in supportive housing are making a difference. The hopeful 2% reduction of 61 single men in shelters points to the importance of creating supportive housing like the Oaks for those with the longest stays in this group.**
4. **Housing affordability for people with low incomes showed no improvement except for those who received assistance with rent.**

The Alliance to End Homelessness is a non-profit, non-partisan organization.

It produces an annual Report Card to track progress in meeting targets to end homelessness in Ottawa.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Action-Logement / Action-Housing
Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa
Bronson Centre
Bruce House
Canadian Mental Health Association – Ottawa Branch
Canadian Red Cross
Caring and Sharing Exchange
Carlington Community Health Centre
Catholic Immigration Centre
Causeway Work Centre
Centre 454
Centre 507 Drop-In
Centre espoir Sophie
Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services, University of Ottawa
Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC)
Centretown Community Health Centre
City of Ottawa, Housing Services Branch
Cooperative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario
Cornerstone Housing for Women/Le Pilier
Daybreak Non-Profit Shelter
Debra Dynes Family House
Elizabeth Fry Society
Emily Murphy Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Family Services Ottawa
First Baptist Church
Good Day Workshop
Harvest House Ministries
Horizons Renaissance Inc.
Housing Help
Jewish Family Services
John Howard Society of Ottawa
Minwaashin Lodge/Oshki Kizis Healing Lodge
Monfort Renaissance
Multifaith Housing Initiative
Nelson House of Ottawa-Carleton
Nepean Housing Corporation
Nepean, Rideau, Osgoode Community Resource Centre
Nursing Students of Ontario (NSO)
Oasis Program at Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
Odawa Native Friendship Centre
Ontario Association of Social Workers, Eastern Branch
Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG)
Carleton University
Operation Come Home
Options Bytown Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Ottawa Action on Poverty / Action Pauvreté
Ottawa (OAP-APO)
Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)
Ottawa Inner City Health Inc.
Ottawa Inner City Ministries
Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre (OPC)
Ottawa Salus Corporation
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Psychiatric Survivors of Ottawa (PSO)
Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, Community Mental Health
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
Shepherds of Good Hope
Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Somerset West Community Health Centre
South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre
St. Joe's Women's Centre
Stewart and Associates
The Ottawa Food Bank
The Ottawa Mission
The Salvation Army Booth Centre
The Well/La Source
Tungasuvvingat Inuit
Wabano Centre For Aboriginal Health
West End Legal Services
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
YMCA-YWCA, National Capital Region
Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
Youville Centre

A better journey from a family shelter to permanent housing

“If it weren’t for the *Families First* team, I’m not sure where we would be. They’ve helped me with the kids, they got me connected with resources in the community and they got me connected to a counselor.”

A *Families First* parent



Photo: David Vincent

Seven of the 10 members of the *Families First* Team

This quote reflects the experiences of families using the *Families First* program since its recent launch in September 2011. This program is funded as part of the City’s \$14 million Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan and supplemented by the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Prior to this, families received minimal support during their transition from shelters to community housing, resulting in many cases of returns to the shelter.

- In 2010, out of the 807 different families who used a shelter, approximately 25% used a shelter more than once.

The *Families First* team assists families from diverse backgrounds and with complex needs, including families with a history of living in poverty and new Canadians with added challenges of language and cultural integration.

Most families seeking to rent housing in the private market discover that they cannot afford to do so due to:

- High market rents.
- Freezing of income supports.

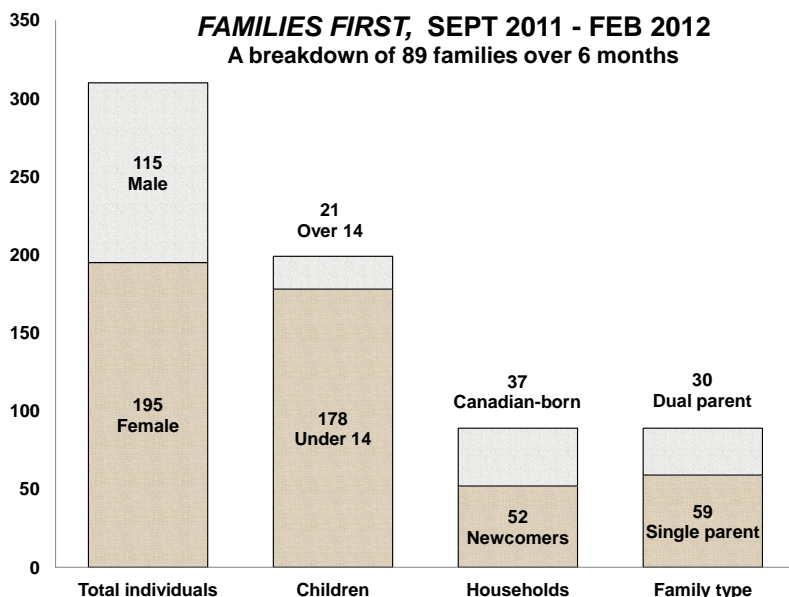
Such factors lead to a majority of parents not being able to afford basic necessities for themselves and their families, and the resulting emotional stress only serves to compound this affordability issue.

Families First provides holistic and multi-disciplinary support to families during their critical transition from homeless shelters to permanent housing. The program’s case workers:

- Engage with families to develop a focused plan to address issues that impact their ability to maintain new housing
- Connect families to resources in their community.

Making these connections is critical in their plans as it helps in improved adaptation of adult and child family members by:

- Ensuring greater housing stability
- Reducing disruption and stress, and
- Helping to form stronger networks of formal and informal supports.



With the support of the *Families First* program, families are able to leave the shelter system with the confidence that continuing services will be available to assist them in linking to community supports, therefore reducing the threat of loss of housing.

THE CITY'S INVESTMENT

The \$14 M Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan

Approved in May! Rolled-out in July! 2011 Goals Exceeded!

Over 1,000 additional households helped



Prevention 2011

COMMUNITY APPLICATION SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (ODSP)

174 households granted ODSP benefits – a cumulative increase in financial resources of approximately \$990K to low income households.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUND

216 low income households benefited from emergency assistance for heat and hydro arrears.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

51 youth from low income families graduated August 31, 2011 from a unique program of leadership development, paid employment, training, and post secondary mentorship.

100 youth assessed for an employment program, **40** secured employment or enrolled in training/education, and **34** successfully completed their "Youth Initiative" program.

SOCIAL HOUSING REPAIRS / RENEWAL

38 repair projects completed in approximately 50 Ottawa communities to help improve health, safety, accessibility, lower energy costs, etc.



Safe and Affordable Housing 2011

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

26 stacked townhouse units approved to be built in 2012, **4 to be large and accessible**. Occupancy planned for the 4th quarter of 2012.

RENT SUPPLEMENTS / HOUSING ALLOWANCES

183 additional households receive rent supplements and go off the social housing waiting list.

In 2012, up to 200 households or individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless will qualify for a housing allowance to help make housing more affordable and sustainable.



Supports 2011

SUPPORTS

68 families, with 128 children aged 14 and under, who were homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless were provided with supports from a multi-disciplinary team.

Over 80 single men and women were supported to move from emergency shelters into housing with supports or from transitional housing into independent living.

42 homeless women with complex physical and psycho-social needs moved to Cornerstone.

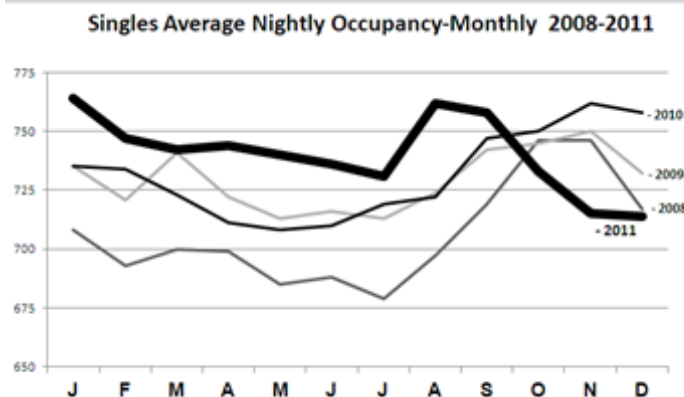
Work began by City & key community partners on Transitional Emergency Shelter Program.

MOVING FROM THE STREET TO A HOME

The Street Outreach Network saw a steady decrease in the number of individuals living on the street from an estimated 120 to fewer than 40 over the last three years.

In 2011, 17 people were housed and supported thanks to the efforts of that Network and the availability of new Rent Supplements and Housing Allowances. A "Housing First" approach providing housing and supports works!

REDUCED SHELTER OCCUPANCY FOR SINGLE PEOPLE



January 2011 started with an all-time high demand in shelter use for single people.

By December 2011, numbers were lower than the same month in the three previous years.

The \$14M Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan was approved in May 2011 and implementation started in July. This started to directly impact shelter occupancy and contributed to the reduction seen in the graph above.

OVER-ALL LENGTH OF STAY

Despite the monthly occupancy reduction by December, the overall length of shelter stay increased in 2011. Researchers report that 12% of shelter users in Ottawa have multiple or long stays and represent 52% of shelter usage⁽¹⁾. The longer time spent in shelters points to the growing need for more supportive housing for the individuals in that 12%.

Community initiatives like The Oaks (2010) and Cornerstone Housing for Women (2011) provide affordable supportive housing and meet some of this need as does as supporting people in regular housing. More of these kinds of services are needed in our City.

⁽¹⁾ Aubry, T., Farrell, S., Hwang, S. & Calhoun, M. *Identifying Patterns of Shelter Stays in Three Ontario Cities*, presented at the 7th Annual Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa Research Forum (November 2010).

NEEDS OF FAMILIES

One new trend is that more families who become homeless are larger and some include extended family members. Finding larger affordable units in Ottawa is a challenge. In the meanwhile this increases the number of individuals and the overall length of stay in shelters.

\$5M in rent supplements and housing allowances and an expected 253 new affordable units in 2012 (including the *Carsons Road* construction) will help meet this growing need.

COMING SOON!

Carsons Road is being built for unique circumstances, including accessible units for large families.

Watch for 26 units opening in 2012!



First time since 2007

HOUSEHOLDS ON THE REGISTRY WAITING LIST DECREASE

Since the implementation of the City's 14 M Housing and Homelessness Investment Plan in July, 2011 Ottawa has experienced a decrease in the number of people on the Centralized Waiting List.

YEAR HOUSEHOLDS

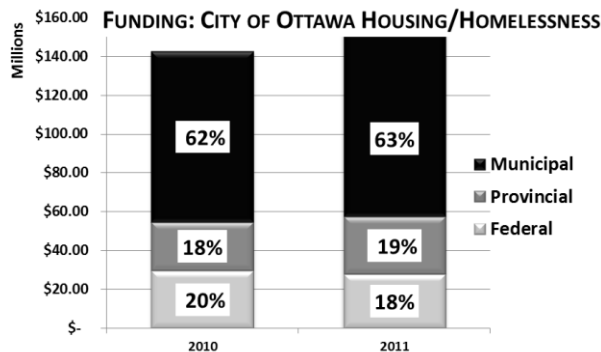
2011	9,977
2010	10,502
2009	10,235
2008	9,692
2007	9,370

Province of Ontario can do more



Some of the ways the Province of Ontario helps the Ottawa community address homelessness

- The Provincial Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) funding is combined with the City's homelessness funding to provide operating funds to 21 agencies offering programs that **helped 14,128 Ottawa households in 2011**.
 - Agencies focus on preventing homelessness, helping people while they are homeless including helping them obtain and keep housing. Agencies work together to coordinate the homelessness service system.
- The province contributes 80% of the per diem amount for an individual or family member to stay in a shelter; the other 20% is from the Municipal Government.
- Provincial health funding provides case management with rent supplements for people with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Through a Canada-Ontario initiative, the 2011-2014 *Investment in Affordable Housing*, the province funds the creation and repair of affordable housing and provides rental and down payment assistance to make housing more affordable (previous program was Action Ottawa).



Contact Ottawa's Provincial Politicians:

Ottawa Centre	MPP Yasir Naqvi	ynaqvi.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Ottawa South	Premier Dalton McGuinty	dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Ottawa West-Nepean	MPP Hon. Bob Chiarelli	bchiarelli.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Ottawa—Orléans	MPP Phil McNeely	pmcneely.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Ottawa-Vanier	MPP Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	mmeilleur.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
Nepean-Carleton	MPP Lisa Macleod	lisa.macleod@pc.ola.org

The Province of Alberta is making a big difference. While Ontario does not have a specific plan yet, Alberta's 10-year plan to end homelessness reaches year three in March 2012 and has already assisted over 4,800 formerly homeless people, including 961 families, to have a safe home with supports to remain housed. The overall budget to support homeless people in Alberta for 2012-13 is \$110 million. The Calgary Homelessness Foundation, one of Alberta's communities with a local plan, recently reported good progress:

- 1,376 to be housed in 2011/12 (estimated total of 4,000 since January 2008); about 1/3 are chronically or episodically homeless
- Now 14,000 households are at imminent risk of homelessness; the previous estimate was 72,000
- The 2012 Homeless Count showed 3,190 people at any given time, suggesting a reduction of 11.4% since 2008
- 64 people were found to be sleeping rough in Calgary, compared with an estimate of 569 in May 2008
- A 50% decrease in emergency response visits and days in jail and a 60% reduction in interactions with police

Ontario MPP's can make more of a difference!

1. HELP OTTAWA BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING!

Ask Ottawa's Provincial Politicians to put more money for affordable housing in each provincial budget in addition to the funds now provided through the Canada-Ontario *Affordable Housing Investment* initiative. Investing in affordable housing is the right thing to do. **It also adds to economic growth and creates jobs too.**

- **65 241 Housing Starts in Ontario in 2011, an increase of 8%!**
The province can improve housing starts by funding the creation of new affordable rental housing that people on low incomes can afford.
- This housing not only provides a place to live for an individual or family, it also provides thousands of jobs **and generates taxes, fees and levies for all three levels of government.**

2. INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH SPENDING

Ask MPPs to make sure funding for supports will be there when it is needed for new supportive housing projects and to support people living in the general community.

Ask MPPs to increase Housing First programs that support people with mental illness in securing and maintaining safe housing.



Shepherds of Good Hope

Photo: David Vincent

How did federal government help the Ottawa community to assist homeless people in 2011?

HOMELESS PARTNERING STRATEGY (HPS)

- In 2011, **6,756 households** in Ottawa were helped by 24 homelessness programs such as *Housing Loss Prevention* and *Housing Search and Stabilization*. The programs received operating funds from HPS delivered by the City of Ottawa.
- HPS funded large and small capital projects to bolster the physical infrastructure of the service system; a Community Capacity Building Training Program provided specialized training for front line staff.
- One capital project built **42-units of supportive housing for chronically homeless women**. In mid- 2011 Cornerstone Housing for Women opened this project thanks to funding from all three levels of government and a successful fundraising campaign. The tenants have permanent supportive housing and supports for health care, activities of daily living and life skills.

HOUSING

- Federal/Provincial/Ottawa housing funds created: **6 units** on Crichton Street; **69 seniors units** at Eastern Christian Co-op; **58 units** at OCISO's Presland Project and **28 units** of Aboriginal Housing at Gignul Non-profit Housing, in addition to Cornerstone Housing for Women **42 units**.

Let your federal politician know YOU want MORE housing funding, not less!

The local Municipal Council demonstrated leadership by increasing its investment in 2011 and the impact has already begun.

Federal investment decreased by 2% in 2011.

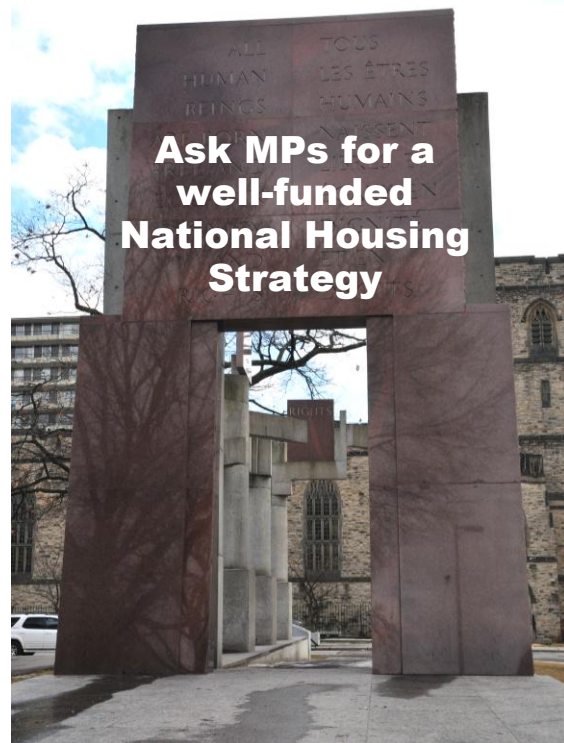
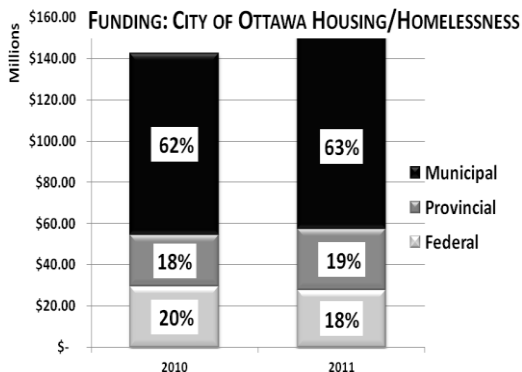


Photo: David Vincent

Ottawa's Human Rights Monument

Our country, our community needs it!

The Alliance to End Homelessness would hope to see:

- An amount equal to 1% of the GDP going to federal investments in affordable housing as suggested by the Wellesley Institute.
- Federal government protection of Canada's 600,000 units of existing social housing and reinvestment funds of from expiring social housing operating agreements.
- Acknowledging that creating better affordable housing outcomes is slow work, the Alliance sees the necessity of strengthening the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

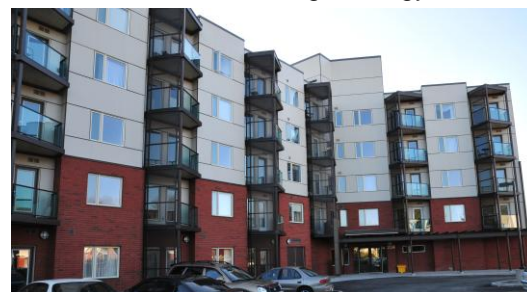


Photo: David Vincent

Eastern Ontario Christian Seniors Co-op: 69 units

Ottawa's federal politicians

Ottawa Centre MP	Paul Dewar	paul.dewar@parl.gc.ca
Ottawa South MP	David McGuinty	david.mcguinty@parl.gc.ca
Ottawa West-Nepean MP	Hon. John Baird	john.baird@parl.gc.ca
Ottawa-Orléans MP	Royal Galipeau	royal.galipeau@parl.gc.ca
Ottawa-Vanier MP	Hon. Mauril Bélanger	mauril.belanger@parl.gc.ca
Nepean-Carleton MP	Pierre Poilievre	pierre.poilievre@parl.gc.ca

Charter Challenge

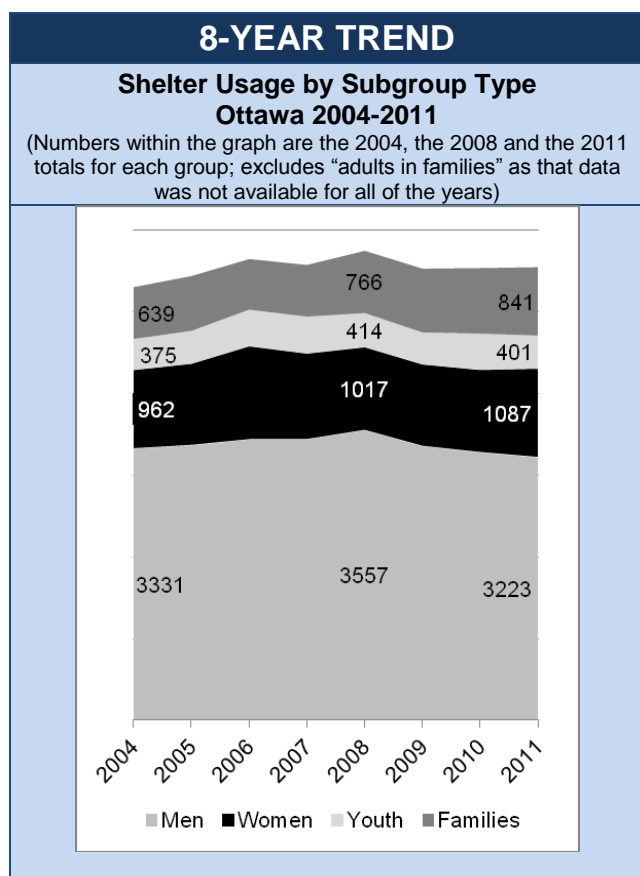
On Tuesday, November 22, 2011 formerly and currently homeless Ontarians marked National Housing Day by serving the Attorney General of Canada with nearly ten thousand pages of evidence establishing that the governments of Canada and Ontario have violated their *Charter* rights under section 7 and section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by creating and maintaining conditions that lead to and sustain homelessness and inadequate housing.

Follow the case at <http://www.acto.ca/en/cases/right-to-housing.html>

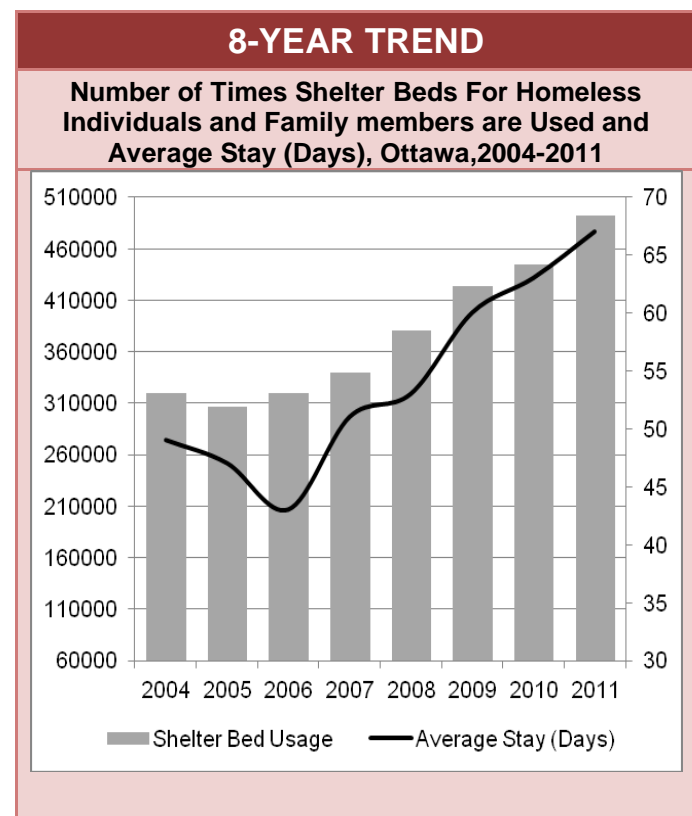
REDUCING EMERGENCY SHELTER USERS			
2011 TARGET: 500 FEWER	2010	2011	D+
TOTAL # OF INDIVIDUALS & FAMILY MEMBERS ¹	7,049	7,299	+250
# TIMES SHELTER BEDS WERE USED	444,476	491,808	+47,332
TOTAL NUMBER IN DIFFERENT SUBGROUPS ²			
Single Men	3,284	3,223	-61
Single Women	1,010	1,087	+77
Youth	441	401	-40
Families	807	841	+34
Children	1,382	1,499	+117
Adults in Families	1,069	1,137	+68

¹ Total number of different individuals using shelters.

² The sum total of people in the sub groups is different from the total of unique people by 48 due to occasional changes in age or family status over the course of the year. Children here are dependents 18 & under.



SHORTER SHELTER STAYS			
2011 TARGET: 3 DAYS LESS	2010	2011	F
AVERAGE STAY (days)	63	67	4 days longer
AVERAGE STAYS IN DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS			
Single Men	60	60	No difference
Single Women	52	55	3 days longer
Youth	36	37	1 day longer
Families	72	82	10 days longer



WHAT DO THESE GRAPHS SHOW?

- 1) A strong trend of increasing shelter use and length of stay across the 8-year period.
- 2) Notable increases for females and families using shelters since 2004.
- 3) Small decreases in the number of single men since 2004.

... and affordable housing & affordability plus 8-YEAR TREND

CREATION OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2011 TARGET: 1000 NEW UNITS

2010

2011

A

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

- 22,400 social housing units and rent supplements prior to 1995

1,386

1,589

+203

RENT SUPPLEMENTS/HOUSING ALLOWANCES

City of Ottawa: 508 new, CMHA: 28 new

3,200

3,736

+536

TOTAL

+739

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PLACES

1,263

1,373

+110

WAITING LIST FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

(households)

10,502

9,977

- 525

RENTAL VACANCY RATE

(Housing Market Indicator)

1.6%

1.4%

N/A

AVERAGE RENT bachelor apartment

(Housing Market Indicator)

\$715

\$727

+\$12

AFFORDABILITY (Income/Rent)

2011 TARGET: CLOSER TO NO MORE THAN 30% OF INCOME ON RENT

2010

2011

F

Percent of income needed to cover 2011 average rent for bachelor apartment

MINIMUM WAGE (hourly)

\$10.25

\$10.25

44%

ONTARIO WORKS for a Single person

\$592

\$599
(+\$7)

121%

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE for a Single Person (ODSP)

\$1,053

\$1064
(+\$11)

68%

OF ONTARIO WORKS CASES

(monthly average)

15,563

16,138

+ 575
(up 4%)

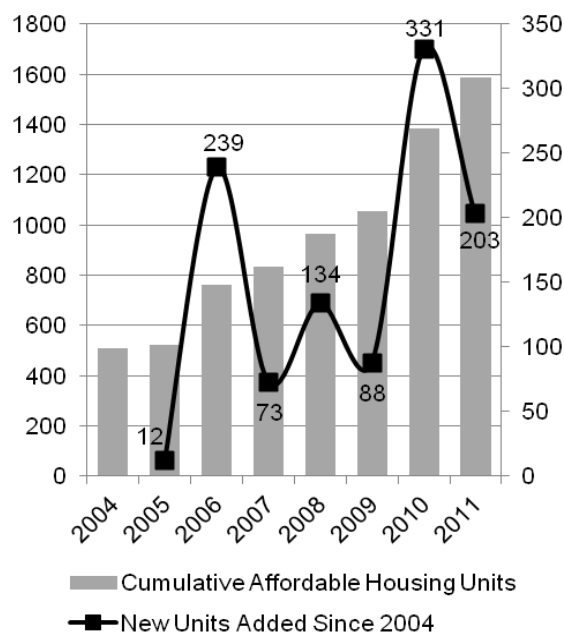
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX INCREASE

3.5%

1.9%

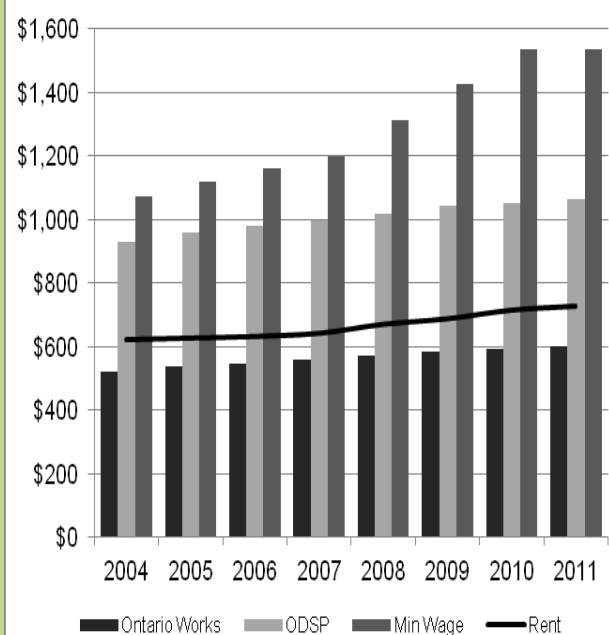
8-YEAR TREND

1589 New Affordable Housing Units Added, Ottawa 2004-2011



8-YEAR TREND

Income (Ontario Works, ODSP, Min. Wage) vs. Rent, Ottawa, 2004-2011



WHAT DO THESE GRAPHS SHOW?

- 1) Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Assistance are not keeping up with rent increases.
- 2) An increased minimum wage has helped individuals to spend less of their paycheques on rent.
- 3) In 2011, Ottawa created more new affordable housing units than in any of the previous 7 years.

What is HHiT?

A Canadian study investigating the health and housing status of vulnerably housed (e.g., rooming house residents with recent history of homelessness) and homeless individuals over time (4 years)

Who is HHiT studying?

The study is taking place in Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver, with each city recruiting 200 vulnerably housed individuals and 200 homeless individuals to participate (approximately 1,200 individuals in total).

Why is HHiT important?

Results will help us to understand how changes in housing status can affect one's health and well-being. Results will also help to identify the factors that lead people to achieve stable housing.

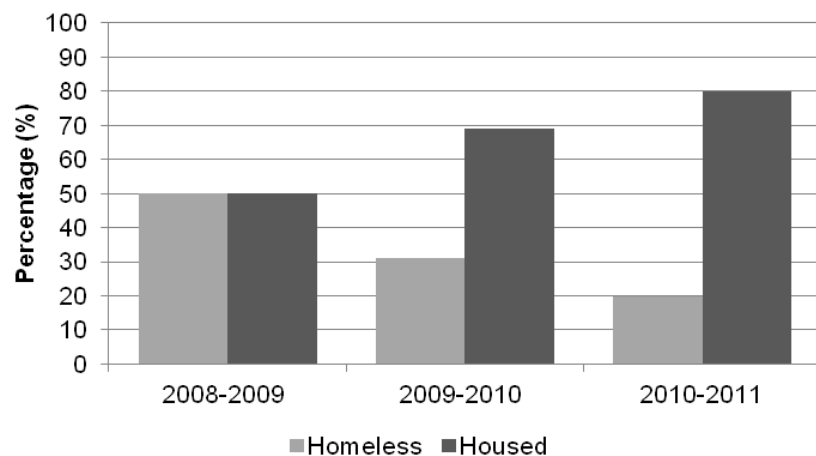
WHAT DOES THE PICTURE LOOK LIKE IN OTTAWA?

Housing for vulnerably housed or homeless individuals

FACT BOX

1. A steady increase in people becoming housed.
2. People moved an average of 3 times from 2008 to 2011.
3. 22 individuals (11%) were always homeless from 2008 to 2011.

Housing Status of Participants

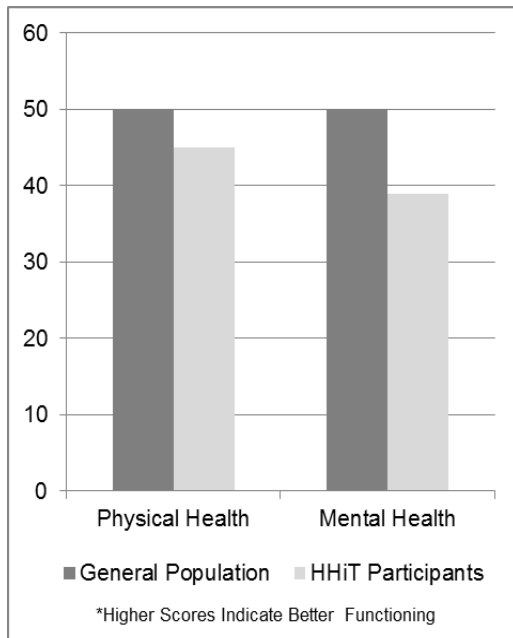


LIVING SITUATION	2008-09 397 participants	2009-10 341 participants	2010-11 321 participants
OWN APARTMENT	17%	39%	55%
ROOMING HOUSE	32%	22%	18%
SHELTER	44%	21%	14%
ON THE STREET	3%	2%	2%
OTHER*	4%	16%	11%

* Other includes: hospital, jail, transitional housing, supportive housing, hotels, halfway houses, boarding homes, treatment facilities

HEALTH STATUS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY

Physical and Mental Health Functioning as Reported by Participants and Compared to the General Population



Most Commonly Reported Health Problems

HEALTH ISSUE	% SAYING YES
PREVIOUS HEAD INJURY	63%
MOOD DISORDER (E.G., DEPRESSION)	51%
BACK PROBLEMS	44%
ARTHRITIS	32%
ANXIETY DISORDER	31%
HEPATITIS B OR C	30%

We asked HHiT participants how their current housing situation affects their mental and physical health

Here are some of their responses:

“It’s improved so much. I have my own space and it’s quiet here. My mental health is much better.”

(A participant that had recently moved into his/her own apartment after being homeless for almost 3 years)

“It is helping [me]. I can sleep now and rest. Peaceful – away from stress of shelters.”

(A participant that has her/his own housing after previous residence at a shelter)

“It affects my emotional health in a positive way. No stress. No drugs. No alcohol. No pressure. It’s a clean, healthy environment.”

(A participant that has his/her own housing after previous residence at a shelter)

FACT BOX

1. In comparison to the general population, HHiT participants reported having poorer physical health functioning and particularly poorer mental health functioning.
2. HHiT participants reported a variety of physical and mental health problems with a large proportion indicating that they had previously experienced a head injury.

The Health and Housing in Transition (HHiT) study is being conducted by researchers from the Research Alliance for Canadian Homelessness, Housing, and Health (REACH3). The research study team in Ottawa includes Tim Aubry (University of Ottawa), Susan Farrell (Royal Ottawa Health Care Group), Fran Klodawsky (University of Ottawa), and Liz Hay (University of Ottawa). The study is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

2011 COMMUNITY FORUM ON HOMELESSNESS

On November 22, 2011, the Alliance to End Homelessness held its 8th *Community Forum on Homelessness* at the University of Ottawa. Over 200 people attended the event, including a large number of front-line workers. As part of the day, some of the city's top researchers on homelessness presented fascinating results and ideas from their current projects. Two of the presentations are highlighted below.



Jim Silver, University of Winnipeg speaking on *The Worrying Re-Alignment of the Urban Landscape*



Dan Sabourin, Alliance Vice-chair introducing **Stephane-Sophie Cardinal**, Director, University of Ottawa Centre for Global and Community Engagement



Participants at the 2011 Community Forum on Homelessness gathered at the University of Ottawa



Tim Aubry, University of Ottawa on the HHIT Study



John Sylvestre, University of Ottawa on Supported Housing Addiction Recovery

Photo: David Vincent



Homeless People, the Criminal Justice System, and Rights-Based Defense Strategies in Canada

Marie-Eve Sylvestre, University of Ottawa (pictured) and Céline Bellot, Université de Montréal,

This research investigated the criminalization of homelessness by examining how homeless individuals are treated by the judicial system.

RESEARCH RESULTS FOUND

1. A large number of fines are given out to homeless individuals for minor offences
2. Homeless individuals are not heard or represented in the legal system
3. Negative stereotypes of homelessness are held by many in the judicial system (for example, that homelessness is a personal choice)

And concluded that:

Homeless individuals need greater fairness and advocacy related to their contact with the legal system.



End-of-Life Care Services in the Context of Homelessness

Manal Guirguis-Younger, Saint Paul University

This national study looked at end-of-life care for individuals experiencing homelessness.

RESEARCH RESULTS FOUND

1. End-of-life care must be sensitive to the unique needs of the population (for example, complex health and addiction issues)
2. Care must be offered at multiple settings, since homeless individuals access several types of services
3. End-of-life care is at different stages of development across Canada

And concluded that:

Homeless individuals require appropriate end-of-life services delivered jointly through community partnerships.

Improving urban Aboriginal families' access to preventive services



Aboriginal PhotoVoice contribution: *"The Single Mother"*

"Where do we find the money? Where do we find the resources? . . . I still see the urban Aboriginal population that have that disparity . . . not even being on the same playing field as the non-Aboriginal people that are potentially in the same situation."

Study Participant

SIXTY-SEVEN PER CENT OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN CANADA ARE NOW LIVING IN LARGER CITIES, AND HAVE THE YOUNGEST POPULATION AND THE HIGHEST BIRTHRATE IN CANADA. (CIHI, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2008)

WHAT WE DID:

Researchers from the Population Health Improvement Research Network at the University of Ottawa with help from community partners studied the factors influencing access to prevention services for urban Aboriginal families*. Families shared their experiences through qualitative interviews and photos.

WHAT WE FOUND:

- Negative experiences significantly alter Aboriginal families' use of prevention services.
- Feelings about prevention services are shaped by previous experiences with racism, poverty, homelessness, residential schools and health care.
- Participants felt that being Aboriginal complicates experiences of homelessness and poverty
- A lack of options for Aboriginal people facing poverty in urban settings, forcing some to "choose" to become homeless to avoid other unsafe environments (e.g., unsafe home environments).
- A lack of a sense of belonging and connection to the community, which may affect access to services.
- Service providers often do not take culture into account, leaving many Aboriginal families hesitant to access services.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND:

Study results pointed to a need for a collaborative approach to preventive services led by Aboriginal organizations that takes into account the families' perspective and the range of factors that affect access to services, including housing.

*"You see it manifested on the streets
. . . people will prefer to spend a horrible winter
night out on the street with their friends rather
than going somewhere where they don't have any
friends . . . they will take adversity, an adverse
situation over a comfortable situation because it's
the relationship and the relatives and the
extensions, all those pieces."*

Study Participant



Aboriginal PhotoVoice contribution: *"Children are what matters"*

* Study was led by Dr. Dawn Smith, PhD; Sara Tedford Gold, PhD; Wendy Peterson, PhD; Kim van Herk, MS. Population Health Improvement Research Network, University of Ottawa.

Renting a home in Ottawa

***DID
YOU
KNOW***

1. Ottawa has the **3rd highest rents in Canada**, after Vancouver and Toronto
2. **40%** of Ottawa households are renters
3. There are **no limits on the amount of rent** that a landlord can charge a new tenant
4. **Vacancy rates below 3%** indicate a tight rental market with upward pressure on rents. Currently the Ottawa apartment vacancy rate is 1.4%.
5. **1 in 5 of Ontario's tenant households** pay more than 50% of their income on rent.

AVERAGE RENTS IN OTTAWA, 2011

2011 Vacancy Rate: 1.4% CMHC

	2011 Rents*	Yearly income needed in 2011 to pay no more than 30% of pre-tax income on housing *
Bachelor	\$727	\$29,080
1-bedroom	\$899	\$35,960
2-bedroom	\$1,086	\$43,440
3-bedroom	\$1,322	\$52,880

* Canada's affordability standard of less than 30% of income.

EXAMPLES OF LOW INCOMES IN 2011

	YEARLY AMOUNTS		
	SINGLE INDIVIDUAL	PARENT + 1 CHILD	A COUPLE
ONTARIO WORKS	\$7,188	\$13,376	
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORTS PROGRAM	\$12,768	\$19,940	
ONTARIO MINIMUM WAGE	\$21,320		\$42,640
OLD AGE SECURITY & GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT	\$14,538		\$23,394

IMPORTANT TERMS:

'Households in Core Housing Need' refers to households unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability, and affordability norms. Affordability is defined as less than 30 per cent of the household income spent on shelter.

'Severe Housing Need' occurs when households spend 50% or more of their income on a place to live.

'A Living Wage' in Ottawa would be **\$13.50 per hour in 2011** without benefits and based on a 35-hour week. That allows a person to make ends meet and avoid supplementing their incomes by relying on food banks and other social services. It meets Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off for a community the size of Ottawa.



Remembering



MEMORIAL: JC died this year at the age of 58 from complications of liver failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Although many people might have felt that smoking and alcohol addiction were what led to his early death, the reality is that he died from decades of living with untreated psychiatric illness.

As a young man he suffered from unbearable symptoms of anxiety and depression. The treatments at that time were either ineffective or had side effects he found difficult to cope with.

As often happens, he looked for other avenues of relief and found alcohol eased his symptoms. Unfortunately his addiction also robbed him of opportunities for a job, family life, and housing. Smoking accompanied his drinking. Three packs a day generated the damage to his lungs and heart and eventually caused his death.

JC was one of the first people in the Managed Alcohol Program at Shepherds of Good Hope. Stabilizing his alcohol intake and treating his mental illness provided significant benefits for JC and he was eventually housed and reconnected with family.

MEMORIAL: Helen died this past year, very shortly after turning 48 and is still missed by the homeless community. Everything in her life that could go wrong sadly did. Adopted as an Aboriginal infant by a white family she keenly felt the loss of her culture, identity and belonging.

Although abuse in her early years shattered her ability to protect herself from harm, she was always kind and protective about the well-being of others. Homeless or in jail for most of her adult life, she relied heavily on numbing the pain of daily living with injection drug use. She lived with HIV, Hepatitis, COPD and mental illness.

Her gruff voice, unique sense of style, ironic humor, and ready laugh defined her. She refused to be anyone but herself. Her fighting spirit kept her alive more than 10 years longer than predicted. She reached out and befriended those in need no matter how poorly she felt.

After many years of homelessness and pain, Helen moved into the Oaks, staying there until the very end when she went to the Mission Hospice to die peacefully in the presence of people who loved her as was her final request.

IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE *homelessness is bad for your health*

Studies in Canada and other developed countries have concluded that the life expectancy for people who are homeless is 10 years less than the rest of the population. A large proportion of premature deaths among the homeless are from preventable health problems – heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and breathing problems. Substance abuse, mental illness, trauma and suicides are also common causes of premature deaths.

- The probability of survival to age 75 in homeless and vulnerably-housed individuals was 32% in men and 60% in women (compared to 51% and 72% among men and women in the lowest income group in the general population.)

SOURCE: Hwang, S., Wikins, R., Tjepkema, M., O'Campo, P., & Dunn, J. (2009). Mortality among residents of shelters, rooming houses, and hotels in Canada: 11 year follow-up study. *British Medical Journal*, 339 (b4036), doi: 10.1136/bmj.b4036.

In Ottawa, health care workers supporting

homeless people witness the toll that the lack of secure housing can have on health. They see between 25 and 35 deaths a year. People frequently die in their forties and fifties from cancer, liver or heart diseases. The Ottawa Mission has one of the few palliative care programs for homeless people in Canada. Too frequently, however, death can come suddenly as a result of substance use, suicide or violence.

Health care providers in Ottawa are implementing cost-effective and proven interventions to help homeless and marginally housed people live longer and healthier lives:

- **Clinics for homeless young people** provided jointly by the Youth Services Bureau and the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre focus on prevention and early intervention aimed at improving health status and preventing disease in later life.
- **Influenza and TB testing** which has been provided by City of Ottawa's Street Health Program and community health centres has been hugely successful at preventing the spread of tuberculosis and life-threatening influenza in the homeless community.
- **Since opening the Mission Hospice 10 years ago** to care for homeless people dying of AIDs, efforts to provide accessible treatment in shelters has completely changed the prognosis for homeless people living with HIV.
- **The high rates of death from opiate overdose** have led to an innovative peer training program which provides people who use drugs with the knowledge, skills and tools to save lives in an overdose situation.
- **A tobacco prevention program** of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Inner City Health, the Ottawa Heart Institute and the Ottawa Health Department is reducing the effects of smoking among homeless people.
- **Responding to disturbing rates of Ear, Nose and Throat cancers** among the homeless, specialists and medical students from the University of Ottawa/Ottawa Hospital participate in an annual screening program for homeless people.

Did you know there are more than **9,500** volunteers
community workers and organizations working to end homelessness
in Ottawa?

That's a big number.

The **Ask Me Ottawa** campaign is designed to **bring our
community together** by sharing stories of success and
personal achievement in fighting homelessness.

We need your help.

Tell us **your story** or tell us about **someone that
deserves** to be featured. **We'll even write it for you.**

It's an **easy way to promote** the passion and efforts of
everyone working to end homelessness in our community.



askmeottawa.ca

Contact us today:

askmeottawa@gmail.com

For details visit:

www.askmeottawa.ca

Ask Me Ottawa is a campaign
organized by the
Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa
www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca