ALL THE WAY

Why HOPE is Important

People have asked me why we chose to have the word “HOPE” as part of the End Homelessness Winnipeg logo. Some have said that the word hope is overused by organizations, programs, and as part of fundraising efforts. For others, hope is not outcome focused, is too soft a word. Let’s explore the role that hope plays in ending homelessness.

People who are homeless are not hopeless. An Elder shared with me that we need to see individuals for who they can become and not for how they present in the moment. This wisdom is grounded in possibility, promise, and hope. It creates a space where individuals can be valued for their potential and resiliency. Hope is the tool that has carried them through adversity, discrimination, trauma, and marginalization. Hope is essential for survival.

Hope is essential for the journey of change to occur. The first step is to eradicating the persistent and damaging misconceptions within our community about individuals who have lived the experience of homelessness. We need to see individuals who are trying to survive and surpass their homelessness as valuable members of our community. These persons are our neighbors and they have lives, dreams, goals, and competencies. They are caring and giving persons who have families, relationships, gifts, and skills. Mostly, they have a desire to restore and heal the hurtful and harmful experiences that life has imposed on them.

When we find the courage to change our perceptions on homelessness, we as a community will restore our belief in the power of hope. It will transform the language we use to describe those most in need. Words like “crazy person”, “drunk”, “dirty Indian”, “lazy bum”, “free loader” will be erased from our vocabulary. This will create new space for all of us to be authentic and feel safer in our relationships and interactions. We will be free to create opportunities to assess our privileges, show care, improve our work, and act in meaningful change.

For many of us, hope plays a lesser role in our lives because we have choices, options, supports, and resources. In times of crisis, we turn to our families, our work, our networks and care systems for comfort, healing, services and solutions. We hope these times are few in our lives, and that we will recover quickly.

But for some, recovery from these events is complex and difficult to sustain. For many Indigenous people who’s long and tragic history with Canada has been marked by mistreatment, disrespect, and oppression, the trauma across generations has been significant. For some, the impacts of this trauma are visible and in their daily lives that are scarred by the impacts of poverty, mental health, addictions, and homelessness.

For many youth in our community, homelessness is very real. While homeless, many youth are subjected to victimization and vulnerable to exploitation. We must dispel the persistent myth that youth choose homelessness and that they should “just get a job”. When a person has no supports or access to safe options to address their harm, you cannot justify their condition by saying that what they have chosen this lifestyle. It is up to our community and systems to create meaningful options that reflect their needs, their safety, and their dreams. This includes housing options that are safe, affordable, and suitable to their choices, supports for them to remain housed and to thrive, and prevention strategies that address emerging crisis and underlying issues before youth find themselves homeless.

- Louis Sorin, President & CEO

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MARIE CECILE KOTYK, MANAGER, HOUSING SUPPLY

End Homelessness Winnipeg is continuing to develop a strong working relationship with the Province and the City and has formed a Project Development Working Group that will identify and prioritize housing models that would guide our response to meeting the needs of the community. The goal of these models is to build on the work of the Housing Supply Action Plan and help us to determine the next steps in our discussions with the development community.

End Homelessness Winnipeg is also working on compiling a city-wide affordable housing inventory that will list the types of housing available to our population. It will also identify trends and gaps in the rental market that would assist us in our response to addressing housing challenges.

ALTHEA GUIBOCHE, MANAGER, HOUSING SUPPORTS

I am working hard to collaborate with stakeholders/agencies and shelters to create various Housing Support models that would cater to the different sub-populations, this is being done in a collaborative effort to accommodate the plethora of diverse needs of Winnipeg’s homeless population. We are looking at what the Winnipeg community, at large, currently has to offer and at ways to bring these different entities in closer working relationships with each other.

December has been a busy month with many meetings regarding an extreme weather alert and response system. We are currently collaborating to create a city wide emergency response plan and developing a weather alert system that will work to ensure our vulnerable population and all of Winnipeg citizens are taken care of in a compassionate and caring way.

We can all do our part by checking on Elders who may be shut in or have mobility issues during snow storms/blizzards or extreme cold weather, or you can call 911 if you happen to encounter a homeless person who needs immediate shelter and warmth or even medical attention.

Many of the shelters would be grateful to accept your old clothing, winter outerwear or blankets that you may not need anymore, this is a great time to contribute towards the wellbeing of Winnipeg citizens.

I’m excited to apply my skills and abilities towards the collaboration of stakeholders/agencies and shelters in achieving our ultimate goal of ending homelessness in Winnipeg.

Happy New Year!

JYOTI SINGH, MANAGER, PREVENTION

My first three months at End Homelessness Winnipeg have been very exciting and productive.

As I delve into the project it is becoming increasingly apparent that the issues facing Winnipeg’s homeless is varied and complicated. I was fortunate to be able to help contribute to the dialogue around urban aboriginal housing to inform and develop the National Housing Strategy.

In addition, I have had the pleasure to connect with many colleagues across Canada through the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in London, Ontario this past November. The conference was a great opportunity to see the efforts across the country on homelessness and was very helpful in forwarding my work on Prevention.

I am pleased to announce that in January we will be holding our first Eviction Prevention Working Group. Some of the members of this committee include: Winnipeg Rental Network, John Howard Society, West Central Women’s Centre, Manitoba Housing, CMHA, and Main Street Project among others.

I look forward to working with our community partners to further the prevention piece around homelessness in the coming months.

DARREN LEZUBSKI, MANAGER, SHARED MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Learning curves can be steep when beginning a new journey. Over the past two months since joining the staff of End Homelessness Winnipeg my priorities have focused on working with others to move the discussion forward with respect to developing good, reliable data tools such as the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (“HIFIS”). In addition, preparing and planning for the upcoming Registry Week is increasingly becoming a priority.

As many will attest, learning is enhanced through collaboration. Working with others on research to better align services and programs coupled with better understanding of possible indicators for measuring how we are doing in achieving our goals has also received considerable attention. The New Year promises to be busy as we strive to learn, grow and achieve our Plan’s goals and objectives.
Over the last several months, housing experts, stakeholders, and Canadians from all walks of life participated in “Let’s Talk Housing” consultations and shared their views to help shape a National Housing Strategy (NHS) that will strive to improve the lives of those in greatest need.

“Ensuring that Canadians have access to affordable housing, with all of the socio-economic benefits that come with it, is a key priority for the Government of Canada. The input and ideas we received from Canadians will be invaluable in helping to shape a National Housing Strategy that delivers better housing, socio-economic and environmental outcomes for all Canadians.”

- The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

1/2 Day Indigenous Symposium

On December 16, End Homelessness Winnipeg hosted a symposium to discuss the definition of Indigenous homelessness, the realities such as Lived Experience, system issues, and program approaches.

Jesse Thistle, a PhD student in History at York University, and a national representative for Indigenous Homelessness in Canada for the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness was our keynote speaker.

Althea Guiboche has been promoted from Regional Consultant to the National Steering Committee of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

She, along with Jesse and other members are collaborating to write the definition of Canadian Indigenous Homelessness.

A video of Jesse’s presentation will be up on our YouTube channel shortly.

Jesse Thistle and Althea Guiboche discussing the definition of Indigenous homelessness

2017CAEH Conference Winnipeg

The Planning Committee has already held a number of meetings in preparation for the conference coming to Winnipeg on October 25-27, 2017. Sub-committees are being established and we’ll be looking for volunteers to join us in making this the best conference ever!

The primary focus for this year’s conference is to be Indigenous homelessness, Truth & Reconciliation, and Youth Homelessness.
New Partnerships

End Homelessness Winnipeg is partnering with The Institute of Urban Studies, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, and AMR Associates on a new project to work with the service community to improve coordination of resources and leveraging, and to identify gaps and opportunities for coordination and alignment.

At the center of this project are a series of five focus groups representing: Indigenous organizations that provides services, support, or resources to people experiencing homelessness, housing first organizations, people with lived experience, frontline services and community organizations, and senior administrators.

The goal is to identify challenges faced by service organizations and people with lived experience, and develop an understanding of system-level operations, gaps, and misalignments that will assist in further developing a system of complete care.

The information gathered in these discussions will inform a critical analysis of current funding priorities, and bring Indigenous perspectives into an analysis of Winnipeg Community Plan for HPS funding.

Upcoming Funding Commitments

End Homelessness Winnipeg has made a financial commitment to repeat the 2011 Winnipeg Street Health Survey. The planning for this work has begun and we’re looking forward to the launch in April 2017. Please connect with us if you would like to be involved!

For a second year (2017-18) we have also committed resources to support RAY (Resource Assistance for Youth) in the implementation of the Here and Now Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness. This funding will also assist in the delivery of health services to youth at risk.

Just A Warm Sleep

At 1JustCity folks are provided with supports from socks, to meals, to advocacy and a lot of hugs!

‘Just A Warm Sleep’ is opening Thursday January 26, 2017 with support from Bear Paw Security & Salvation Army, and in partnership with Augustine United Church.

Location: 109 Pulford Ave (Augustine United Church) (map on next page)

Schedule

Opening Thursday January 26, 2017 to Friday, March 31, 2017
Open 7 days a week | If below -10°C, based on wind chill forecast at 1:00pm.
9:00pm – 11:00pm Doors Open | Security open doors; Volunteers are present
11:00pm – 5:30am | Lights out; Watched by security
5:30am – 7:00am | Volunteers + Security clean up

If you’d like to volunteer, email volunteer@1justcity.ca. If you have any questions about the program, contact Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud at tessa@1justcity.ca.
Get Your Benefits

**Its’ a Fact: Better Income Can Lead to Better Health**

A group of interested physicians and health care providers have developed a poverty tool entitled *Get Your Benefits* in order to assist primary care providers and teams to integrate this approach into their practice.

It’s a great pamphlet full of useful information regarding income tax, employment and income assistance, addiction and mental health services, and more. For more information, here’s the link: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/primarycare/providers/povertytool.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/primarycare/providers/povertytool.html)

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