



Making Kenora HOME

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
FOR HOMELESSNESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

HUB Executive

Diane Pelletier, Co-Chair
Dan Jorgensen, Co-Chair
Nan Normand, Secretary
Fay Clark, Treasurer
Don Denver
Freda Holmes
Ruth Illman
Joel McGrath
Judy Underwood
Jen Carlson

Guiding Principles

- ❖ **EQUALITY**
- ❖ **INCLUSION**
- ❖ **SHARING**
- ❖ **SELF DETERMINATION**
- ❖ **EMPOWERMENT**

Message From The Co-Chairs

We are entering our eighth year as an organization. In 2006 we set an ambitious agenda. There has been distance travelled. Some goals have been achieved and others have not, delayed by barriers that we knew would have to be overcome by committed action. At times we have experienced all that is good about Kenora. At other times we have supported each other against the ennui that encases long term issues. At no time have we been deterred.

In 2014 we remain focused on the goals set by our community. Affordable housing is now on the public agenda. The recent district and municipal consultations have heard the citizens of Kenora as they speak up for affordable, accessible and appropriate housing. Other organizations, including the Lake of the Woods Economic Development Commission and Kenora Substance Abuse and Mental Health Task Force, have stepped up to keep the issue before our public decision makers. The Kenora District Services Board is moving their Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan forward. The federal and provincial governments have renewed their commitment to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Awareness was our first strategic arrow. Action follows. Stay posted because

"Kenora Cares"

Dan Jorgensen
CoChair

Diane Pelletier
CoChair

OBJECTIVE # 1

Promote Implementation of Recommended Housing Projects

1. **Full-time Emergency Shelter:** They are still open but the clock is ticking down. The Kenora



Fellowship Centre has notified stakeholders that they will not be continuing operating the emergency shelter. A working group has formed to ensure that interim emergency shelter

services are available until the long term solution can be found. This crisis means that our community has slid into a worse position with regards to homelessness than was measurable in 2006.

2. **Eight Transitional Single Room Occupancy Units:**

The proposed construction of 8 transitional units for the chronically homeless remains unfunded. The pre-independent living centre in their basement of the Fellowship Centre is occupied by 11 residents. Project Homefind has completed its one year program. Although 24% of the participants found housing, it quickly became apparent that it is the lack of affordable housing and rehousing resources that prevent the transition of people from homelessness to housing. Despite herculean efforts by the Transitional Support Worker, there were no options for housing available to program clients. The VI-SPDAT data base project was successfully set up on the Making Kenora Home website. The Problematic Substance Use Initiative continues to operate their pilot program supported by a supportive housing worker and 8 housing subsidies. Although this project which is partnered by Community Mental Health Support Services /Kenora Association for Community Living and Lake of the Woods District Hospital Community programs/Morningstar Centre has been helpful, the lack of affordable units continues to impede the progression of citizens from homelessness to residency.

3. **Twenty Single Room Occupancy Units:** No progress has been made towards the development of 20 SRO units. The municipality has introduced some affordable housing incentives in the Keewatin Community Improvement Plan. The KDSB has purchased an apartment building that will be renovated to house 4-6 senior and family units. The

management of the building by social housing is welcome. The quality within this building is expected to improve however Kenora needs an expansion of rental options

4. **Ten Single Dwelling Aboriginal Family Units:** Aamikkowish partnered with the Kenora Affordable Housing Group to build 10 family homes under the FIMUR (First Nations Inuit Metis Urban Rural housing) program. The project was part of \$2.89 million local project awarded through the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corporation. All are now occupied.

5. **Tax Discount/Credit and Utility Credit for Low-Income Seniors:** Our municipality does have a tax deferral option for low income seniors. The LEAP



(Low Energy Assistance Program) has been replaced with the OESP (Ontario Electricity Support Program) which offers credits applied directly to billings once a customer has been found

eligible. The credits are limited and many will still not be able to pay utility bills. The pending sale of Hydro One has raised further fears of escalated billings.

6. **Two Supportive Housing Units:** In a creative partnership, Pinecrest is now providing fee for service assistance onsite for seniors within three housing complexes. Funding for a senior's housing forum has been received and hope is rising for alternative senior housing options. Seven transitional housing units for women fleeing abusive relationships were also funded through the \$2.89 FIMUR project.



7. **Rent Subsidization:** The Ministry of Health has provided rent subsidization for 4 individuals experiencing mental health dysfunction and 4 whose mental illnesses have brought them into conflict with the justice system. There have been an additional 2 subsidies to private landlords through KDSB out of the 13 that they manage regionally. The 2014 extension of Investment in Affordable Housing funding is an opportunity for expansion of rent subsidies as well as builds.

8. **Revolving House Trust:** The second Habitat for Humanity (Kenora Chapter) build is approaching completion. The community has been very generous in their support of our local Habitat chapter. Six other home ownerships were funded in 2010 through FIMUR.

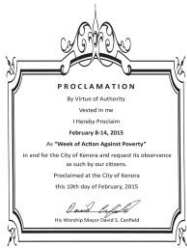


Making Kenora Home has continued to participate in housing consultations at all levels of government. Housing the Chronically Homeless was presented to city council in May and we collaborated with the Kenora Substance Abuse & Mental Health Task Force in June's long term housing consultation.

OBJECTIVE # 2

Community Caring Projects

Week of Action Against Poverty.



The lead events of this year's WAAP included the launch of the Build Kenora Strong campaign by the Kenora Substance Abuse & Mental Health Task Force, the Seniors Speak Out consultation and the Kenora Food Action Symposium. Both high schools

participated. STAHS took the lead in the Poverty Challenge while BBSS students learned about the social determinants of health by playing "The Last Straw" game.



St. Louis students wore red and sock raised for the emergency shelter while King George classes donated art work for the Out Of The Cold fundraiser. Hot meal challenges gave the regular Helping Hands volunteers a break as groups committed to the donation, preparation, serving and clean up of



a meal. All local financial institutions again collaborated to post information on WAAP and distributing red ribbons. Several of the banks and credit union also had staff actions undertaken to help local charities dealing with a variety of poverty issues.



There were also related events that bracketed WAAP. Trylight Theatre's production of Frozen Dreams raised the issues of homelessness to a greater community audience while The Coldest Night of the Year

sponsored march raised money for local poverty services. Assorted fundraisers, donation drives and discussion groups rounded up the activities.

Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation.

This year's campaign benefitted from a Lake of the Woods Community Foundation grant. The purchase

of a banner raised the profile of our summer events. Emergency Services personnel competing in the *Stuff A Boat* initiative raised \$1,320 plus 3,260 lbs. of food that was distributed to local emergency food suppliers.



The *Gleaning Project* was carried on at the Matiowski Farmers Market. Volunteers picked up unpurchased fresh vegetables and baking for distribution to local food banks following each market day. Thanks to the generosity of the Farmer's Market vendors, local tables held healthier foods.



Despite the rain, fourteen service agencies and 50 neighbourhood residents

attended the sixth annual *Minto Summerfest* held on July 29, 2015. Between the showers, children played games, ate carnival food and tried out the Circus Kids activities. The OPP and volunteers flipped burgers while the Fire Department gave tours of their shiny red truck. It is an opportunity for neighbourhood development that is appreciated by residents and service providers.



The *Street Picnics* held at the Fellowship Centre spanned 5 Saturdays and were well attended. Live entertainment kept the gatherings lively and the food was summer perfect.

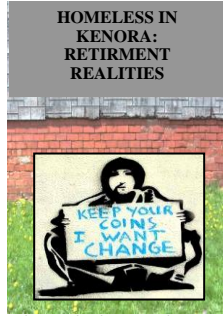
OBJECTIVE # 3

Community Awareness and Education

Gingerbread Lane. This year's event continued the tradition of gingerbread villages, refreshments, live entertainment and children's activities. Volunteerism was up this year but donations were down. All proceeds went towards the Fellowship Centre's Christmas Sharing Circle.

Newsletters & Pamphlets Two newsletter editions were published and distributed by email and print editions throughout the community.

Working and Still Poor The eighth book in the Homeless in Kenora series focused on citizens who have retired but are still struggling with the cost of shelter. Seniors spoke of separation from loved ones, the curtailment of space and independence and the ever increasing expenses that shred fixed incomes. In a secondary book launch, a previous contributor to the booklet series completed a book on her life in residential school, her struggles with alcohol, the miracle of sobriety and of her work as a social activist. Nancy Morrison's book, *Approaching Dawn*, is available from online book distributors. The lessons of her life story have value to all of us and is highly recommended for anyone interested in the peoples of Kenora.



The Poverty Challenge. The annual *Poverty Challenge (Walk In My Shoes)* was freshened this year by refocusing on our youth. Three participants (Rayleh Hanson-Munn, Elyssa Woodbeck and Riah Motlong) from St. Thomas Aquinas High School lived on the Ontario Works single person benefit for five days. Instead of blogging, the students handed out personal challenge cards to other students throughout the Week of Action Against Poverty to stimulated poverty conversations with their peers. The media interviewed the participants who presented their experiences with thoughtful commentary

Facebook Page. Social networking has become a key tool in Making Kenora Home's communications strategy. Membership in this online community has increased by 133% in the previous year.

Web Site. Our web master, Karen Sinclair, continues to effectively manage our web site. www.makingkenorahome.com includes events, research, publications and a direct newsfeed on federal and provincial housing matters, All booklets and reports are downloadable.

Media Interviews

- Radio 10
- Television 5
- Newsprint 24



- Web-based News 16

Financial Report

Making Kenora Home Charitable Services Inc. Statement of Revenues and Expenditures	
Year Ended December 31, 2014	
Income	
Received Donations	\$ 1,116
Non Received Donations	925
Donations from Other Charities	1,200
Interest	<u>2</u>
Total Income	<u>\$ 3,243</u>
Expenses	
Interest & Bank Charges	31
Donations	678
Program Expenses	1,069
Professional Fees	<u>565</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$2,343</u>
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	(\$900.00)

Membership & Volunteerism
Contact
Nan Normand
468-8888

Making Kenora Home Statement of Changes in Net Assets	
Year Ended December 31, 2014	
Net Assets-Beginning of Year	\$ 3,381
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	(900)
Net Assets-End of Year	\$4,281.00