

Making Kenora HOME

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
FOR HOMELESSNESS

NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 2: August 2011

Kay'shi'daay'ing - Where We Live

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What is Making Kenora HOME?

A concerned group working on solutions for homelessness in our community.

Guiding Principles

- ❖ **EQUALITY:** We are all created equal within this world that we share
- ❖ **INCLUSION:** Every person living in Kenora is a part of our community
- ❖ **SHARING:** As a community we must care for each other
- ❖ **SELF DETERMINATION:** Each person has the right to choose his or her own path providing that path does not hurt another
- ❖ **EMPOWERMENT:** We are accountable for our own actions and need to look inward first

Chair's Report

Jump Into The Joy of Summer

Summer is Kenora is always worth celebrating. The lake and the sunshine brings out the best in us all. This year we have further cause for believing in the future of our community. The Kenora Chapter of Habitat for Humanity has formed and the first build is expected next year. The Kenora Affordable Housing group continue their work to bring the 17 units funded through FIMUR into construction. The Kenora Fellowship Centre remains open year round. Core funding has not been obtained but they are still operating with community support. The Week of Action Against Poverty was a wonderful outpouring of community commitment. The volunteers of Making Kenora Home continue to come forward to support the vision of our membership.

A *Community Attitudinal Survey* has been undertaken by HOME. After five years of advocating for affordable housing, we wanted to know if local attitudes towards poverty reduction have shifted. The data has been collected by our volunteers and will be collated soon (probably on a laptop by the lake).

Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation will run again in August. Stay tuned to local media to find your opportunities to address hunger during our holiday season. Good times increase when they are shared. The public is welcome to share summer joy at our *Street Picnics* (August 6, 13, 20, 27 at 2 pm) and at the Minto neighbourhood festival *Summerfest* (August 18 4-6 pm).



Fabric of Diversity Conference
September 14th and 15th, 2011
Best Western Lakeside Inn Kenora ON

Inclusion in our city, as well as our region, will be considered at an upcoming conference in September. The *Fabric of Diversity Conference* has been organized by the Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee for September 14th and 15th. Contact kcconsulting@shaw.ca for further information on this fresh look into issues of age, gender, sexuality and race. Facilitated by Stan Wesley, the conference will bring together prominent speakers including Dr. Ayman Al-Yassini of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Summer Help Needed!

Entertainers, chefs and sharers for
Street Picnics & Summerfest
Call Nan at 468-8888 to volunteer

Community Update -July 2011

Kenora has joined the international movement to help local families in need of safe, decent, affordable housing by forming a Kenora Chapter of Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg (HFHW). A steering committee has been formed and the local group is planning to build its first home commencing in late spring 2012.

Committee Chair Ralph Page noted the Kenora chapter is now part of an international community. "When an organization such as Habitat for Humanity comes into the community, it gives us a different profile. Habitat for Humanity is known world-wide, for the good work they do," he said. "It puts us on the map, when it comes to having a social conscience."

As a Chapter of HFHW, support is provided to Habitat for Humanity Kenora (HFHK) by the Winnipeg affiliate, which will also administer the mortgage on the home. Mortgage payments are calculated at 25 per cent of a potential HFHK homeowner's annual income and there is no interest charged or cash down payment required.

"This makes payments for the house affordable for a low income working family enabling them to actually purchase the house," said committee chair Ralph Page.

As part of their commitment to Habitat, the family is required to provide" sweat equity "of up to 500 hours into the project. Sweat equity may consist of actually swinging a hammer, or offering support to Habitat approved projects. A family pays fair market value for their home. HFHK will build it with as much donated labour and materials as possible, but the selling price of the house will be assessed by fair market value and mortgaged accordingly.

"So they're not getting it at cost, that's a misconception" Page said. "It's not a free home giveaway program. Instead it's considered to be a hand up not a handout. What we provide is the opportunity for someone deserving in the community to purchase their own home on repayment terms based on a percentage of their income."

All mortgage payments will be placed in an account for HFHK. "So it's actually a revolving account" Page said, explaining the funds will be used for future projects, in addition to funds raised from local donations.

The house will be chosen by HFHK from a catalogue of plans, provided by HFHW and there are requirements the home be built to Kenora and Ontario building code standards. The steering committee determines where the house will be built and who will build it.

"We're in charge of making decisions on the ground. All the other administrative stuff is done by Habitat," Page said, adding the vast experience and support from an experienced group is reassuring.



It is too early to calculate the exact amount needed to fund-raise for the local project, but the committee estimates HFHK will need approximately \$115,000. The exact amount will depend on the actual level of support from donors of labour and materials and sponsorships.

Page said, "We have already received donations from students at two local schools namely St. Louis School and Ecole, Marguerite Bourgeoys as well as support from the community

during the recent Winter Carnival from sale of buttons. The total already raised from these three events is almost \$2000, which is a great start". One of our committee members Gord Taylor is presently cycling approximately 1500 kilometers as part of the "Habitat Cycle of Hope" We anticipate receiving locally approximately \$800 more from this unique project.

"We have also already received offers from local trades and businesses for donation of labour and materials which will help reduce our overall costs of the build. These offers have been made without our asking formally. We see this as an indication of the level of support which our local community will give to this project and are very grateful." Says Page

Pleased by the support already from Kenora, Page said Habitat is a community builder. "It does more than just provide a house for a low income family," he said. "It creates a tremendous feeling that this is a community project. People want to be involved in it. It's very much a hands-on thing."

"Kenora has already proven with other worthy projects that we are a community that likes to do things as a community. We expect the Habitat project will be no different," he said. "This project will go one step further. This is about helping our neighbours, this is helping families. Kenora has that history."

Habitat for Humanity Kenora is an officially designated Chapter of Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg. Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg is a registered charity and affiliate of the international non-profit registered charity committed to eliminating poverty housing and dedicated to making safe, decent and affordable housing for purchase by low income working families.

In 2011 the steering committee will be concentrating on selecting a family to purchase the 1st home which will be built early next year as well as fundraising the necessary funds and materials and even labour to enable the build to proceed.

As Habitat is a registered Charity tax receipts for donations will be provided.

For further information, contact: Ralph Page, Committee Chair
Phone 547-2363 (home) or 407 8978 (cell) E-mail page@kmts.ca

Week of Action Against Poverty 2011

This year the City officially declared the Week of Action, February 13-19. The keynote activity, Walk in Our Shoes, an experiential blog, received over 5000 hits, produced much media attention and resulted in a booklet of experiences that will be released to the public.

As has become customary, the Kenora Ministerial Association, opened the week with their "Prayers from the Pulpit" project. Community congregations raised poverty issues through sermon, and prayers. Other presentations were made to Calvary Pentecostal Church Bible Study Group and Notre Dame's St. Vincent Du Paul Society.

Music filtered through the community. Act Global Act Local (part 2) featured 16 different performances at two locations (Haps, Cornerstone) held simultaneously on the Friday evening. Other musical fundraisers included Jam Nite and the Recycled Teenagers at the Cornerstone.

The business community stepped up their participation this year. Twelve businesses distributed the red ribbons made by People First. These distributors were joined by 2 social service agencies (Pinecrest, KACL) and 2 justice services (Court House, LAO/NCLC). The Cornerstone held events daily during the week. Keystone Lock & Safe committed \$5000 in goods and services to the first Kenora build for Habitat. Other participants included KACL, NWHU, TD Bank, Challenge Club, NDP, Nechee Centre, Court House, TOPS and the Kenora Women's Action Network. The Kenora Metis Warmth and Wellness Group held a week long Knit-A-Thon that produced 44 fresh units of winter wear for the emergency shelter. Another 34 units were added from their stock and distributed to those in need.

Youth activity remained high. Schools (Valleyview, Pope John Paul and St. Louis) made donations to the emergency Shelter through a variety of sale (houses, cupcakes) and awareness raising (housing needs art project) active-ties. Confederation College student council also staged donation bins, pajama days and snack fundraisers to benefit the Fellowship and Salvation Army. KPCS-Youth in Care again prepared and donated a lunch to the Fellowship Centre.

"Dreaming of Home", the fourth edition of Homeless in Kenora by Making Kenora Home was released at HoJo's. Shirley Hanslip contributed her musical stylings and poetry to the book launch.

Advocating to our political leaders and community members was undertaken by four local groups. The Four Winds Aboriginal Toastmasters Group featured three separate presentations on the impact of poverty locally. The Kenora Seniors Coalition put their telephone tree to action focusing on medical issues felt by low-income citizens and the NWHU presented on Food Security Awareness to City Council. KACL spoke publicly on the inadequacies of disability pensions. The City confirmed their commitment to advocate for affordable housing at OGRA and Kenora District Services Board joined the Ontario Works staff in collecting donations for Jubilee Church of God's work with the impoverished.

Total donations had an estimated value of \$12,000. With the blog hits, the participation rose to 7,000.