
news release

January 22, 2002
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regional Municipality of Niagara to receive funding for homelessness initiatives

ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO—Community groups in the Niagara area working to help homeless people in their community now have more resources available to them. The Government of Canada today announced approval of the Niagara Community Plan on Homelessness. Niagara will receive \$1,461,520 to help alleviate homelessness in the area. Funding was also announced for two community organizations, the Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold project will receive \$275,000, through the Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiative (SCPI), and the St. Catharines Resource Service for Teens will receive \$75,000, through the Youth component of the National Homelessness Initiative.

Members of Parliament Walt Lastewka, John Maloney, Gary Pillitteri, Tony Tirabassi and Tony Valeri announced the funding on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women) and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness.

“The Community Plan for Homelessness in Niagara represents the collaborative effort of many people and local organizations working together to develop solutions to address homelessness in their neighbourhoods,” declared the Members of Parliament in a joint statement. “We would like to congratulate the members of the Niagara Homelessness Committee for the hard work that they put into developing this community plan.”

Projects approved to date include the creation of a Housing Help Centre and expansion of a Community Care building to provide additional storage space to collect and distribute food, clothing and basic household needs. These projects were selected based on priorities identified in the Community Plan.

The Niagara Homelessness Committee is a grassroots group that represents social sector agencies from the Niagara region. This group coordinates the Community Plan for Homelessness in Niagara, which is the community's vision of how best to help the homeless. The plan is a product of a consultative process involving all stakeholders interested in addressing homelessness in a particular community.

“We are elated that the Community Plan of Niagara for our homelessness population has been accepted. This is great news for the Regional Municipality of Niagara as we will finally be able to help our most vulnerable group in the Region,” said Roxanne Felice, Project Director of S.H.A.R.E. and Chair of the Niagara Homelessness Committee.

The Niagara Homelessness Committee hosted a community forum to identify the barriers and gaps that impede effective service for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless within the Niagara region. Priority areas identified in the Community Plan include providing safe, secure, emergency and transitional housing, addressing the lack of mental health services, improving access to employment, and assisting with staffing and resources.

“The Community Plan reflects a true collaborative effort of a wide range of constituents within the Niagara Region who deal with or are affected by the issues of poverty and homelessness through the Niagara Homelessness Committee,” stated Betty Lou Souter, Co-Chair of the Niagara Homelessness Committee (NHC). “This exercise provided the NHC and its partners occasion to reflect and develop strategies on positive long-term solutions to address the needs of the most vulnerable. The Community Plan has established a framework for future direction with a particular focus on the homeless population.”

The \$753-million National Homelessness Initiative works in partnership with community organizations, the private sector and all levels of government to help Canada's homeless people by bringing together various partners to develop local solutions that work to address particular homelessness needs and issues. Through this co-ordinated approach, the following building block programs are available to support communities across Canada: Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative; Urban Aboriginal Strategy; Youth Homelessness Strategy; Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative; and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Renovation and Conversion Programs.

Funding for the Initiative was provided for in the February 2000 federal Budget and is built into the existing financial framework.

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit our Web site at www.hrdc.gc.ca/homelessness

The Niagara Region is comprised of the following 12 municipalities: Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland, and West Lincoln.

For more information, contact:

Bob Howsam
Human Resources Development Canada
(416) 954-7810

David Klug
Office of the Minister of Labour
(819) 953-5646

Mike Haines
Member of Parliament Lastewka's office
(905) 934-6767

Roxanne Felice
Project Director of S.H.A.R.E.
Chair of the Niagara Homelessness
Committee
(905) 357-5121

Betty-Lou Souter
Community Care of St. Catharines &
Thorold
Co-Chair, Niagara Homelessness
Committee
(905) 685-1349

BACKGROUND
INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS
ST. CATHARINES, NIAGARA
January 2002

To help address and alleviate homelessness in Niagara, the Government of Canada is investing \$350,000 into two community organizations, through the National Homelessness Initiative.

Project title: Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold, Phase II
Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative funding (SCPI): \$275,000

Under this project, Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold will convert a freestanding garage and storage space into a Housing Help Centre and expand its current Community Care building to provide additional storage space to collect and distribute food, clothing and basic household needs. The project will provide a multi-purpose centre, located in the downtown core of St. Catharines, where several agencies, which help people facing homelessness, will be co-located. The agencies will work both independently, within their own individual organizational framework, and jointly to help homeless people.

Project title: St. Catharines Resource Service for Teens
Youth component of the National Homelessness Initiative: \$75,000

This project will establish one transitional housing unit that will accommodate two youth at a time and one crisis housing unit that will also accommodate two youth at a time. This project aims to help prevent youth homelessness by providing safe and affordable housing that youth feel comfortable accessing. A Youth Worker, Transitional Support Coordinator and Programs Director will be employed to provide support services to youth experiencing a housing crisis.