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partners in touch - september 2011

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We've been very fortunate to receive donations from generous organizations, event planners and individuals over the past year. We have used these funds for homelessness prevention and to hold two service fairs. Between January 1 and August 15, 2011, the Coalition's **Homelessness Prevention Fund** helped 55 individuals and 19 families with one-time grants to pay damage deposits, rent arrears or utility bills to help avert the loss of housing. The Fund is entirely underwritten by private donors and resulted from 10 Coalition partners working together to create one more resource for struggling renters. Not one dollar is kept for administrative purposes.

Project Connect and **Coalition Connect** received both cash and goods donations, giving approximately 1,500 people access to personal services and products. Project Connect (for adults) and Coalition Connect (for families) are service fairs where participants can access free services ranging from ID replacement and resume writing to hair cuts and footcare, learn more about service providers in Greater Victoria, enjoy a great barbecue lunch and leave with a bag stuffed with personal care items, socks, gloves and more.

None of this would have been possible without **you** - your time, your donations, your resources. We are looking forward to the next year's activities and feel lucky that you will be part of it. If you have feedback, suggestions, or would like to get involved, please get in touch.

Debbie Thompson
Executive Director

debbiethompson@solvehomelessness.ca

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COALITION UPDATES

World Homeless Day is October 10, 2011 and **Homelessness Action Week** is October 9 to 15. The **Coalition** and **Our Place** are co-hosting **Project Connect**, our popular service fair for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, on **October 14**. We are putting out the call for **donations** now. Cash, travel size personal hygiene items, and new toques, scarves and gloves are all needed. We'd love it if some local knitters got involved!

Other **Homelessness Action Week** events are still in development, so keep an eye on the Coalition's [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

When the donations start rolling in and when we fill 700 bags for Project Connect, that takes up a lot of space. We are grateful to [Target Self Storage](#) for donating two lockers for our year-round

Get informed

Coalition website

Reports and Studies

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Many thanks to our funders!



United Way
OF GREATER VICTORIA



Who Are We?

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a partnership of service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, business, post secondary and the faith community.

Our mission is to end homelessness in the Capital Region by 2018.

Fast Fact

The estimated monthly

use.

The **Coalition** is in the midst of creating our new **Strategic Plan** for the next three years. We are currently conducting a survey to help us evaluate our progress to date and help to inform the planning process.

Many thanks to [Connect2Dots Media Inc.](#) for the **\$500 donation**. The funds were raised as part of the Strata Community Home Show 2011, which showcased a community of 65 townhouse units at Orchard Hill and their unique home design ideas.

Did you know that the Coalition [has a blog](#)? We are looking to include our partners' voices and we welcome submissions for consideration. Entries on poverty, homelessness and relevant local, national, or international events and issues are welcome. **We look forward to hearing from you!**

We are sad to say goodbye to **Leah Syme**, our summer Communications and Planning intern, whose salary has been partially paid by **HRDC's Canada Summer Jobs program**. Leah's contribution has been invaluable, including research and analysis, social media and web content, and yes - much of this newsletter!

SUCCESS STORY



When you don't have a home, it takes a lot of work to just sleep and eat. **Joanne*** moved between the shelter, couch surfing and sleeping outside for a full year. When she could save enough from her disability allowance, she could stay in a motel for 2 weeks.

"When I moved into my apartment, I cried," she says. "I don't have to get woken up at 7:15, get my clothes stolen, see people doing crack in the shelter rooms. This is my haven."

With the help of the [Streets to Homes Pilot Program](#), this mother of four lives in private market housing with a rent supplement. Her follow-up support worker helps her with goals and getting out to buy groceries. [Read more](#)

*Pseudonym

PARTNER UPDATES

The **Federation of Community Social Services of BC (FCSSBC)** is holding its [Fall General Meeting](#) on October 27 and 28 at the Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel. The FCSSBC also has an exciting new leadership program starting in September. [Leadership 2020](#) will bring together leaders from Federation member agencies to establish a Community of Practice for leadership co-learning and networking.

Anawim House will be celebrating its 20 year anniversary on September 9. [Anawim House](#) has been an important part of Victoria's community, helping end the cycle of poverty and

cost of living for a family of four is **\$5,049.33**; however, the estimated gross monthly income for minimum wage earners (\$8/hr) is **\$1,313.67**.

Community Social Planning Council, March 2011

[Read the Greater Victoria Report of Housing and Supports 2010/2011 to learn more.](#)

IN THE NEWS

The [Victoria Integrated Court](#) has shown promising signs of reducing reoffending behaviours in chronic offenders.

[Richard Clemens of the Victoria Dreams](#)

street soccer team headed to Paris in August to play for Canada's team in the Homeless World Cup.

The BC Government plans to spend \$5 million this year to reform the [Community Volunteer Supplement program](#) for disabled volunteers by clearing the large backlog of applicants, and plans to eventually develop a new model for the program.

MEMBER UPDATES

Welcome to our new members:

- Ann Moskow
- Wayne Sheeran
- The Bay Centre

homelessness. Congratulations on this milestone!

Mark Horvath, homeless advocate and creator of [invisiblepeople.tv](#), will be finishing his cross-Canada trip in St. John's, Newfoundland on September 12. Mark is on a road trip to record people's experiences with homelessness and collect signatures from community leaders signifying their commitment to ending homelessness. **Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin** was the first signatory. The grand finale event in St. John's will be streamed on [invisiblepeople.tv](#), and will include Mark collecting the final signature.

The **South Mid Vancouver Island Zone (SMVIZ) Veteran's Housing Society** is available to help veterans experiencing homelessness access shelter, food, and other services. If you or someone you know identifies as having served in the military and is experiencing homelessness, contact Angus Stanfield at angusstanfield@shaw.ca.

BC Housing has released a set of [procurement guidelines for non-profit housing providers](#). The guidelines provide explanations, recommendations, and requirements for procuring capital or construction renovations. The guidelines are a way of assisting non-profit housing providers in making informed decisions.

Don't see **your organization's updates** here? [Email](#) short newsletter items and web links by the 20th of each month and we will include your news!

EVENTS

The [Victoria Conservatory of Music](#) (VCM) is holding its 3rd Annual Open House on **Saturday, September 10** from 10am to 3pm at 900 Johnson Street. Join the VCM for free opportunities to have a mini-lesson, go to their "instrument petting zoo," meet instructors, and tour around practice rooms and performance halls. Musical fun for the whole family!

September 10 is also **World Suicide Prevention Day**, and [D.O.T.S. BC](#) (Development of Treatment Services) will be forming a human chain from **Royal Jubilee Hospital** to the **B.C. Legislature**. They are hoping to have around 1,200 people participating as "dots" to represent connecting the dots to fill in gaps in mental health services.

September 10 is a busy day! **Ensemble Laude**, a women's community choir directed by Elizabeth MacIsaac, will be performing a benefit concert. Proceeds go to the **Rainbow Kitchen**, a non-profit society that supports low income people in the community by serving them nutritious meals. [Visit our website to see the flyer for more information.](#)

[Cool Aid](#) is having its Annual General Meeting on **September 13**, 12 noon, at their Downtown Community Activity Centre, 755 Pandora Avenue. Along the theme of "**Creating Community Solutions**," the AGM will report on Cool Aid's busy past year, with the opening of Rock Bay Landing Shelter, Olympic Vista supported housing, and Queens Manor supported housing.

[Community Social Planning Council](#) will be holding its

Annual General Meeting on **September 21** from 11:30am-1:30pm at **Burnside Gorge Community Centre**. Members are invited to attend for a no-cost lunch, networking and inspiring stories on how the Community Council is tackling poverty and building new assets for community development. The Council will also be host its 75th Anniversary Celebration Dinner Theatre and Dance on November 3. Invitations will be sent later this month.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

September 14-16, 2011 - [National Aboriginal Housing Conference](#): Sustainable Solutions for Housing Providers, National Aboriginal Housing Association and Namerind Housing Corporation, Regina, SK

September 21-23, 2011 - [North American Housing and HIV/AIDS Research Summit VI](#), New Orleans, Louisiana

October 23-25, 2011 - [North American Housing and Redevelopment Officials \(NAHRO\) National Conference and Exhibition](#), America's Center, St. Louis, MO

October 27-30, 2011 - [Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association Conference](#), Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls, ON

November 21-23, 2011 - [British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association Annual Conference](#), Richmond, BC

May 2-5, 2012 - [CHRA Congress 2012](#), St. John's, NF

FALL PROPOSAL CALLS

The [Homelessness Partnering Secretariat](#) (HPS) announced a call for proposals for research on rural and remote homelessness in July. The deadline for applying is **September 30**. For more details, visit their website. The HPS recently conducted a literature review on this topic, and found that access to services for people experiencing homelessness in rural areas is challenging due to the need for transportation. Rural and remote residents are also more likely to have lower education levels, face lower paying jobs, a lack of affordable housing, and fewer job opportunities.

The **New Horizons for Seniors Program** (NHSP) has a call for proposals open until **September 16**, with grants of up to \$25,000 available. NHSP is looking for projects that encourage seniors to volunteer, engage seniors as mentors, expand awareness of elder abuse, increase the social participation of seniors, and enhance community capacity to address local issues. [Application forms are available on their website](#).

The **Small Project Component of the Enabling Accessibility Fund** will be accepting applications until **September 23** for projects that improve accessibility for Canadians with disabilities. Grants of up to \$50,000 are available. [Visit their website for the application form and to learn more](#).

PARTNER PROFILES

The [Victoria Human Exchange Society](#) (VHES) is a

volunteer-run, non-profit society that aims to provide safe and stable temporary housing to people looking for change in their life. The VHES advocates for and supports people recovering from substance abuse, and helps families support each other by arranging for family counseling and therapy if requested. Currently facilitating **7 houses** in Victoria, Salt Spring Island, Sidney and Nanaimo, the VHES has a zero tolerance policy for drugs, but creates a shared environment where residents can learn how to live healthfully and care for themselves and others. House facilitators live on site to ensure a safe environment. Residents who are ready and capable can become house facilitators. As a volunteer-run society, the VHES is open to volunteers looking to share their skills and time.

Congratulations to the VHES for celebrating your 19th year of helping people this past May!

[Visit their website](#) to learn more about the work done by the VHES and how you can help.

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