

# Experiencing Homelessness

# 6

The Sixth Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2013



New units of affordable housing were created in this building in 2012 under the Affordable Rental Housing Program in Greater Moncton.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness documents the current state of homelessness in Greater Moncton. We have many positive changes to report for 2012, and some not so positive. Food Bank use continues to be at an all-time high. The number of people on the waiting list for subsidized housing jumped by 24% to 1,219, compared to a year earlier. And only 15 new subsidized housing units were added to the inventory in Greater Moncton. Some positives: • The YWCA began to roll out its long-awaited supportive housing project for women [cont'd pg 6]

## The Current Situation\*

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2011	2012
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – 2011 census	138,644	138,644
Total number of admissions to shelters	1,018	1,032
Total number of unique individuals (clients)	627	720
Total number of nights stayed	7,378	10,765**
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	7.83	11.8
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	48	48
For women (domestic violence)	17	17
For women (not domestic violence)	14	14
Number of beds for drug/alcohol detox:	20	20
For men (plus one emergency)	13	13
For women	6	6
<b>Housing Indicators</b>		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,555	1,570
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	650
Of these, # in private dwellings	905	920
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	933	1,219
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	132	14
Number of transitional housing beds/units	24	24
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	267	280
Rental vacancy rate	4.3%	6.7%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$715	\$731
<b>Income Indicators</b>		
Social assistance for a single person	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	4,950	4,919
Minimum wage in NB	\$9.50	\$10.00
<b>Food Security in NB</b>		
Number of food banks	6	5
Number of soup kitchens (4/3 supplemental)	7	6
Number of individuals assisted HungerCount	3,735	4,694
* Sources available inside document;		
** Numbers are up because HH was closed for much of 2011.		

**720 different individuals were homeless in 2012. They were admitted to emergency shelters 1,032 times.**



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing 20 agencies in Greater Moncton that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless as well as representatives of the three levels of government. Established in 2000, the GMHSC provides leadership and coordinates communication among stakeholders and service providers to ensure the implementation of the Greater Moncton Community Plan on Homelessness. It also works to create public awareness about issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and housing. This 6<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2012 data. All six Report Cards will be available at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org).

## **Shelter admissions up in 2012**

The shelters have seen a certain amount of instability recently, with Harvest House closed most of 2011 and some of 2010 for construction, and House of Nazareth closed in late 2010 because of a bed bug infestation. Both operated for the full year in 2012, and admissions were up slightly. The total number of individuals is around 700, although we know that there is some double counting, as individuals move back and forth between the two shelters.

	House of Nazareth		Harvest House	
	2011	2012	2011	2012
Total number of admissions	749	700	269	332
Total number unique individuals	458	465	169	255
Total number of nights stayed	4,939	5,597	2,439	5,168
Average length of stay	6.59	8.0	9.07	15.6
Average number of beds occupied per night	13.53	15.3	6.68	14.1
Source: House of Nazareth Annual Reports; HIFIS Report Harvest House				

During the six years that we have produced these Report Cards, we have worked hard to refine our numbers to make sure that what we report is as accurate as possible. HRDC's Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) has helped. Both shelters now use it on a regular basis, and we believe that increasingly, we are getting an accurate picture of shelter use. This doesn't, of course, include the "hidden homeless," those people who do not use the shelters.

## **What we know about food bank use in 2012**

Food bank use continues to be at an all-time high in Greater Moncton, New Brunswick and Canada as a whole. Since 2008, food bank use has increased in New Brunswick by 24.8%. Food Banks Canada statistics for District 5\* show:

- 2,922 adults and 1,485 children, for a total of 4,407 used a food bank in March 2011;
- 3,070 adults and 1,624 children, for a total of 4,694 used a food bank in March 2012, an increase of 6.5% from the previous year.

\* includes Greater Moncton, Riverside-Albert, Dorchester, Petitcodiac, Port Elgin, Richibucto, Rogersville, Sackville, Shediac, Sussex and Memramcook.

## **What we know about welfare rolls**

The number of people in Greater Moncton relying on Income Assistance remained stable in 2012, at 4,919 in December, compared to 4,950 at the end of 2011. Anyone living on Social Assistance is, of course, living in poverty. Some 78% of those on IA receive \$537 per month, \$6,444 per year, which is much below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Offs. The LICO's suggest that a single person living in a metro area the size of Greater Moncton needs \$15,865 per year to be at or above the poverty line.

## **Supportive Housing (SUN) Network comes to Moncton**

In late 2012, the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee launched the Supportive Housing Network (SUN Moncton). Modelled on a Fredericton SUN committee that has seen great success over the past three years, SUN Moncton's mandate is to work collaboratively with community agencies to support the successful transition into affordable housing of clients who have experienced chronic homelessness.

The focus will be on clients who have been in and out of the emergency shelters for many years, as well as individuals who currently do not have safe and affordable housing. Clients will be helped to find affordable housing, to set up and furnish their apartment, and will be provided with supports and services to help them maintain their tenancy.

The YMCA Re-Connect Street Intervention Program in Greater Moncton has hired two outreach workers, who will directly engage homeless clients by assessing their needs, assisting with personal goals, and connecting individuals with stable accommodation and appropriate services.

Research has shown that moving a homeless individual into his or her own apartment is often the easy part. Providing them with supports and services to maintain that tenancy can be a major challenge. This is a great addition to Greater Moncton, and over the long-term should help to significantly reduce shelter use. Social Development is funding the project.

## Bad news on the housing front for 2012

The province of New Brunswick manages 1,570 subsidized housing units in Greater Moncton, of which it owns 650. Another 920 are subsidized in private apartment buildings. The 650 number has remained constant for the past few years, as Social Development has moved to a model of providing rent supplements in private buildings rather than expanding its own inventory. Some disappointing results for 2012:

- Only 15 subsidized housing units were added in Greater Moncton as a whole in 2012;
- Included in the 15 are 14 new units created under the Affordable Rental Housing Program. In 2011, 132 new units were created under the same program.
- Perhaps most worrisome is that the number of people on the waiting list for subsidized housing in Greater Moncton increased, from 933 at the end of 2011 to 1,219 at the end of 2012. The table below shows numbers in each category. This does not mean that these 1,219 people are all homeless; it DOES mean that many are probably living in housing that is not adequate, safe and/or affordable.
- Despite efforts in recent years to provide housing for non-elderly singles, they remain the largest group on the waiting list, representing around 50% waiting for subsidized housing.

Type	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2012	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2011
Family	319	246
Senior	262	207
Non-elderly single	603	472
Disabled	35	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>933</b>

### Transitional housing

- Crossroads for Women Second Stage Housing – six units (women)
- John Howard Society of Southeastern NB – 10 units (adult males)
- Moncton Youth Residences Inc. – eight transition beds (four female, four male)

### Longer-term supportive housing

- Alternative Residences Inc. (mental health clients) – three group homes (23 beds); one Transition home (8 beds); 16 one-bedroom apartments; five bungalows/duplexes (30 beds)
- Future Horizons Housing Inc. – 12 units (Headstart Inc. clients)
- MacDonald Independent Living Centre – 34 units (physical disabilities)
- Moncton Community Residences Inc. Serves **147** people in various living arrangements (intellectual/ developmental challenges)
- **NEW** YWCA Scattered supportive housing for women; **10** housed at end December.

### Social Housing (in addition to provincial)

- St. James Court – 13 townhouses for single parent families earning less than \$31,000 per year for a 2-bedroom and \$36,500 for a 3-bedroom. Building has 10 2-bedroom units and 3 3-bedroom units.

### Other (Halfway houses for people leaving correctional facilities)

- Cannell House, 20 beds for men
- Greenfield House, 16 beds for men, five for women

\* NOTE: Changes highlighted in bold.

*1,219 people were waiting for subsidized housing in 2012, an increase of 24% from 933 in 2011.*

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton (CMA)				
Unit size	%age change Oct-11 to Oct-12	Oct 2012	Oct 2011	Oct 2010
Bachelor	4.1%	\$485	\$479	\$456
1 Bedroom	2.5%	\$619	\$591	\$577
2 Bedrooms	1.9%	\$731	\$715	\$691
3+ Bedrooms	1.6%	\$897	\$794	\$787

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2012, 2011, 2010

[www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm)

## Moncton's average rent 2nd highest in the province in 2012

*The vacancy rate in Moncton in 2012 was 6.7%, an increase of 2.4% from a year earlier. Fredericton had the highest average rent in the province in the fall of 2012 at \$770 per month, followed by Moncton at \$709 per month.*

The YWCA Moncton is returning to its roots by providing the women of our community access to safe and affordable housing. Providing supportive housing options for women is a complex undertaking. Women who face barriers to safe and affordable housing may be living with addictions, mental health issues or disabilities. They may have poor credit or have recently experienced a separation, divorce or job loss that has negatively impacted their financial situation. These factors dramatically affect their ability to access safe housing. Young women are particularly vulnerable to housing insecurity, especially when they are pregnant or new mothers. Young women who are homeless or precariously housed are also at high risk for sexual exploitation at the hands of those who offer shelter.

For these reasons, YWCA Moncton has created a comprehensive housing strategy called **A Home for Her**. The strategy has two streams – a scattered housing initiative that provides safe, furnished apartments, life skills training and support services for women of all ages in need, and a planned new facility for young pregnant women and women with very young children.



Photo: Nadine Lipton

Mobile One Executive Director Séan Tobin (left) at the launch of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in 2010, with GMHSC community development officer Sue Calhoun and Moncton Mayor George Leblanc.

Mobile One Community Services ceased operations of its Mobile Soup Kitchen in 2012, after more than a decade of serving thousands of meals to the disadvantaged population in Greater Moncton. A big thank you to Executive Director Séan Tobin and his team for their tremendous service to the community over the years.

To date, our scattered housing initiative is housing 10 women throughout the city, with plans for another four to five women to be placed in safe, secure homes this spring. These women are in various stages of their lives; some have mental health issues, others are adjusting to life outside of an abusive relationship or are on the path to recovery from substance abuse.

All these women are working on their personal goals such as repairing family relationships, finding employment and paying back debts. YWCA Moncton is fortunate to be working with generous local landlords to arrange safe, affordable housing and the agency is providing life skills courses, financial literacy classes, help to complete their education and on-going case management, all according to their individual needs and to ensure that their goals are being met.

The YWCA Moncton's planned new facility will address the needs of young women who are pregnant or mothering. Plans are underway to design and fund this new facility in Moncton, and we anticipate breaking ground in the spring of 2014.

# Early findings from the At Home/Chez Soi Project

By Tim Aubry & Stephanie Yamin, Researchers, At Home / Chez Soi Moncton Site

The *At Home / Chez Soi* Demonstration Project is the largest social experiment on homelessness in the world. The project funded by Health Canada through the Mental Health Commission of Canada is testing the effectiveness of Housing First services for people with severe mental illness and a chronic history of homelessness in five Canadian cities, namely Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Housing First is a revolutionary approach to addressing chronic homelessness by assisting individuals with severe mental illness to move into regular housing without any pre-conditions. Housing First services provide rent subsidies and support that address needs as determined by individuals receiving the services.

Early findings from the five cities in the *At Home / Chez Soi* project are very promising. Over the course of their first year in the study, individuals receiving Housing First services spent 73% of their time in stable housing. In comparison, participants receiving treatment as usual were stably housed for only 30% of the time. Early findings also show cost savings associated with receiving Housing First services; in particular, Housing First participants showed a significant reduction in the use of such services as hospitalizations, emergency room visits, outpatient services, shelters, and police detentions.

In Moncton, early findings are also impressive. Of 126 participants receiving Housing First, 125 participants have been housed at least once over the course of the project. Currently, 89 (71%) of these individuals are housed in regular housing in the Greater Moncton region or in Southeast New Brunswick. Of those housed, 63% are living in their first or second unit. As a group, Housing First participants spent 90% of their time in stable housing in their first year in the study.

## Main Messages

- Housing First makes better use of public dollars.
- Individuals who have not been well served by our current approach and who have remained homeless for years are being housed in adequate, affordable, and suitable settings.
- People with mental health issues can live independently in the community with the right supports.

-from **Early Outcomes Report, December 2012**

In comparison, individuals receiving treatment as usual were in stable housing for only 40% of the time. As well, Housing First participants reported significantly greater improvements in their quality of life with regard to their living situation, finances, leisure activities, and safety during the first year of the study compared to treatment as usual participants. The data collection for the study is scheduled to be completed in the five cities by the end of March 2013. The final report on study findings will be available in early 2014.

*Meet some of the inspiring people from Greater Moncton who are part of At Home/Chez Soi <http://athome.nfb.ca/#/athome>*

## What is Homelessness?

- Living on the street.
- Staying overnight in emergency shelters.
- Staying in places not meant for human habitation.
- Moving continuously among temporary housing arrangements provided by friends, family or strangers (“couch surfing”).

## Are YOU at risk of homelessness?

Families and individuals can lose their housing for any number of reasons: fleeing abuse, losing a job or having an income too low to stay in suitable housing.

Some people are at risk because of mental health issues or substance use problems or they lack life skills or ability to live on their own.

[Cont'd from pg 1]

in Greater Moncton. It has also undertaken a feasibility study for a new building to house pregnant teens and young moms. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is contributing to the funding of both projects. (See page 4)

- Salvus Clinic developed a Peer Support Program. Peer Support Specialists are people who have lived with mental health issues themselves, have managed to find peace and stability in their own life, and are now trained to work with others experiencing similar issues. Most have been part of At Home/Chez Soi, a program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada aimed at chronically homeless people with mental health issues. The At Home/Chez Soi program is now winding down, and research results are looking very good. (See page 5)
- Tannery Court Co-operative Ltd. offers safe and affordable housing to 90 tenants in two buildings in Greater Moncton. In 2012, Tannery Court started to offer support services such as counselling, program delivery and other services that help tenants stay in their homes, and reduce their risk of homelessness. These services also reduce reliance on costly emergency services, health and social services, and help tenants to become strong and successful members of society. These services are also available to 164 Tannery Court residents in Fredericton and Saint John.
- Towards the end of 2012, funding from Social Development for two outreach workers helped to establish the Supportive Housing (SUN Moncton) Network, the objective of which is to house long-term shelter users, and to provide supports to help them maintain their tenancy. (See page 2)

### ***What you can do to end and prevent homelessness...***

1. **Educate** yourself and others about the problem of homelessness.
2. **Volunteer** your time to work directly with people experiencing homelessness.
3. **Be a friend** to those who are homeless or precariously housed.
4. **Call a politician**, either municipal, provincial or federation, and telling them how much ending homelessness matters to you.
5. **Join** others who care on Facebook & Twitter.
6. **Vote** for those who support affordable housing during each and every election.
7. **Contribute** to and help organizations that work to end homelessness.
8. **Understand** that there is a plan to end homelessness...all it takes is you.

- Also towards the end of the year, Moncton City Council unanimously passed a motion to establish a Committee on Poverty that will look at municipal responses to poverty in other jurisdictions.
- Social Development has revised its process for screening applicants for housing. Applicants can now call **1-866-426-5191**, and they will be screened over the phone. If they qualify, they will be put on the waiting list for housing the same day. *No more three months waiting period to be added to the waiting list.*
- There were other positive changes on the provincial level: The minimum wage increased to \$10 an hour in April; a dental and vision plan for low-income children was put in place in September.

***The Homelessness Partnering Strategy is slated to end March 2014. If you think this program has had a positive impact on the community, be sure to let the Minister know. You can send a letter to the Honourable Diane Finley, House of Commons, Ottawa ON K1A 0A6. No postage required.***

This 6<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton is an opportunity to inform the community about the issue of homelessness and how it is being addressed in our community. The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee and its 20 agency members are working hard to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. You can contact us by visiting our website at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org) or join us on Facebook.