



## **The Kingston Diocesan Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

### **Community Life**

***Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call***

#### **Directive #2**

**Pages: 2**

**Date:** February 10, 2018

**To:** Parish Council Community Life Chair

**From:** Bernadette Veitch, Diocesan Community Life Chair

**CC:** Diocesan Executive, Provincial Community Life Chair

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#### **Attachments: Results of Homelessness Survey**

***There is a lot that happens around the world we cannot control. We cannot stop earthquakes, we cannot prevent droughts, and we cannot prevent all conflict, but when we know where the hungry, the homeless and the sick exist, then we can help.***

Jan Schakowsky (US Rep, Dem.)

#### **Canada Summer Jobs Programme - Conflict of Religious Freedom**

Betty Colaneri, National Community Life Chair, has advised about changes in the Government of Canada funding for summer jobs. Applicants will "be required to attest that both the job and the organization's core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to non-discrimination based on sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, identity or expression".

The government recognizes that women's rights are human rights. This includes sexual and reproductive rights and the right to access to legal abortions. These rights are at the core of the Government of Canada's foreign and domestic policies.

The objective of the change is to prevent the Government of Canada funding from flowing to organizations whose mandates do not respect individual rights. This prevents students as young as 15 years of age from being exposed to employment within organizations that may promote positions that are contrary to rights enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Government officials insist that churches and other faith-based groups can still apply for the program if they don't create jobs dedicated to such things as preventing women from obtaining an abortion.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops released a statement stating the attestation "seriously undermines the right to religious freedom, since the Government of Canada is directly limiting the right of religious traditions to hold, teach and practice their principles. Furthermore, the recently announced policy represents an attempt to restrict the voices of faith communities in Canada and their participation in the public square" ([www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/statements-aletters/4865-canada-summer-jobs-ccb-statement](http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/statements-aletters/4865-canada-summer-jobs-ccb-statement)).

Is this the beginning of other programmes that will be affected? Time is of the essence. Contact your local MP to voice your concerns. Inform league members, other organizations, businesses and Canadians in general that will be impacted by the programme.

### **Development and Peace**

I attended the workshop at St. Joseph Parish, Kingston on this year's Development and Peace Share Lent Campaign, TOGETHER FOR PEACE, presented by Animator Luke Stocking. Please encourage your parish to participate in this campaign. You will find resources in your handout folders. Caritas Canada thanks everyone involved in Share Lent this year. Monies collected will help support the actions of our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. There will be plenty of time to donate, place your Share Lent envelope in the Offertory, or to donate online at [devp.org/give](http://devp.org/give). Thank you for continuing to pray for all those who are working to build a world of peace and justice. "Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope."

### **Homelessness**

A small questionnaire was sent to each Council about Homelessness. The Executive was anxious to know what Councils had learned about this subject and what, if any, ideas had been implemented and would be willing to share. We did receive some answers back, not as many as was anticipated. Most were aware of homelessness, possibly not in their area, some Councils had donated to organizations that assist the homeless and some were not sure (rural areas) there was a homeless problem in their area. Perhaps we need to make ourselves more aware of the types of homelessness and hidden homelessness that exist. Supporting organizations that assist homelessness is a good start. We need to understand the underlying causes for homelessness - addiction, mental illness, poverty, etc. Are there enough beds in group homes for people with mental illness, resources for addiction? Enough supports for people with addictions and mental illness to live on their own, where do people living in poverty turn for help. Perhaps we should be asking our MPs these questions.

You will find the results of the survey in the attached document.

Respectfully submitted.

DATED: January 15, 2018  
MEMO TO: Council Presidents  
FROM: Bernadette Veitch  
Community Life Chair  
Kingston Diocesan CWL  
RE: Homelessness

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The following questions were sent to presidents to compile for the February 2018 President's meeting:

- What have you learned about homelessness and hidden homelessness in your area?
- Does your area have accessible resources for homeless, if so what?
- Has your council implemented any ideas or got involved in any activities to help the homeless in your area? If so, what?
- Anything you would like to share with other councils on the topic.

Here is the synopsis:

**Amherstview: Mary Lou Hills**

The geographic area in question is the city of Kingston and the surrounding area, especially Amherstview. The Blessed Sacrament Community Life Chair, Carol Daigle, had met the Director of Street Mission previously and invited her to speak at our September 12, 2017 meeting. While numbers of homeless were not discussed, we were made aware of the problem. Street Mission operates from 8 – 11 p.m. from St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. It is a refuge from the cold, offering clothing, warm drinks, instant soup etc.

In Amherstview, while groups of teenagers hang out at the strip mall where there is a pizzeria, other homelessness is not visible. But we believe that “couch surfing” does exist in Amherstview.

That same evening she also instructed us on the extent of human trafficking in the area (on a personal note, a friend's daughter delivers newspapers in Kingston in the evening and early morning hours. She asked us to donate blankets, gloves, toques, etc. She keeps them in the trunk of her car to assist the homeless she meets on her delivery route.)

The local unit of Community and Social Services offers an afternoon where pregnant women can meet and receive information and food once a week. I am told that other women come just for the food that is there for the women who are on social assistance. Other than that, I am not aware of any other resources other than the Presbyterian Church, community food drives by local volunteer fire department and supermarket. In Kingston there are shelters managed by the Salvation Army. Agencies such as Dawn House (women) and Ryan House are also in existence.

As a result of our evening with the Director of Street Mission – who received an honorarium for speaking to our Council, members also gave a free will donation (by the way we had members of the parish attend as well). We had a month-long drive for winter clothing, food and personal care items as well as sleeping bags and blankets. One of our members also works at the Mission Thrift store as a volunteer and has been able to collect blankets that the store rejects for resale. We are also making Street Mission as one of the local charities that we assist each year.

### **Brewer's Mills – Stephanie Walker**

Stephanie asked for clarification about the definition of homelessness for the sake of your questionnaire. Are we using the literal definition as a person who lives on the streets and uses shelters? Or are we to include the poor – those who might have a roof over their heads but just barely ... that might have a roof but can't afford heat or food or clothing? I am not sure I would say that our rural community has anyone who are "homeless".

### **Brockville – Alice Laushway**

We have compiled some things that our council does for Homelessness. Mostly it is to supply food. We work at the school breakfast programme five days a week. We have a Food Bank in Prescott and many of our members volunteer there. We donate to St. Vincent de Paul Society once a month at the Church. South Grenville High School have the King's Kitchen which has a meal every Wednesday. Brockville has a restaurant called Loaves and Fishes. They provide meals for \$1.00. The Peer Church has complete dinners. Cardinal is in the process of getting ready for a building with beds and meals for 14 people. They must be recommended by a Doctor.

### **Belleville – Selina Harley/Ann Rorabeck**

In the Belleville are there is hidden homelessness such as sleeping hard, couch surfers (using friends for periods of time), using entrances to banking machines. Lots of younger people in this category.

Hasting has 20 plus accessible resources that can be accessed by the needy:

Hospital Crisis Response, Community Health Centre, CMHA Transitional housing, Food bank, Local United Churches Meal Programmes (*In From the Cold*), Salvation Army, APS, Adult Protective Services, Poverty Round Table. There has been funding from all three levels of government, Street nurse.

It appears that a lot of younger people, plus women seniors are at risk. Reason that our food banks are relied on. Shortage of rentals and affordable housing a big factor. We hope to have an 8-bed transitional house ready by the Fall. It is not funded by the government. Will be spearheaded by Jodie Jenkins. Our Three Oaks Women Shelter now has an apartment to help victims, for a period of time for them to get back on their feet.

### **Kingston – Roberta Millar (St. Paul the Apostle)**

Hidden homelessness is more prevalent in our schools, students are known to "couch surf" with meals during week provided by school breakfast and lunch programmes. I tried to implement backpacks and snacks for these students to have on weekends, left

messages, phone & email for ACW's at Holy Cross and Regi but no response. Our Health and Education Chair will look into this.

Our St. Paul the Apostle CWL Council provides toques, socks, mitts, blessing bags with toiletries, food items for St. Vincent de Paul Lunches. Our parish collects food once a month for Food Bank. Our council provides home cooked meal once a month for *In From the Cold* as well as financial donation.

If a list of reliable resources does not exist it would be great to have in referring people to appropriate resources.

#### **Madoc - Debbie Wood**

Living in a small town the face of homelessness is hidden from us. I do believe it exists, even in small towns but the problem is not as visible as in the larger areas. We have decided that as an Easter project, we are gathering feminine hygiene products and delivering them to the women's shelter in Belleville. Three Oaks (the women's shelter) does have an outreach programme in our area and north but of course due to privacy we are not able to obtain names of these women and children who might be in need. Although this may not be a homeless person living on the streets, these are our sisters and their families who have fled from abuse with no place to go. We trust this direction has come from the Holy Spirit and will be a good example of giving for not only members of our league but our entire parish.

#### **Marysville – Julia Murphy**

We have mentioned this topic at our monthly meeting. As we are a country community we felt that lack of food is more of the issue than homelessness in our community. We support the local food bank in Deseronto. We have a monthly collection at our church for the Food Bank. When we had a presentation in April 2017 by Nadia covering the World Youth Day Experience in Poland, there was no admission charged for the presentation and soup lunch, but we asked everyone from the parish to bring a food bank item or donate cash for the Food Bank. At our annual Christmas Lunch for our members we started a new tradition in 2015, whereby we stopped buying \$10 gifts for each other and we collected Food Bank items or Cash. Our Council also supports the Food Bank with cash twice a year.

#### **Picton – Colleen Hill**

We had a presenter from a county charity "Alternatives for Women" in November. We have a monetary donation as well as bags and bags of needs that were identified, such as women's clothing, robes, toiletries, household items, sheets and bedding and more. It filled the whole back of the presenter's van! We learned about their many services and programmes for women and children of domestic abuse – and will continue to support them.

#### **Tweed – Sheila Shaw**

There are several Community Services in Tweed that help those in need. They have monthly community dinners, thrift stores, Salvation Army. Not really aware of people who are actually homeless.