

The Regional Homelessness Fund

With \$1.7 million in funding from the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) since 2000, the Regional Homelessness Fund (RHF) has assisted communities province-wide, including St. John's, Bay Bulls, Gander, Corner Brook, Happy Valley Goose Bay, Labrador City and Nain.

The RHF is designed to help support small and rural communities experiencing homelessness.

Hope Haven, Labrador City

Hope Haven is a new shelter and resource facility for women and their children who are escaping domestic abuse and violence. The facility received \$625,000 from the Youth component of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), \$112,000 through the *Shelter Enhancement Program* (cost-shared between Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC)), and a *Proposal Development Funding* loan of over \$17,000 through CMHC.

This shelter includes four large wheelchair-accessible bedrooms with two bathrooms, administrative offices and activity rooms, and provides women access to computer equipment, library resources, a 24-hour crisis line and other resource and referral programs. The new facility offers safe and secure shelter and support services and can accommodate up to 225 women and children annually.

Key supporters of the project also include the past and present members of the Hope Haven Board of Directors and staff, the *Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOCC)*, the departments of Health and Community Services, Human Resources Labour and Employment, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Wabush Mines and many others within the community.



Grand opening of Hope Haven, Labrador.

The Happy Valley-Goose Bay Homelessness Community Plan

During 2006, the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay agreed to sponsor and administer the development of a local community plan to address homelessness, led by a multi-stakeholder Homelessness & Transitional Housing Committee. With representatives from *Labrador Literacy Information and Action Network*, *Libra House*, *Mokami Status of Women Centre*, *Lake Melville Community Employment* and all levels of government, the community has come together

to create its first-ever action plan on homelessness.

In January 2007, Service Canada approved \$25,000 to help the community complete its plan.

"Without the funding from the Regional Homelessness Fund...our homelessness issues would continue to grow," says Donna Roberts, a member of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Homelessness/Transitional Housing Working Group. ■

What do you think about the issue of homelessness locally?



Lois Skanes, Lawyer

"Well I'm sure there's a lot of it and I think that is something that we need to deal with. I don't think the supports are there to give people a proper place to go when they are in crisis or any unexpected situation."



Donald Hewitt Tucker, Musician

"I think everyone should have a home obviously. Years ago, you'd never hear about anything like that in Newfoundland, but lately you see more and more people living outdoors. It's a sad state of affairs especially this time of year."



Colleen Simpson, Expediter

"I think it's terrible, especially in the winter. They're people trying to do something about it though. They were trying to raise money for the Pancake Breakfast at the Battery yesterday."



Billy Jordan, Homeless

"It's hard being on the street, getting a bite to eat and its down, really down here now. I don't sleep. I slept in the bank last night. It was hard to sleep."



Phonse Miller, Gallery Shoes, Owner

"Nobody should be homeless in this day in age, but we know it happens. A lot of time I think its because some cases are just hard-to-deal-with people and the system just lets go because there is too many people for too few social workers or whatever group of people takes care of them."



Brian Windsor, Retail sales clerk

"It's kind of a problem. There's some, but not a whole lot though. There's a couple, three or four that I see every day."



Hendrik Vanderkuilen, Father

"I personally know about twenty people who are homeless. I think homelessness is an issue that people haven't been dealing with as well as they should. Right now I have a home, but I still panhandle to this day. I just came from panhandling."



Sarah Brown, Memorial University Student

"I don't really know anyone in particular but I've heard of lots of people crashing on people's couches and stuff like that."



Andrew Gillespie, Full-time student

"I think its not as widely accepted or probably widely known as other big cities in Canada, but I think it does definitely exist here."



Kayla Pittman, Daycare worker

"I don't think it's addressed enough. I think it's out there more than people realize it is. More should be done to help them get back up on their feet and actually find a place to live. Everybody deserves a second chance in life."