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The Greater Saint John Homelessness Steering Committee (GSJHSC) is an inter-agency committee representing all agencies in Greater Saint John that work with the homeless population and those at-risk of becoming homeless. To comment on the content in 'Perspectives' or provide ideas and suggestion for future issues, contact coordinator Mark Leger at 636-8541. E-mail: mark@sjhdc.ca

Green Thumbs At The Salvation Army Booth Centre

Jean Isaac grew up on a farm in Quebec. Now a resident of The Salvation Army Booth Centre on St. James Street, Isaac is reconnecting with his farming past in a newly planted vegetable garden outside the shelter. The area was originally intended to be a parking lot, but they made it a garden instead. Shelter residents have planted an assortment of vegetables, including potatoes, carrots, and squash. Karen Powell, Support Services Coordinator, is a chef by training and plans to cook good meals for the guys from the harvested food. Many area businesses and organizations have dedicated time and money to getting the new garden off the ground, including The Fundy Region Solid Waste Commission, Fundy Fencing, Halifax Seed, Canadian Tire, the Saint John Y's Men's Club, and the Saint John Salvation Army Auxiliary. We'll update this story come harvest season in the fall.



Karen Powell, Support Services Coordinator, Karl Jacoby, Gary Knor, and Jean Isaac tend the vegetable garden at The Salvation Army Booth Centre on St. James Street. Since this picture was taken, the plants have sprouted and the weeding season is well underway.

Hope Is An Affordable Home In Good Condition

It's been a busy spring and early summer for the provincial government on housing and homelessness issues. In early April, the province passed **Bill 35**, which granted roomers and boarders the same rights and protections as tenants renting apartments. Roomers and boarders now have the legal right to safe, clean living space in good repair, and can register a complaint with the Office of the Rentalsman if these conditions are not met. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Stephen Brittain, the Rentalsman for Saint John. He is available to answer questions one-on-one, and is also open to conducting information sessions about the new legislation with groups of residents and service providers. His phone number is 658-2512. E-mail: saintjohn.rentalsman-mediateur@snb.ca. You can also find more information on the Service New Brunswick web site: www.snb.ca.

In late June, the provincial government released, **Hope is a Home: New Brunswick's Housing Strategy**. The government has committed to spending \$48-million over five years on affordable housing and homelessness initiatives. In the week after the strategy was released, the province held several press conferences to announce specific initiatives. They promised to provide stable funding to shelters for homeless people. In the first year, they have pledged \$250,000 to be shared amongst the eight shelters in the province. In the second year, the amount will be increased to \$500,000; in subsequent years, it will be bumped to \$750,000. They also promised to extend child protection services to youth, aged 16-18, including foster care and kinship care. Addressing youth homelessness is an identified priority in the plan, and includes a pledge to develop a funding formula for transitional housing programs for youth.

As part of the housing strategy, the province developed a long-term plan for addressing homelessness entitled, "The Solution to Homelessness is a Home." In addition to providing stable funding, the government lays out a plan for ending chronic homelessness developed in consultation with stakeholders from across the province. The details are contained in New Brunswick's Housing Strategy, "Hope is a Home," which is now available in the Social Development section of the government web site: www.gnb.ca/0017/Housing/index-e.asp



The Stiletto Stampede

The participants in this year's Stiletto Stampede didn't sit back on their heels, as they sprinted down the Market Square Boardwalk and raised nearly \$6,000 for Coverdale Centre for Women. The second annual race took place June 30, with 32 participants racing in two-inches before a crowd gathered to celebrate Canada Day—and, of course, enjoy the spectacle of men and women clip-clopping down the boardwalk in stilettos.

Yoga and skateboard enthusiast Jason McLean won the celebrity race. He was second to Joaquin Zubizaretta in the men's open run, though; Monik Cormier came first in the women's race. The Stiletto Stampede raises money for the clothing program offered at Coverdale. This program is currently used by 500 women a year and is rapidly expanding, so Coverdale appreciates the generous support of the runners and their sponsors.

First Steps Grads Ready for their Next Steps

Nine young women from First Steps Housing Project Inc. graduated from The Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre last month. One of the students graduated with high honours; two finished with honours.

Five of them are moving on to post-secondary degrees. Two will attend the University of New Brunswick in Saint John; two will go to the New Brunswick Community College; and another will enroll at the Saint John campus of Eastern College (formerly CompuCollege).

As part of the graduation celebrations, the students were treated to a shopping spree, hair appointment, lunch, dinner, hotel stay and a framed photograph. They also took part in a Graduation Celebration June 28th at First Steps. \$5,000 in scholarships were also awarded, thanks to Saint John Energy, Brunswick Pipeline and MLA Margaret-Ann Blaney.

First Steps is a supportive home for single and pregnant young women and their children. It provides an environment where young mothers can continue their education, further their personal development and gain the skills required to thrive as individuals and as parents.



Linda Beckingham and Julie Hooley are two members of this year's graduating class at The Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre.

Saint John Services

Shelters

- Coverdale Centre for Women Inc.
Halfway House - 634-1649
Emergency Wet Shelter - 672-6285
- The Salvation Army - Booth Residential Services -
634-7021
- Hestia House (women and children leaving domestic
violence) - 634-7571
- First Steps Housing Project (pregnant and parenting
mothers age 16-29) - 693-2228

Youth

- The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC) - 632-5531
(The Oasis Room, Switch 180 Case Management)
- Youth Choices - 634-0788
- ONE Change - ONE L.I.F.E. Program - 635-2035

Housing

- Saint John Non-Profit Housing Inc. - 658-1925
- Housing Alternatives Inc. - 632-9393
- Second Stage Safe Haven - 632-9289

Food Services

- Food Banks (for a full list of food banks and those
who provide food services please visit
www.saintjohninfo.ca or www.sjhdc.ca)
- Romero House - 642-7447
- Outflow - jayne@sure-stone.com

Health

- AIDS Saint John - 652-2437
- Community Health Centre - 632-5537
- Open Door Club - 658-3196
- Ridgewood Addiction Services - 674-4300

Other

- Family Resource Centre - 633-2182
- Urban Core Support Network - 642-9033
- John Howard Society - 657-5547
- Saint John Community Chaplaincy - 634-8218
- PASAGE Saint John - 642-4035

For information on other community services call
the INFO-Line at 633-4636 or search our online
database at www.saintjohninfo.ca

News and Notes

Local

The 2010 **report card on homelessness** in Saint John, 'Experiencing Homelessness,' was launched in March. There are statistics on housing and homelessness, and stories about people and issues, here in Saint John and across the province. Copies are available online at <http://www.sjhdc.ca/pdf/HPS-Report-Card.pdf>



National

On July 9, the **Alberta government committed \$188-million** this year to housing projects for low-income and homeless Albertans. It's part of a provincial plan to build 11,000 new units for low-income earners and homeless people by 2012 and end homelessness altogether by 2019. In its progress report on ending homelessness, the Calgary Homeless Foundation celebrated the creation of new housing units, but laments that Calgary has been so far unable to stop the growth of the homeless population, which increased from 447 in 1992 to 4,060 in 2008. Sources: *Edmonton Journal*, Calgary Homeless Foundation

In September, the **Alberta government is rolling out a plan to stop panhandling** in communities across the province. The idea is to have people donate to charities that help the homeless, rather than give them money on the streets. A similar program is already in place in Calgary. According to the Downtown Business Association, the number of panhandlers has dropped to 30 from 100 in 2006. Source: ctvcalgary.ca

In June, the city of Vancouver and several non-profit organizations staged a two-day conference entitled, '**Beyond Housing: Health of the Homeless.**' Participants discussed ways of addressing underlying health concerns in the homeless population, including addictions and mental health issues. The conference took place just as the Mental Health Commission of Canada was beginning a three-year study involving 100 people in the homeless population, who will be given access to mental and physical care by teams of medical professionals. Source: *Vancouver Sun*

The new vegetable garden at The Salvation Army on St. James Street (see story on page 1) isn't without precedent. **Homeless youth at Eva's Place, a Toronto-area shelter, have their own garden too.** It was planted last year and will be expanding this year thanks to an \$8,000 grant from the Sobeys and Earth Day Canada Community Environment fund. Apparently, vegetable gardening is good for your overall health. A 2001 study found that people who participated in community gardens ate more vegetables and less processed and junk food than those who don't garden. Source: *Toronto Star*