



PRESS RELEASE

County of Dufferin
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DUFFERIN COUNTY PARTICIPATING IN NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN TO HOUSE 20,000 HOMELESS CANADIANS

Dufferin – Dufferin County and the Community Advisory Board has joined the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) again this year for the 20,000 Homes Campaign, a powerful nationwide campaign that aims to permanently house 20,000 of Canada’s most vulnerable homeless people.

“The 20,000 Homes Campaign is a grassroots movement of communities working together to permanently house some of our most vulnerable homeless neighbours,” says Tim Richter, President and CEO, CAEH. “Homelessness is a solvable problem and we believe if we work together, apply proven strategies like Housing First, we’ll achieve meaningful, nationwide reductions in homelessness within three years.”

The 20,000 Homes Campaign is focused on the ‘most vulnerable’, referring specifically to homeless individuals who are assessed as having high acuity (those with complex needs and at risk of death from homelessness) and/or those who are chronic or episodically homeless. The Housing First approach is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing providing supports and services as needed.

On any given night in Canada, approximately 35,000 people will sleep in a shelter or on the street and over 235,000 people will experience homelessness over the course of a year. Research suggests of those 235,000 as many as 33,000 people are chronic or episodically homeless, meaning they have been homeless for a long time or experience episodes of homelessness over the course of their lives. Chronic and episodically homeless people often struggle with deep poverty, trauma, mental illness, addiction along with complex and often multiple medical problems. Research shows conclusively that people experiencing homelessness have higher mortality rates and a lower life expectancy than other Canadians.

“Although homelessness in Dufferin County is not as visible as it is in larger municipalities it does exist and we are working hard to address it” said Anna McGregor, Dufferin County’s acting Director of Community Services. “Through our partnership with the Community Advisory Board we are making great progress in ensuring that everyone in Dufferin County has a home first and foremost” she

continued.

The campaign in Dufferin will engage volunteers to get to know homeless people by name and assess their housing and health care needs through a simple survey conducted on May 14th and 15th, 2018. Completed surveys and recorded data will be shared with local staff who will prioritize entry into housing based on urgent need. The County will then work together with various partners to house their most vulnerable homeless people, reporting progress regularly on the campaign website www.20khomes.ca.

"We're going to extract every ounce of value we can from existing resources to get people housed," Richter says, "but to end homelessness in Canada we will need meaningful federal investment in affordable and supportive housing."

Over the next three years the campaign hopes to build public support for ending homelessness and renewed federal investment in housing and support services.

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