



North House Newsletter



December, 2006 4th quarter - 17th Newsletter

From the Board

The staff and trustees at North House are, like you, always horrified when we hear of the deaths of mothers or fathers who have been driven to such deep despair and desperation that they have no where to turn or have nothing else to do but take their children with them when they commit suicide. Especially at this season of the year when our culture has created this idyllic holiday called, "Christmas", there are many people who cannot face up to the disappointment that will enter their lives because there will not be a Christmas or perhaps, not even a family.

We want, like all social agencies, to be able to reach these people and tell them that there is hope at the end of the dark tunnel and that they and their children will be all right. North House has found that we are providing a safety net that works and others have used it successfully to assist people in getting their lives on track. The 'safety net' is called WrapAround.

Developed first when dealing with difficult children, WrapAround has been adapted to many different situations including homelessness and literacy.

Over the past year, the Literacy Network of Durham Region has instituted training sessions for WrapAround across Durham Region in an attempt to assist not only with literacy but to assist social agencies in developing a way of dealing with all the other problems that are so much a part of poverty and literacy.

Homelessness, like literacy, never comes alone as an isolated problem. Often it might be started as parents lose a job, become incapacitated from a work related injury or find that one family member can no longer be part of a cohesive family unit. Because families are often relying on two wage earners making minimum wage, there is no safety net when one of them is no longer working. The bills mound up and sooner or later the family is in a desperate situation.

WrapAround is a support group but not an ordinary support group. The family chooses friends, or acquaintances, the minister or the social worker to be part of their WrapAround team. As the family develops goals, the team works together to see how they can assist the family in moving forward whether it be for daycare, budget training, or more education, a way can be found to help. The family can take a breather from some of their rent bills with a subsidized apartment while they work on getting their life back together. Within a few months, North House is finding that people are getting their lives back on track and they are moving into more permanent and stable housing.

North House is hoping that with the help of a Trillium grant to both North House and to the Literacy Network of Durham Region that we can provide more WrapAround and WrapAround training so that many more families can be helped to enjoy holidays in the future.

Heather Beveridge Chair of North House



Raising the Roof Campaign 2006-2007



A miniature kitchen with a small sink, a few cupboards and a stove along with a couple of chairs and a small table are enough to provide dreams galore for two small kindergarten children. They don the colourful aprons, put out the pretend food, wash the dishes when they're finished and chatter away like a couple of "old hens". They're playing "house".

As a kindergarten teacher, I think I saw every child in the class want to play "house". Why was it the most popular activity in the classroom? Perhaps the appeal of imitating the "grownups" makes the pretend world even more fascinating. In some cases, just pretending to have a kitchen is dream come true.

But the dream that all children have doesn't always come true for all children. When was it shattered? Was it the first time they realized there wasn't going to be any breakfast because Mom had overslept after a night of drinking, or was it when they had to flee the house in the middle of the night in their pyjamas because Daddy was raving and had already punched Mommy?

No, these scenes are not part of any child's dreams but they are the beginning of nightmares that focus on the home and the "house."

These nightmares are not always the cause of homelessness but during Housing Awareness Week make yourself aware that many children's dreams of "house" go unfulfilled even though they may have two parents who are working. All children deserve a home.

In Durham Region, just in the first half of 2006, 2,500 households were supported in some way by assistance. Most of these families are the working poor who require some assistance to keep them from becoming homeless. Every day, North House Shelter in Beaverton receives a call from a household looking for a subsidized apartment. Some of our families in Uxbridge and Scugog continue to be on the waiting list for government subsidized housing.

In 2006, one hundred and seventy-two households received assistance from the Rent Bank; the three hostels in Durham Region operated from 75% to 95 % capacity. There has been an increase in the number of single women with mental and physical health challenges that are seeking subsidized and supportive housing.

Project staff of Durham Region note that there is an increased need for supportive, subsidized housing to assist households in stabilizing over the long term with an increase in the number of households facing multiple challenges: – minimum wage income; health problems; poor housing.

Housing Awareness Day should not only make us aware of the homeless, but those who live in substandard housing and those who cannot afford to live in this area because there is a lack of affordable housing. During the election I heard councillor after councillor say, "my family is growing up here because it's a great place to live." Yes, it is a great place to live but will your son or daughter be able to afford to live here when it's time for them to buy a home, or when you become seniors will you still be able to live here? So many seniors are moving from this high tax area to homes that they can afford to live in. Many seniors are finding themselves homeless when they've had a home all their lives.

Housing Awareness Day, November 22, is the kickoff day for North House's "Raising the Roof" Toque campaign. "Raising the Roof" is a national homelessness charity that provides funds for 93 Canadian agencies working to alleviate homelessness.



Raising the Roof Campaign 2006-2007



Again this year, North House Transitional Housing will be the recipient of funds from the toque campaign in Durham Region and toque boxes will be placed in local communities, schools, Township Offices, etc. "Raising the Roof" is being helped by their partners: Home Depot; Global Television; Direct Energy; The Bargains Group; Ecentricarts; Newstalk, CFRB; 97.3 EZRock; HOMES Publishing Group; Toronto United Church Council. You can help alleviate homelessness too by buying a toque!

You will see staff and volunteers selling very fashionable toques at a number of different venues. We would welcome the opportunity to come to your organization and discuss the work that North House does, the current statistics on homelessness in North Durham and how your organization can become involved.

Please call Ann Watson at 705-426-1150 if this is something you would like to arrange.

Preparing for 2006-2007 "Raise the Roof" Toque Fundraiser



Heather Beveridge-Chair of North House & Ann Watson-Program Manager



Reflections over the last twelve months

Over the past twelve months North House has had the opportunity to work with many families in North Durham. Countless telephone calls have been answered by myself and Claudette Taylor, our administrative assistant. Referrals, when appropriate have been made, and more importantly North House has worked closely with five families. These families were referred to North House by social workers, Ontario Works staff, local clergy and other community organizations that saw a need that was not being met and thought that a good fit with North House might exist.

All of these families have received a rent subsidy which has helped alleviate financial stress and all are participating in the WrapAround process. With the support of the WrapAround process and the many volunteers involved, families are making steps towards their goals and overcoming obstacles that had seemed insurmountable. It has been a pleasure to work with these families and individuals. Their desire to bring about positive change in their lives and the lives of their children has been an inspiration.

With the purchase and renovation of a four-plex in Beaverton this year, North House reached its capacity for working with families in Beaverton. Over the next twelve months North House will seek to expand its services in other areas of North Durham, specifically in the townships of Uxbridge and Scugog.

The support of our volunteers, Board Members, and WrapAround team members have made North House what it is today. The commitment of the Board, the dedication of the many social service, counseling, educational and support programs, and the love of the many family and friends involved has made wraparound a successful tool in helping families and individuals get back on track. As we grow and expand our services, we look forward to expanding our volunteer base and making North House truly a community based and supported organization.



NORTH HOUSE VISION & VALUES

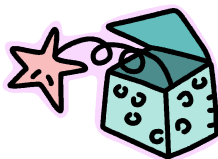
Vision:

North House will facilitate responsive approaches and supports to housing that are safe and affordable, meeting the changing needs of the people in the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge.

Core Values

1. We believe in: The rights of our participants to confidentiality and privacy;
2. Safe, supportive, non-judgmental and healthy environments;
3. Breaking the cycle of homelessness by providing a supportive, integrated continuum of housing services and supports;
4. An innovative approach that uses a circle of supportive services and a focus on the strengths of the participants which enables them to find and enact their own solutions to positive change

Suggestions and Comments Always Welcome



North House is looking for a sponsor for our quarterly newsletter. If you can help, please call the office at 705-426-1150 or email us at northhouseoffice@bellnet.ca

This newsletter was compiled by Claudette Taylor, Administrative Assistant, Ann Watson, Program Manager, and Heather Beveridge, Chair of the Board of Directors. If you have information you would like included in the next edition or have questions or comments in regards to this newsletter, please send them to northhouseoffice@bellnet.ca.

North House acknowledges the support provided by St. Paul's Anglican Church in Beaverton, ON

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