

Media Release

For immediate release

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Surrey Agencies and Volunteers Prepare for Metro Homeless Count

(Surrey, BC) The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) and the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee (AHSC) are overseeing the fourth Homeless Count on March 16 from midnight to midnight.

“The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce is taking the lead on the Count in Surrey,” explained Shayne Williams, Executive Director of South Fraser Community Services. “We know homeless youth have been undercounted in previous years so we are pleased that this year the Metro Vancouver Count will include the first specialized youth implementation strategy in Canada”

Every three years Since 2002, regional homeless counts have been taking place across Metro Vancouver(2002, 2005, 2008 and 2011). The methodology is refined with every count and is recognized by all levels of government and community agencies as the best approach to understand trends in the homeless population.

“It is unfortunate that we still need to conduct this count,” said Madeleine Addison of the Canadian Mental Health Association and Co-chair of the Task Force. “Assisting homeless people to find and keep their housing is difficult without the necessary resources. As well, the significant increase in the use of the Surrey Food Bank tells us that more youth, seniors and families are at risk of homelessness than ever before.”

There are eight locations where people can be counted and access services in Surrey on March 16, Count Day: South Fraser Community Services/Front Room, Newton Advocacy Group Society, First United Church White Rock, Salvation Army Newton, South Surrey Women's Services, Cloverdale Church, Surrey Urban Mission and Surrey Women's Centre.

This year organizers anticipate over 600 volunteers will participate throughout Metro Vancouver on Count Day. The 2011 Homeless Count is made possible through funding from: United Way of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver, Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society and TransLink (in-kind).

For more information and a backgrounder visit: www.pledgetoendhomelessness.org

For more information about previous Metro Vancouver counts please visit www.stophomelessness.org

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