

# April 2011 Newsletter

## Peninsula Homeless to Housing (PH2H) Round Table

Providing leadership in the South Surrey White Rock communities

In recognition of national volunteer week in April, this month we focus on the role volunteers and community partnerships play in providing extreme weather shelter. Please circulate our newsletter to your members and congregations. We welcome your feedback and any news items can be sent to: [petergreenwell@telus.net](mailto:petergreenwell@telus.net)

The PH2H Roundtable meets at 9:30am on the first Friday of each month at the White Rock Baptist Church at 1657-140<sup>th</sup> St Surrey. Our next meeting is April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Extreme Weather Shelter

The White Rock South Surrey community has had an extreme weather shelter for three years; First United Church operates as the extreme weather shelter of Hyland House. And it is only able to operate through the partnerships of First United Church, BC Housing and Options/Hyland House. And beyond that is the dedicated efforts of the volunteers who make the operation happen.

Volunteers make it to the church during terrible weather; arriving just prior to 10 p.m. to welcome guests and to prepare a hot meal. Staff from Hyland House is on duty through the night starting at 11:00p.m. A second shift of volunteers serves morning coffee at 6:30 a.m. and provides a gift card to allow guests to purchase breakfast at McDonalds. It is a labour infused with a spirit of community service. Many congregations are represented amongst volunteers as well as community volunteers who have no church affiliation.

PH2H had a chance to speak with Kees Koster, who has volunteered with the shelter since it began three years ago, and he had these observations. "Dick Avison, [volunteer organizer] is very determined and thorough and has a way of organizing things that really works for people."

Kees Koster credited the Reverend Joan McMurty as a key advocate for the shelter. "Three years ago she said if it's needed we should do it. She got in touch with Peter Fedos at Hyland House to get it started."

First United Church's hosting the extreme weather shelter involved more than just opening the doors. Fire Department Inspectors came and did an assessment and there were a number of renovations required, including replacing double wooden doors with steel doors and other more minor changes.

This year the church expanded its capacity from 10 to 15 beds this year. With the number of cold spells this last winter there was a total of 48 nights when the extreme weather shelter was available. On average the shelter hosted between 2 to 6 people per night.

Hyland House provides two staff people per night for the shelter, from 11pm to 6:30am, and provides an orientation for volunteers. Hyland House, through BC Housing funding, also supplies the basic necessities for food and supplies. A final acknowledgement needs to be expressed to the City of White Rock for their expressed support for the operation of the extreme weather shelter.

**Homeless Count in South Surrey White Rock**  
PH2H wants to acknowledge SOURCES and Options Outreach for their work in recruiting volunteers and overall coordination of the March regional homeless count on the peninsula; First Church and South Fraser Women's Services Society hosted meals; and Alexandra Neighbourhood House was asked to do training and serve as the Hub for the youth count. Without their invaluable assistance the homeless count would not have been possible in our community. We will keep you posted when final results are available.



### PH2H Food Security Initiative

Working with the White Rock South Surrey (WRSS) Community Foundation, the Peninsula Homeless to Housing Roundtable has undertaken the initial steps to develop a fund to support low-income meal programs in our community. If you wish to contribute to this fund please contact:  
WRSS Community Foundation  
Contact Debbie Magson Tel: 778-292-1367  
Email: [info@wrsscf.org](mailto:info@wrsscf.org)

### Update Canadian Mental Health Commission

Below is a link to the spring newsletter of the Vancouver At Home/Chez Soi demonstration project of the Canadian Mental Health Commission. This is a five year cross-Canada project that provides a variety of housing and support services for people with mental health issues. [Vancouver update](#)

**May's Newsletter will focus on the challenges youth face with homelessness.**