

**Homelessness
and Housing
Umbrella Group (HHUG)**

**2014-2015
Annual Report**



HHUG

Message from the Chair- Lindsey White

Since the inception of the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG) in 2006, the group has been motivated to fulfil the vision that “Waterloo Region is an inclusive community where everyone has adequate housing, income and support to make a home.” 2014 year was a year of thanks.

This past year also saw new partnerships emerge. One partnership was Hockey Helps the Homeless, a Canadian initiative to raise funds for those supporting agencies working with people experiencing homelessness and programs which are committed to ending homelessness. Hockey Helps the Homeless held their inaugural K-W event on October 24th bringing together hockey enthusiasts for a good cause. Money raised from the event was divided between four organizations within Waterloo Region. HHUG was grateful to be named as a recipient and due to this donation HHUG is able to continue through to 2016. Many local volunteers participated to make the event the success it was. Aside from the funds raised, Hockey Helps the Homeless also brought Homelessness and Affordable housing issues to light for many folks who may not have realized the reality of Homelessness and Affordable Housing within the Region, and for that, we are truly thankful. The event for this year is already in the planning stages and will be taking place on October 30th.

Throughout the past year, the HHUG steering committee and community partners continued the mission to support and mobilize the housing stability and related sectors to end homelessness. That being said, thanks needs to be passed along to the HHUG steering committee for their ongoing and committed work during the past year.

On behalf of the steering committee, our thanks go to Ann Gibson, our administrative support. Thanks for always having what we need and for your creative work on our newsletters. Ann’s last meeting with us was a couple of weeks ago, thanks again Ann and wishing you all the best. As Ann has left us, we welcome Dianne Bourbeau; we look forward to having Dianne attend our monthly meetings.

The Steering Committee also sends out a heartfelt thanks to Lynn Macaulay, our Initiatives Coordinator. Much of HHUG’s success is due to Lynn’s work with advocating and mobilizing the community and local government representatives, her undeniable knowledge of Homelessness and Housing needs and her ability to ‘think outside of the box’ to bring issues to light that may have gone unnoticed. We thank you Lynn and look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

Coming to a close, we would like to thank everyone who supports those experiencing homelessness and to those working toward permanent solutions. What you do matters. Perhaps more than ever we need your commitment, skill and passion. Together, we will end homelessness in Waterloo Region.

This annual report covers activities from January 1, 2014-March 31, 2015. This is the transition year from calendar reporting to fiscal year reporting.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee met a total of ten (10) times throughout 2014-2015. The Committee took a break from meetings in the summer (June, July and August). Meetings were cancelled in both Feb, 2014 and Feb, 2015 due to inclement weather. The meeting in March, 2015 was cancelled due to a conflict with Hockey Helps the Homeless Planning Committee. The Steering Committee is responsible for the following:

- Making decisions and conducting business on behalf of the HHUG
- Providing direction to any support staff
- Developing and ensuring the implementation of the Annual Work Plan
- Planning HHUG Community Events (including the AGM and Housing Awards)
- Approving the establishment and work plan of any ad-hoc action committee
- Approving all correspondence on behalf of the HHUG
- Collecting, sharing, and coordinating other homelessness/housing group work plans
- Seeking out and addressing homelessness and housing issues

The 2014-2015 Steering Committee:

Name	Organization	HHUG Role(s)
Rob Davis	Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo, Wellington, Dufferin	Member at Large
Kristine Dearlove	Habitat for Humanity, Waterloo Region	Vice Chair, Member at Large
Melissa Dunbar	Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries	Cambridge Representative
Ron Flaming	House of Friendship	Treasurer, Kitchener Representative
Kendra Foord	oneROOF Youth Services	Member at Large
Gael Gilbert	Supportive Housing of Waterloo	Waterloo Representative
Charlotte Graham	Community Member	Member at Large
Daniella McIntosh	Immigration Partnership	Member at Large
Michael Savage	Community Member	Executive Member, Member at Large
Jeff Schumacher	Region of Waterloo	Regional Representative
Nancy Singer	Waterloo Region Community Legal Services	Member at Large
Alex Troeger	Community Member	Member at Large
Van Vilaysinh	Region of Waterloo	Regional Representative
Lindsey White	Lutherwood	Chair, Rural Representative

Ex-Officio Members of Steering Committee

NAME	ORGANIZATION	ROLE
Judith Binder	Canada Mortgage and Housing	Consultant
Bryan Hryhorchuk	Social and Economic Development Canada	Consultant
Ann Gibson	Lutherwood	Admin Support
Lynn Macaulay	HHUG	Staff

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES:

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS EVENTS

- **HHUG AGM – June 4, 2014**

Featured guest speaker Tracey Ruehicke from CMHA WWD on Here 24/7

Here 24/7 is an integrated coordinated access centre for mental health, addiction and crisis services in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin. Staff are able to do the intake, assessment, referral, crisis, waitlist and appointment booking work for programs. The service launched on April 1, 2014 and was immediately inundated with a much higher than predicted number of requests for service. As a result, the management team has been meeting daily in order to resolve issues and modify the program. Tracey thanked the community for their support and patience through the first few months of this service.

- **Hockey Helps the Homeless- October 24, 2014**

On October 24, 2014, 112 local adult hockey players, 16 NHL Alumni and a crew of volunteers gathered at RIM Park in Waterloo for the inaugural Kitchener-Waterloo Hockey Helps the Homeless tournament. After playing 3 hockey games alongside Toronto Maple Leaf alumni including Mike Krushelnyski, Todd Warriner, Mark Osbourne, Laurie Boschman and hometown favourite Don Beaupre, everyone gathered for the banquet. The highlight was a short presentation by Steve Gosselin. He shared that as someone who had been homeless and struggling with alcohol issues, he was someone many of us would have passed on the street and never noticed. Today, he is employed, is a volunteer and recently got married. He reminded us that every person experiencing homelessness has a story.

In addition to being a fun and impactful day, the event raised \$80 000. The funds were shared by Lutherwood, House of Friendship, YWCA-KW and HHUG. These funds ensure the continuation of HHUG until the end of March, 2016!

- **Community Forum on Affordable Housing
Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge – January 17, 2015**

MP Adam Vaughan, Liberal Housing Critic, visited Waterloo Region for two affordable housing events on January 17th. HHUG was pleased to have the opportunity to organize a morning roundtable for service providers in the Housing Stability Sector and Mr. Vaughan. We were able to share some successes from Waterloo Region as well as some of our needs in terms of Federal Government Housing Policy.

In the afternoon, Mr. Vaughan hosted a community forum on affordable housing. The event featured a panel including Karen Redman (Regional Councillor), Doug Craig (Cambridge Mayor), Dave Jaworsky (Waterloo Mayor), Berry Vrbancovic (Kitchener Mayor) and Lynn Macaulay (HHUG Initiatives Coordinator). Again ideas about how the Federal Government can support affordable housing were discussed and Mr. Vaughn shared a number of his insights and ideas.

ADVOCACY

- **Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs,
Ontario Pre-budget Consultations – Monday January 13, 2014**

HHUG was pleased to be chosen as one of the presenters at the consultation held in Kitchener. Lynn Macaulay presented on behalf of HHUG.

- **Discretionary Benefits Strategy, 2014**

Regional Council voted in January, 2014 to add 1 million to discretionary benefits \$500,000 to permanent funding and \$500,000 as one time funding. This success was due to the work of a number of individuals and agencies within the community who all got together behind one strategy.

- **Pre-Budget Consultation with Ontario Finance Minister Hon. Charles Sousa
and Hon. John Milloy, MPP Kitchener Centre – February 6, 2014**

HHUG was pleased to be invited to attend a small consultation in Waterloo regarding the 2014 budget.

- **Endorsed Right to Housing Coalition Declaration asking the Federal
Government to create a National Housing Strategy, November 21, 2014**

This initiative was created by the Right to Housing (R2H) Provincial network. A rally and forum were held in Toronto as part of National Housing Day events.

- **Endorsed the Child and Youth Health and Housing Action Statement - www.housingandchildhealth.ca**

The Canadian Child and Youth Health and Housing Network represents key paediatric health sciences centres and other groups involved with children and housing. The network's main activity is to raise awareness of the role housing plays in the healthy development of children and youth in Canada.

- **Meetings with 3 Area MP's regarding Reinvestment of Funding from Expiring Social Housing Operating Agreements.**

- All three MP's requested more information about this issue
- MP Harold Albrecht wrote to Minister Kenny about the issue
- In the most recent Federal Budget investments in Affordable Housing were guaranteed at the same level for the next 4 years (instead of the planned decrease as agreements expired).

- **Presentation to Regional Council, Budget Public Input Session - February 11, 2015**

Lynn Macaulay presented on HHUG's behalf to Regional Council to summarize the challenges with Discretionary Benefits since the 2013 change in Provincial Funding. In 2015, Regional Council approved a staff recommendation that made the one-time \$500 000 into permanent funding. For each of the past 3 years, since Provincial Funding cuts, Regional Council has added two million additional dollars to discretionary benefits. This 2M is now all permanent funding.

SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Housing Stability Training Centre

5 Workshops were held, covering the following topics:

- Housing Stability System 102 – June 28, 2014
- Out of the Cold Volunteer Training – Sept 27, 2014
- Housing Stability System 102 – November 18, 2014
- Community Housing Part 1 – Jan 20, 2015
- Community Housing Part 2 – February 24, 2015

Waterloo Region Housing Coalition Awards – November 20, 2014

Outstanding Volunteer Housing Champion

Awarded to an individual or group who through volunteer work, has significantly increased the community's awareness of affordable housing issues and/or has measurably contributed to the creation of new affordable housing or to the sustainability of existing stock within Waterloo Region.

The 2014 recipient: Kitchener—Waterloo Out of the Cold Sites

Bethany Evangelical Missionary Church
Church of the Holy Saviour
First United Church
Ray of Hope
St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
St. John's Lutheran Church
St. Louis Roman Catholic Church
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church
Trinity United Church

15 years ago, the early Out of the Cold volunteers saw that there was a great need in our community and they met it. Over the years, the volunteers have given thousands of nights and tens of thousands of hours of their time - not to mention their hearts - to preserve and improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable neighbours. In addition to meeting the basic needs through the provision of meals and overnight accommodation, the Out of the Cold volunteers have been vigorous advocates of the need for more affordable housing with supports.

Sybil Frenette Outstanding Housing Creator

Awarded to an individual or group who has measurably contributed to the creation of new affordable housing or to the sustainability of existing stock within Waterloo Region. This award is named in honour of Sybil Frenette, whose visionary leadership has inspired many to make the building of affordable housing a priority within Waterloo Region.

2014 Recipient: Wendy Czarny, Executive Director - Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health Inc.

Waterloo Regional Homes began in 1980 with 1- eight bedroom home and has grown to include 371 subsidized accommodations within 10 agency owned properties and 304 one bedroom apartments in partnership with private and non-profit landlords. Waterloo Regional Homes combines affordable housing options with 24/7 support for people with mental health issues. Wendy has been with Waterloo Regional Homes since 1981.

Christine Wilson Outstanding Housing Community Worker

Awarded to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional commitment, dedication and ability in assisting individuals or households to access or maintain adequate affordable rental housing. This award is named in honour of Christine Wilson whose passion and commitment to low income tenants has created a lasting legacy in Waterloo Region.

Recipient: Zakim Tokhy, Housing/Orientation Co-ordinator, Reception House Waterloo Region

Each year about 245 refugees and 75 secondary migrants are served through Reception House. One of the most challenging yet important components of a Government Assisted Refugee's stay with Reception House is securing appropriate and affordable accommodation. Citizenship and Immigration Canada have mandated that once a refugee arrives at Reception House, they must have housing secured within 13 days. Zakim works with all of these individuals to assist them to secure housing within this time frame.

Outstanding Housing Educator

An individual or group who has demonstrated exceptional commitment, passion and innovation in increasing awareness and educating the community about affordable housing issues within Waterloo Region

Not awarded this year.

INFORMATION SHARING and MEDIA

HHUG acts as an information hub in order to share, to collaborate and to coordinate activities, research and information within the Housing Stability Sector. This is done in a number of different ways including:

- **List Serve**
Through the List Serve we share a wide range of information, training, events and research related to homelessness, affordable housing and poverty. Currently over 200 people receive these emails.
- **Newsletters**
Two newsletters were distributed, one in June, 2014 and one in April, 2015. It is posted on the HHUG website and distributed through the HHUG's list serve. Thanks to all those who submitted articles for the newsletter.

- **Website**

The HHUG website has information about who we are, what we do and our key documents. The HHUG website is scheduled for a major update as Lutherwood (our host site) is changing their website.

- **Media –**

Where HHUG is mentioned or a HHUG spokesperson is quoted.

- “Homeless lose a place to stay as Out of the Cold site set to Close” The Record, January 8, 2014 - <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/4305530-homeless-lose-a-place-to-stay-as-out-of-cold-site-set-to-close/>
- “Strong Reaction to recent Passing of fourth ROOF youth”, Kitchener Post, May 2, 2014, Waterloo Chronicle May 7, 2014 - <http://www.waterloochronicle.ca/news/strong-reaction-to-recent-passing-of-fourth-roof-youth/>
- “Region gets \$2.2 M from Ottawa to fight Homelessness”, The Record, August 22, 2014 - <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/4768675-region-gets-2-2m-from-ottawa-to-fight-homelessness/>
- “Hockey Helps the Homeless charity tourney, retired NHLers comes to Waterloo Region” – The Record, August 29, 2014 - <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/4804535-hockey-helps-the-homeless-charity-tourney-retired-nhlers-comes-to-waterloo-region/>
- “Can Hockey Help the Homeless?” - Kitchener Post, September 5, 2014- <http://www.kitchenerpost.ca/sports/can-hockey-help-the-homeless/>
- Radio Interview on Talk 570 November 3, 2014 – re: 2nd Annual State of Homelessness in Canada Report
- “Hockey Helps the Homeless helps keep HHUG afloat”, - Waterloo Chronicle, December 17, 2014 and Kitchener Post, December 18, 2014 - <http://www.waterloochronicle.ca/news/hockey-helps-the-homeless-helps-keep-hhug-afloat/>
- “Region Expected to Approve Benefit Spending for the Poor” – The Record, February 18, 2015 - <https://www.therecord.com/news-story/5342936-region-expected-to-approve-benefit-funding-for-the-poor/>

- “The View from Upstream: Unearthed Poverty” – The Community Edition Blog by Cameron Dearlove, March 7, 2015 - <http://communityedition.ca/blog/2015/03/07/the-view-from-upstream-unearthed-poverty/>

Committee and Group Involvement

HHUG regularly participates in the following groups/committees:

- **Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO Board Member)**
 - ACTO is a specialized legal clinic, funded by Legal Aid Ontario to better the housing situation of Ontario residents who have low incomes including tenants, members of co-ops and people who are homeless. They achieve this through test case litigation, law reform, housing policy work, community organizing and public legal education.
- **C-400 Group**
 - This National group was formed in order to promote the passage of Bill C-400 which would have required the Federal Government to create a National Housing Strategy. Although the Bill was defeated, this group continues to work and plan on National Housing Advocacy Strategies.
- **Cambridge Action on Homelessness Group (CAHG)**
 - A group of primarily direct service providers who meet to network and to respond to issues related to supporting people experiencing or at – risk of homelessness.
- **Cambridge Affordable Housing Roundtable (CAHR)**
 - This group works to support the creation of affordable housing stock and policies within Cambridge.
- **Right to Housing Committee**
 - This is a provincially based group of academics, advocates, people with lived and experienced and service providers They are currently focused on the Right to Housing Case (which is currently awaiting a decision by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding if they will hear the “motion to strike” appeal) and the need for a National Housing Strategy.