



# THE COMMUNITY GUIDE TO **End Homelessness** in Waterloo Region



November 2015

A photograph of three people—two women and one man—smiling and posing together outdoors. The woman on the left has short, wavy grey hair and is wearing a white turtleneck under a dark denim jacket. The woman in the middle has long blonde hair and is wearing a light pink long-sleeved shirt. The man on the right is a Black man with short hair, wearing an orange button-down shirt. They are standing on a paved path with green foliage in the background.

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This Community Guide is provided by  
the Region of Waterloo in partnership with  
the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG)



Region of Waterloo

COMMUNITY SERVICES



HHUG

This Community Guide provides information on ways to get  
involved in helping to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.  
**Thank you to all those who provided input.**

This booklet is available online at  
[communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca)  
**Search “Community Guide to End Homelessness”**

For additional copies please contact:  
519-883-2117  
TTY: 519-575-4608

Alternative formats of this document are available  
upon request.

The Region has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information  
contained in this booklet. However, the Region is not responsible for information  
that may have changed after the time of printing.

# Introduction

## Let's Make Change Happen

No one chooses to become homeless, yet there are many people experiencing **homelessness** in our community. There is a role for everyone in working to end homelessness – **you can be part of the solution.**

This Guide has been organized under the themes learn, lend and lead to help you to:

- **LEARN** more about homelessness and housing stability in Waterloo Region and opportunities to get involved;
- **LEND** a hand in our collective community efforts to end homelessness; and
- **LEAD** change in our community.



This Community Guide will be updated as new information becomes available. Check the Region's website at [communityservcies.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://communityservcies.regionofwaterloo.ca) for the latest version.

# LEARN



**3,219**  
people were  
served by  
emergency  
shelters from  
April 1, 2014 to  
March 31, 2015

LEARN

LEND

LEAD



## ENDING HOMELESSNESS

# It's a cause we can all support

Homelessness impacts everyone in the community.

### **The human cost of homelessness is extraordinary.**

Homelessness has been linked to many negative health outcomes, including chronic health issues and early death. Living without a fixed address takes an enormous toll on the individual, both physically and emotionally.

### **The community cost of homelessness is extraordinary.**

Research indicates that providing people with adequate housing and support not only improves health outcomes, it also contributes to significant cost savings to our community. The At Home/Chez Soi final report (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014) found that spending \$10 on housing people saved \$21.72 in health care, social supports and justice system costs.

It just doesn't make sense to leave people homeless.



Ending Homelessness



Saved Lives



Saved Money

## AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

# Lived Experience

## Homelessness can happen to anyone.

All it takes is one unexpected event or job loss to take a person off-course. This is one story. More stories of homelessness can be found on [homelesshub.com/about-homelessness/stories](https://homelesshub.com/about-homelessness/stories).

## A LOCAL STORY OF HOMELESSNESS

Daniel was 36 years old when he first experienced homelessness. He never imagined that he would be in this situation. Daniel had lived in Kitchener for most of his life and for years everything was going well – he had a job he enjoyed, a stable and safe apartment, and a loving family.

Four years ago everything changed. Daniel lost his job unexpectedly and began to feel depressed. The depression had a negative impact on Daniel's health and family life and his marriage began to fall apart. Daniel's wife and child moved to another city, and Daniel was not able to pay his rent or bills for the apartment he was living in.

Daniel felt lost, alone and frustrated. He did not know where to turn or who he could trust for help. For a while, a close friend let Daniel sleep on the couch at his place, but Daniel overstayed his welcome. As his depression worsened, and his experience became more difficult, Daniel felt that everyone looked down on him.

While one of the most difficult times in his life, Daniel found staying at shelters and on the streets to be a humbling experience. During this time, Daniel formed friendships with others experiencing homelessness who were a source of unconditional and trusted support.

Daniel has recently been connected with a [STEP Home](#) Streets to Housing Stability worker who is supporting him in his search to find permanent housing. Daniel is feeling hopeful for the future as he has found an apartment that he would like to rent.

**Daniel is feeling hopeful for the future**

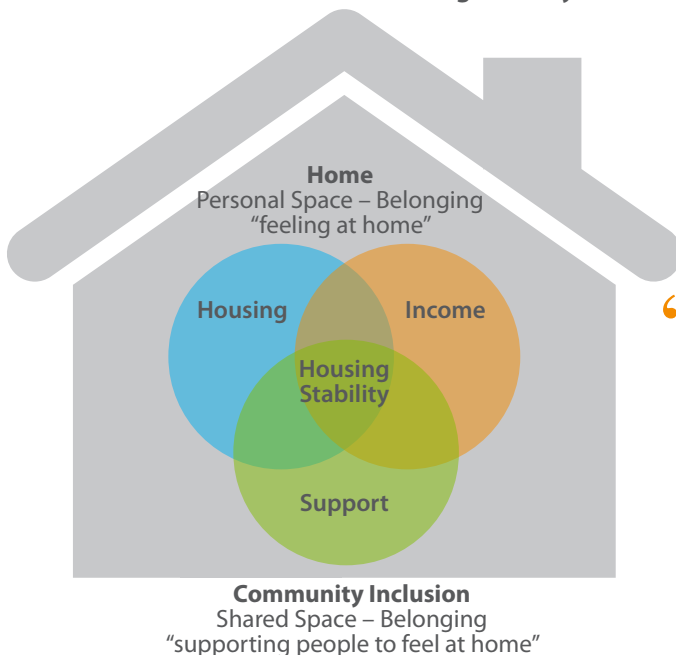


# To End Homelessness People Need Housing Stability

“**Housing stability**” means people are able to retain housing over the long term. It means people have:

1. **Adequate housing:** Housing with security of tenure that is desirable, affordable, safe, adequately maintained, accessible, and a suitable size.
2. **Adequate income:** Enough financial resources to meet and sustain minimum standards for housing.
3. **Adequate support:** Enough personal support (informal and/or formal) to meet desires for living independently and connecting with others.
4. **Community Inclusion:** A sense of belonging within the broader community.
5. **Home:** A sense of belonging to a personal space. Home is personal and self-defined.

## Essential Elements for Housing Stability



“We know that the ability to create and have a personal connection to home is one of the “essentials” necessary to support long term housing stability and ending homelessness in Waterloo Region.”

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?



# There are Many Ways to Learn More About the Issue of Homelessness

## Websites

Check out the following key local and national websites.

### Region of Waterloo

Provides access to local Housing Stability reports, program and resources.

Visit [communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/communityPlanningPartnerships/Homelessness-to-Housing-Stability.asp](https://communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/communityPlanningPartnerships/Homelessness-to-Housing-Stability.asp)

### Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG)

Provides access to newsletters, local listserve, and more. HHUG exists to support and mobilize the housing stability and related sectors to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.

Visit [www.hhug.ca](http://www.hhug.ca)

### Homeless Hub

A national clearinghouse with over 30,000 resources (the largest in the world). The Homeless Hub includes everything you want to know about homelessness and its solutions along with a searchable library that includes reports, stories, videos, and information for teachers, students and researchers. Our local resources are also posted on the Homeless Hub.

Visit [www.homelesshub.ca](http://www.homelesshub.ca)



During a 2014 Waterloo Region Registry Week, 261 health and housing surveys were completed with people experiencing homelessness, we learned:



## Read

Here are some examples of popular books and articles.

### Fiction

**Land of Lost Souls: My Life on the Streets** by Cadillac Man (2009)

**Ragged Company** by Richard Wagamese (2008)

### Non-fiction

**Toxic Charity** by Robert D. Lupton (2012)

**The Twenty-Piece Shuffle: Why the Poor and the Rich Need Other** by Greg Paul (2008)

**When All You Have is Hope** by Frank O'Dea (2008)

**Million-Dollar Murray** article by Malcolm Gladwell (2006)

**The Glass Castles** by Jannette Walls (2005)

**God in the Alley: Being and Seeing Jesus in a Broken World** by Greg Paul (2004)

### Children and youth books on homelessness

**Anya and the Shy Guy** by Suze Winegardner (2015), Ages 12-18

**Homecoming** by Cynthia Voigt (2012), Ages 12-18

**Tyrell** by Coe Booth (2007), Teen/young adult

**The Lady in the Box** by Ann McGovern (1997), Grades K-6

**Fly Away Home** by Eve Bunting (1993), Grades K-6

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

### Watch

There are many great videos (local and beyond) and movies about homelessness.

#### Video Clips

[Raising the ROOF – The Homeless Read Mean Tweets](#) (2015)

[Rethink Homelessness – Cardboard Stories](#) (2014)

#### TV Shows

[How Can a Cold Man Understand a Warm Man, Why Poverty Ontario Short Documentary](#), TVO (2015)

[60 Minutes – Hard Time Generation: Homeless Kids](#) (2011)

#### Movies

**Time Out of Mind** (2015)

starring Richard Gere

**The Soloist** (2009)

starring Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr.  
(based on the true story of Nathaniel Ayers)

**The Pursuit of Happyness** (2006)

starring Will Smith (based on the true story of Chris Gardner)

**Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story** (2003)

(based on a true story)

**Ironweed** (1987)

starring Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep

#### Documentaries

**Lowdown Tracks** (2015)

A documentary made by award-winning filmmaker Shelley Saywell, of Bishari Films

**Carts of Darkness** (2008)

This documentary follows a group of homeless men who have combined bottle picking with the extreme sport of racing shopping carts. Director Murray Siple

**Dark Days** (2000)

A documentary made by Marc Singer, a British filmmaker. The film follows a group of people living in an abandoned section of the New York City underground railway system, more precisely the area of the so-called Freedom Tunnel.

**112**  
families accessed  
emergency  
shelters from  
April 1, 2014 to  
March 31, 2015

### Plays

#### **Myra's Story** (2013)

A one-woman show that explores the life of a homeless woman in Dublin

### Local Videos

STEP Home [watch](#)

20,000 Homes [watch](#)

Circle of Friends [watch](#)

## Speakers

There are a number of housing stability agency staff, Regional staff from Housing Services and/or people with lived experience that may be available to speak to your church, class, event etc.

Contact the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG) at [www.hhug.ca](http://www.hhug.ca) or agencies listed on [page 15](#) of this document.

## Events

You can also attend annual events held within our community.

National Housing Day is celebrated each year on or around November 22. Search National Housing Day in Waterloo Region online.



# LEND



“volunteering  
**changes**  
the volunteer”

LEARN

**LEND**

LEAD



## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

**There are many ways that you can LEND your support to our collective efforts to end homelessness.**

**You can volunteer your time, give money and/or donate items.**

Here are some of the key non-profit agencies directly working to end homelessness in our community that need your support:

[Argus Residence For Young People](#) 519-623-7991

[Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank](#) 519-622-6550

[Cambridge Shelter Corporation](#) 519-624-9305

[House of Friendship](#) 519-742-8327

[Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre](#) 519-745-4404

[Lutherwood](#) 519-884-7755

[Marillac Place](#) 519-571-0722

[Mennonite Central Committee - Circle of Friends](#) 519-745-8458

[Monica Place](#) 519-743-0291

[oneROOF Youth Services](#) 519-742-2788 ext. 212

[Supportive Housing of Waterloo \(SHOW\)](#) 519-886-8200

[The Working Centre](#) 519-743-1151

[Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health](#) 519-742-3191

[YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo](#) 519 576-8856

Organizations that provide on-going support to many of these agencies include:

[United Way Cambridge and North Dumfries](#) 519-621-1030

[United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area](#) 519-888-6100

[The Food Bank of Waterloo Region](#) 519-743-5576



## Donating Items

In addition to the agencies and programs that are **directly working to end homelessness**, there are also many shops, community resources, online resources, and services that help people to set-up their new home for little or no money.

The Waterloo Region [“Make It a Home” Access Guide](#) lists over 25 different shops, community resources, online resources, and services to which you can donate new or used goods.

Remember if you are looking to donate goods directly to one of the agencies on [page 15](#), contact them first to ensure they are able to receive your donation or to find out what is needed most right now.

**“knowing what it’s like  
‘cause you’ve been there”**

**“volunteering = personal development”**

**“volunteer with a pure unselfish motive and you will  
be blessed more than those you set out to help”**

**“volunteering = increasing awareness of my community”**

# Organize a Third Party Fundraising Event

**Agencies in Waterloo Region working to end homelessness appreciate the generous support they receive from the local community.**

One of the ways they receive support is through third-party fundraising events sponsored by various organizations and individuals within the community. Hosting an event in support of an agency can be a great way to help make a difference in our community and have a lot of fun in the process.

Need an idea of what kind of event to host? From dinner parties to bake sales to casual Friday, there's no event too large or small. Be sure to check with the agency in advance regarding any terms and conditions for hosting third party events on their behalf.

## At home

- yard sale or neighbourhood sale
- host a party and ask for donations in lieu of a hostess gift (street party, pool party, garden party, wine and cheese, cocktail, cook-off, sporting event)
- request donations in lieu of gifts for a birthday or anniversary

## At work

- coffee and cake for a donation
- mini bake sale or craft sale
- casual day
- 50/50 draw
- collect needed items as part of holiday celebrations
- recipe book sale

**“to make a  
difference  
in others’ lives”**

## Anywhere

- sales (e.g., books, plants, used toys)
- bike rides, walks or runs
- tournaments (ping pong, badminton, softball, soccer, frisbee, video games, Wii)
- auctions (art, silent, services)
- benefit concert
- BBQs

**“I always gain more from  
the person I set out to help”**

# Raise Money or Lend Your Time

**There are other local community initiatives happening in Waterloo Region that you can participate in or donate to.**

Here are a few examples:

Hockey Helps the Homeless Kitchener Event  
[www.hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com](http://www.hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com)

Soup Sisters or Broth Brothers (local chapter Kitchener-Waterloo)  
[www.soupsisters.org](http://www.soupsisters.org)

Monsignor Doyle, Into the Cold Event Cambridge, 519-622-1290

Call to Action hosted by OneROOF. Annual speaker  
For more information call 519-742-2788 x212

“putting the **power** in **empowerment**”

“**giving back**”

“using my skills and gifts and developing new ones”

“**giving hope**”

“more attention is paid to homelessness than ever before because of all the people that donate their time to help others in our community”

## **Volunteering your time can make a significant impact in the lives of people experiencing homelessness or members of our community at-risk of homelessness.**

**Ideas for ways you can volunteer include:**

- Helping out at shelters or meal programs
- Helping out at fundraising and awareness events
- Being part of a Circle of Friends

To find out more, contact the agencies listed on page 15 of this Guide directly and/or contact:

**The United Way of Cambridge Volunteer Centre**  
[www.uwcambridge.on.ca/volunteer-centre.php](http://www.uwcambridge.on.ca/volunteer-centre.php)

**The Kitchener-Waterloo Volunteer Action Centre**  
[www.volunteerkw.ca](http://www.volunteerkw.ca)

“sense of  
purpose”

“giving  
transforms  
the giver”

“fairness”

“gratitude”

“I volunteer to  
empower others”

# LEAD



LEARN

LEND

LEAD



## TAKING ACTION

### There are many ways you can be a leader in the effort to end homelessness in Waterloo Region.

You can lead in your community by:

#### 1 Simply say “Hi” or smiling at someone

Sometimes all it takes to make a difference to someone who may be experiencing homelessness is a kind word or a smile.

#### 2 Use respectful language

When talking about housing stability it is important to be aware of the words we use. Language plays an important role in shaping how we think about the world and the people around us ([see Language Guide page 23](#)).

#### 3 Write to your elected officials

Let your elected officials know how you feel about issues of housing and homelessness.

#### 4 Participate in an action campaign

Participate in a local, provincial or national campaigns ([see page 22](#)).

#### 5 Join a group

There are many volunteer leadership opportunities through agency boards, committees, and groups ([see page 19](#)) for volunteer centres that provide updated lists of all the available opportunities within Waterloo Region).

#### 6 Create housing

Consider creating affordable housing in our community. Go to [communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://communityservices.regionofwaterloo.ca) and search “Funding for Housing” for ideas.

## MORE RESOURCES



**Find out what others are doing to **end homelessness** outside of Waterloo Region. Get involved in broader efforts, share ideas with others, and make an even greater impact.**

Here are a few resources to get you started:

### **Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness**

A national organization formed to create a movement to end homelessness in Canada from the community up.

[www.caeh.ca](http://www.caeh.ca)

### **20,000 Homes Campaign**

A national initiative with a goal to permanently house 20,000 of our most vulnerable homeless neighbours by 2018.

[www.20khomes.ca](http://www.20khomes.ca)

### **Raising the Roof**

Raising the Roof provides national leadership on long-term solutions to homelessness through partnership and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, investment in local communities, and public education.

[www.raisingtheroof.org](http://www.raisingtheroof.org)

### **Canadian Housing and Renewal Association**

A national voice for the full range of affordable housing and homelessness issues and solutions.

[www.chra-achru.ca](http://www.chra-achru.ca)

## LANGUAGE GUIDE

# How to talk about housing stability.

**When talking about housing stability it is important to be aware of the words we use. Language plays an important role in shaping how we think about the world and the people around us.**

Some phrases or words that were used to talk about homelessness in the past are now considered out-dated, and may reinforce negative stereotypes. Use the following principles:

**Remember to **focus** on the solution rather than the problem.**

e.g. Housing stability rather than homelessness.

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**Remember to **use “people first” language.****

e.g. Instead of “homeless person” or “street person” say “person experiencing homelessness”.

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**Remember to **avoid blaming people.****

e.g. Rather than people being “hard to house” recognize the community doesn’t currently have the right housing or support to meet everyone’s needs.

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Further information is available in the Homelessness to [Housing Stability Language Guide](#).

