

## Housing & Homeless Services Network

# Agenda

Wednesday, June 8, 2011  
Metro Hall, Room 308/309

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Coffee and Networking

9:15 – 11:00 a.m.

1. **Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association**, Margaret McCutcheon
2. **Resources Exist for Networking and Training (RENT): New Website Launch**, Elis Ziegler
3. **Housing Help Association of Ontario**, Mary Jane McKitterick
4. **Ontario Association of Hostels**, Pat Mueller and Sylvia Braithwaite
5. **Toronto Drop-In Network**, Linsey MacPhee
6. **New Business/Announcements**

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Future agenda items:

Meeley Chan, 416-392-0058/ [mchan1@toronto.ca](mailto:mchan1@toronto.ca), Michele Connell, 416-397-4164/ [mconnel@toronto.ca](mailto:mconnel@toronto.ca) or Sandra Vaughan, 416-397-4192/ [svaugh@toronto.ca](mailto:svaugh@toronto.ca)

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# Housing & Homeless Services Network

## Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Metro Hall, Room 308/309

**Attending:** Peter Ackie, Lystra Alexander, Amjad Al-Jawhary, Ron Barrow, Gemma Bisessar, Peggy Byrne, Lenore Cabral, Christian Carranza, Meeley Chan, Michele Connell, Ruth Crammond, Alan Cristales, Janet Fairfield, Azar Farahani, Anna Fleming, Collett Gabrielle, Angela Geridis-Ouimet, Jennifer Humphries, Laura Jeschkeit, Sam Kwan, Sibyl Likely, Jessica Loucks, Pavlovic Luka, Sharon Mackinnon, Ken MacLeod, Jose Mejia, Catharine Mufflin, Rodney Nembhard, Irene Oeffling, Irene Palisuras, Fanny Paz, Morag Perkins, Heath Priston, Margaret Riddell, Michael Rosenberg, Fatima Saliu-Ediagbonya, Karliene Scott, Renee Shentow, Tanya Simpson, Elizabeth Singh, Vanessa Sulit, Alfred Tam, Thania Valle, Sandra Vaughan, Nick Volk, Fanny Wong, Elis Ziegler

1. Janet Fairfield assumed the Chair and called the second session of the 2011 Housing and Homeless Services Network meeting to order. Minutes of the meeting held on February 9, 2011 were approved as circulated.

2. **Non-Palatable Alcohol, Holly Kramer, Harm Reduction Task Force**

With a number of products being used by vulnerable populations for their alcohol content, the Toronto Harm Reduction Task Force (THRTF) recognized the importance of education on this issue for those who work with these groups. Hand sanitizer is particularly prevalent among homeless populations because of its availability in public dispensers. In partnership with the University of Toronto's Pharmacology students and Seaton House, THRTF created a workshop to train frontline workers on how to treat clients who have ingested hand sanitizer. A workshop for shelter workers only has been developed and was held on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011. They encourage all frontline shelter workers to attend. For more information contact [hkrammer@toronto.ca](mailto:hkrammer@toronto.ca)

3. **Hoarding Intervention Program, Lenore Cabral, VHA Home HealthCare**

VHA Home HealthCare has been providing extreme cleaning services for the past 12 years to individuals who are in imminent danger of being evicted. While in recent years there has been an increase in requests for extreme cleaning services for hoarding issues; extreme cleaning is not a solution to hoarding.

VHA Home HealthCare is currently piloting a hoarding intervention service with four clients. The goal of the project is to explore alternative ways to work with clients who are hoarding in order to achieve better outcomes; offer a cost effective solution to hoarding intervention services; provide clients a positive, therapeutic and supportive intervention; and to share the learning and improve the service.

Trained Personal Support Workers (PSW) are paired with experienced Occupational Therapists (OT) to provide a sorting service. Close attention is paid to the "readiness" level of the client as the client

must be self-referred, willing and motivated. The service is not meant for extreme hoarders who do not understand that their behavior is unsafe and destabilizes their housing.

Delivery model includes: Screening and intake; OT Assessment; Development of service plan (OT and PSW); PSW works with client for 4 weeks for structured sorting, teaching of sorting and organizing skills; OT Assessment at mid-point and revision of service plan, as needed; PSW works with client for another 8 weeks; OT completes discharge assessment; client is offered monthly follow up service for 6 months.

Information on the progress of the pilot is anticipated to be available at end of June 2011. If this intensive intervention proves successful, VHA Home HealthCare would be interested in expanding the pilot. The agency has also produced a publication, "The Community Clutter and Hoarding Toolkit." For more information or to purchase a copy of the toolkit, please go to:

<http://www.vha.ca/home/hoarding-toolkit.html>

#### **4. Kids @ Computers, Angela Geridis-Ouimet, Toronto Employment and Social Services**

The kids@computers Scholarship Project awards computers and internet access to children of low-income families in Toronto. The project conducts outreach to schools, shelters and community agencies, and through partnerships with Toronto Public Library, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and the Toronto Kiwanis Boys and Girls Clubs provides computer orientation sessions. Firefighters from Toronto Fire Services serve as mentors to children participating in the program.

This unique scholarship project has two goals:

- to provide children from low-income families with home computers, giving them the chance to share the opportunities that kids in many other families enjoy, and
- to help children gain the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to succeed in today's world.

The kids@computers scholarship is available to children living in Toronto, who are between 8 and 14 years of age and who do not have a computer. Eligible families must live in subsidized housing or receive Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits. Children from families who are members of the Welcome Policy or who are in receipt of the National Child Benefit Supplement are also eligible to apply.

Over the past ten years, the project has issued 15,000 computers and has reached many children and families in high priority neighbourhoods. Families can apply for the kids@computers scholarship by picking up an application from their local Toronto Employment and Social Services Office or calling 416-392-8610. For more information about the kids@computers Scholarship Project, please visit: [http://www.toronto.ca/socialservices/kids\\_comps.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/socialservices/kids_comps.htm)

#### **5. Investing in Youth, Karliene Scott, Toronto Employment and Social Services**

Investing in Youth is a new program started in July 2010 to reduce the barriers to employment for youth (18-29) who are, or have been, in conflict with the law. To be eligible for the program, youth must also meet other criteria, including living in stable housing and receiving or in the process of receiving social assistance.

Through the Investing in Youth program, youth can access assistance for a variety of services and supports including, counselling, educational upgrading, clothing, transportation, as well as recreational activities. By providing life skills supports and breaking down employment barriers, the program has made a difference to youth.

Written materials about the Investing in Youth program are in development. For more information, please contact Karliene Scott at [KScott2@toronto.ca](mailto:KScott2@toronto.ca). Karliene can forward the contact information for the local Investing in Youth worker(s) in your area. The Investing in Youth worker is also available to provide a presentation to your agency.

## **6. HomeSafe Project, John Fraser, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation**

Every year, CERA receives a significant number of calls from tenants being made ill from the poor indoor air quality in their apartment buildings. Most of these individuals suffer from environmental sensitivities and are particularly sensitive to contaminants in the air. With funding assistance from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, CERA recently launched *HomeSafe*, an initiative to educate tenants and multi-unit housing providers on strategies to improve indoor air quality and create healthier living environments. They have also developed a voluntary set of guidelines for housing providers and an associated resource guide.

Indoor air quality is one of the top five environmental risks to public health. For example, over 70% of asthma attacks are triggered by perfume in everyday products and home renovations can have a major impact on air quality as volatile organic compounds are often released into the air. Apartment tenants are especially vulnerable to bad air because there is little to no control over air flow or what is happening in shared spaces. It is important to realize that these substances do not merely come from the inside of buildings. They also come from the surrounding area: lawn sprays, fumes from lawnmowers, vehicle exhaust, pollutants from nearby commercial and industrial activity, high tension power lines, etc. The surrounding environment can add greatly to the challenge of creating healthy housing.

CERA consults with tenants who have sensitivities to certain products such as scented cleaning products. They also encourage property managers to have proper ventilation during renovation or construction work, use non-toxic options when removing mould and advise against the use of wood composites that contain formaldehyde, laminate, vinyl or carpet flooring. CERA encourages property managers to create scent-free spaces and areas for tenants with sensitivities to perfume including designating scent-free washers and dryers and using scent free cleaning products in common areas. For more information visit [www.equalityrights.org/cera](http://www.equalityrights.org/cera) also, see attached Creating Healthy, Multi-Unit Housing a resource guide.

## **7. New Business/Announcements**

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Sandra Vaughan

Resources:

*The Welcome Home Guide: A Guide to Services for Tenants* and the *Guide to Services for People who are Homeless* have been printed and distributed. Also, the *Services for Tenants and Landlords in Toronto* brochure has also been distributed. If you would like to order more guides or the brochure, please email [ssha@toronto.ca](mailto:ssha@toronto.ca).

**Next Meeting:**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2011  
9:15 am  
Room 308/309, Metro Hall  
55 John Street**