

Housing & Homeless Services Network

Agenda

Wednesday, February 9, 2011
Metro Hall, Room 303

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

9:15 – 11:00 a.m.

- 1. Managing Clutter and Hoarding Toolkit, Lenore Cabral, VHA Home Healthcare**
- 2. Bed Bug Solutions, Good Shepherd CARES, Rolando Aguilar, Good Shepherd Ministries**
- 3. Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy, John Iveson, Municipal Affairs and Housing**
- 4. New Business/Announcements**

Future agenda items:

Meeley Chan, 416-392-0058/ mchan1@toronto.ca, Michele Connell, 416-397-4164/ mconnel@toronto.ca or Sandra Vaughn, 416-398-4192/ svaughn@toronto.ca

Changes to phone, fax, e-mail, mailing information: Laila Parpia 416-392-7198 laparpi@toronto.ca

Housing & Homeless Services Network

Minutes

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Metro Hall, Room 310

Attending: Janice Bangle, Jeff Barrow, Tammy Bays, Janet Cangiano, Meeley Chan, Michele Connell, Donna Dalrymple, Kim Dwyer, Vanessa Fletcher, Rosemary Foulds, Steve Gaetz, Gloria Gallant, Loren Grebanier, Mike Higgins, Erik Hunter, Dawn Jobson, Michael Joseph, Dora Londno, Barbara MacGibbon, John Methven, Steve Milne, Rodney Nembhard, Amber Neumann, Don Nichols, Anusha Sarvanandan, Renee Shentow, Tania Simpson, Tracey Smith, Christina Tudela, Kristy Vanderplas, Sandra Vaughan, Danielle White

1. Janet Fairfield assumed the Chair and called the eighth session of the 2010 Housing and Homeless Services Network meeting to order. Minutes of the meeting held on September 08, 2010 were approved as circulated.
2. **Low-Income Energy Program, Alex Flynn, aflynn@toronto.ca**

Alex provided an overview of existing Ontario Power Authority (OPA) and Ontario Energy Board (OEB) programs for low-income Torontonians. The wide variety of programs offered can be confusing and do not distribute the benefits equally between tenants and owners/landlords. With the implementation of the Green Energy and Green Economy Act as well as specific Ministerial directives, OPA proposed a three-year Program Development Plan.

City Divisions reviewed the initiatives proposed and recommended that OPA:

- include a requirement that municipalities serve as full partners in program roll-outs,
- consider programming geared to non-profit agencies who provide housing to low-income tenants in this, and future, initiatives,
- consult with key partners (including the City of Toronto) to maximize opportunities to reach low-income consumers,
- work with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on reducing any above guideline increases with may result from energy retrofit projects,
- co-ordinate with Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and endorse the continuation of the Ontario Home Energy Savings Program, and
- develop simple, straightforward application and reporting requirements and, where possible, streamline their applications with existing low-income energy programs.

For more information contact Alex Flynn at the above address.

3. **Surviving Crime and Violence: Street Youth and Victimization in Toronto, Stephen Gaetz, sgaetz@edu.yorku.ca.**

This report was conducted by *Street Youth Legal Services*, a program of *Justice for Children and Youth* in collaboration with Stephen Gaetz, Associate Dean of Research and Field Development,

Faculty of Education, York University, and Bill O’Grady, Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph. Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) provides select legal representation to low-income children and youth in Toronto and vicinity. Street Youth Legal Services (SYLS) is a collaborative and community-based approach to assisting street-involved youth (16-24) in the City of Toronto. The program provides legal information, advice, and referrals to street-involved youth through workshops and individual consultation.

“Surviving Crime and Violence”, explores the relationship between youth homelessness and criminal victimization. The research highlights the degree to which the lives of young people who are homeless are characterized by high levels of crime and violence. Two hundred and forty four homeless youth in Toronto were interviewed in 2009 about life on the streets, including their experiences of criminal victimization. While street youth are often portrayed in public discussions as dangerous, threatening and delinquent, this new research highlights the degree to which it is street youth themselves who are clearly vulnerable to crime and violence.

Key Findings

- When young people become homeless, they are much more likely than housed youth to be victims of crime and violence;
- When homeless youth are victims of crime, their networks of support are weak;
- Homeless youth are unable to take appropriate measures to protect themselves;
- Young homeless women in particular are much more likely to be victimized, and report high levels of sexual assault;
- Young homeless women report high rates of partner abuse;
- The younger you are, and the earlier you leave home, the more vulnerable you are to criminal victimization; and
- The solution to this problem lies in changing the way we address youth homelessness.

Recommendations

Government of Canada:

- as part of its Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), must adopt a strategy to end youth homelessness; and
- led by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and Status of Women in Canada, all levels of government must develop and implement a strategy to respond to the needs of young women who are homeless.

Provincial Government(s):

- must develop a strategy to end youth homelessness that includes a focus on prevention;
- the Child and Family Services Act should be amended to enable young people to continue their involvement with Children’s Aid Societies to a more appropriate age;
- should establish an inter-ministerial committee to develop an effective intervention strategy to reduce the number of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who wind up homeless and to ensure seamless access to appropriate services;
- regional health authorities across Canada (in Ontario, the LHINs) and the mental health sector must, in partnership with the youth homelessness sector, develop and adopt a targeted strategy to address youth homelessness; and

- in partnership with Legal Aid Ontario, must ensure ongoing funding and support for Justice for Children and Youth's Street Youth Legal Services (SYLS) program.

City of Toronto:

- and other municipal governments across Canada, must develop a strategy to end youth homelessness;
- The City of Toronto should support street youth serving agencies in developing strategies to meet the needs of young people who are victims of crime;
- The City of Toronto should open separate shelters (with daytime programming) for young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Street youth serving agencies should be funded to remain open to young people twenty four hours a day;
- The City of Toronto should work with street youth serving agencies to develop and host a series of workshops aimed at preventing intimate partner violence and criminal victimization; and
- Toronto Police Services must establish a Youth Homelessness Safety Strategy.

Details of these recommendations can be found in the conclusion of the report. For the full report go to <http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Surviving%20the%20Streets.JFCY.September16.2010.pdf>

4. Vital Signs Report, Toronto Community Foundation, Rosalyn Morrison and Nadien Godkewitsch, 416-921-2035 x204

The Toronto Community Foundation (TCF) is one of Canada's largest charitable foundations with \$230 million in endowed assets under administration and over 400 funds. The Foundation's mission is to connect philanthropy to community needs and opportunities. TCF's vision is to ensure the vitality of Toronto and make it the best place to live, work, learn and grow through the power of giving.

TCF researches and reports on Toronto's quality of life in their annual Toronto's Vital Signs Report. It is a consolidated snapshot of the trends in our city, highlighting progress we should be proud of and challenges that need to be addressed for Toronto's quality of life. The report aims to inspire civic engagement, provide focus for public debate and guide donors and stakeholders who want to direct their resources to areas of greatest need. The report is compiled from current statistics and special studies which look at 11 different, issue areas that are critical to the well-being of our city and its residents. Vital Signs is a collaboration of more than 150 research partners and was adopted by 16 communities across Canada.

Key findings: Housing:

Housing affordability is one of the most fundamental issues, impacting the quality of life in the city.

- Toronto was the 5th least affordable housing market in Canada in 2010.
- The average Toronto residence cost 4.62 times the median family income in 2008 compared to a ratio of 3.54 in 1995.
- 8,000 new eligible households were added to the active waiting list for social housing in Toronto in 2009.
- The number of seniors on the total waiting list increased by 20% between

- 2005 and 2009.

TCF's President and Board of Directors provided advice to Toronto's new mayor. The open letter was published in the October 5th Toronto Star.

For the full report or more information please visit www.tcf.ca.

5. "T.O. on the Down Low", Dawn Jobson

Dawn presented her film *T.O. on the Down Low* and described how she came to make such a film highlighting the experiences of two homeless young men (John Reid and Andrew Ribble) in Toronto. Dawn does not work in the homeless sector and was drawn to make this film after attending a public meeting at a community centre in East York. The meeting was called by local politicians after a few violent incidents had left many residents fear-stricken and angry.

At the end of the meeting Jobson felt extremely frustrated and felt there were no real solutions or ideas offered. Wanting to get first hand information on street youth, Jobson solicited two street youth who were willing to share their experiences – good and bad – including the reasons they find themselves on the street today.

The film is an upfront and honest look at how young people can become homeless as well as providing a stark look at how they spend their days and nights. Dawn was shocked at times while doing her research on this issue, which included speaking with many street youth and poring over various studies and statistics. Most disturbing, she found, is the fact many youngsters will avoid the shelter system altogether, effectively cutting themselves off not only from having a roof over their heads but also from free programs designed to benefit them, including health care.

T.O. on the Down Low is Dawn's first attempt at producing and directing a movie.

For more information and/or a copy of *T. O. on the Down Low* contact Dawn Jobson at jmgmediagroup@gmail.com.

6. New Business/Announcements

Resources Exist for Networking and Training (RENT), EYET, Janet Fairfield, 416-686-3390 x9989

Forum

- A Rooming House Working Group Forum will be held on October 19, 2010, 9:30am – 12:30pm at the EYET, 967 Queen Street East.

**Street Kids International, Kristy Vanderplas, 416.504.8994 x10, kristy@streetkids.org
www.streetkids.org**

- From 2006-2009, Street Kids International led the project Streetjibe which improved the capacity of over 350 front line staff with an estimated reach to over 1000 youth in York Region. Through this pilot project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Streetjibe provided capacity building, networking opportunities and increased learning to a diverse group of front line staff through a learning community/community of practice model.

Streetjibe aims to empower front line staff to become leaders for change in their communities. They work from the bottom-up rather than top-down, focusing resources on those who need it the most. This approach directly benefits front line staff, their organizations and in turn, the youth that they serve. Through a process of peer learning, practitioners come together to share experiences and network in order to advance their work with youth.

The Project in Toronto

Street Kids International is interested in using the experience gained from Streetjibe York Region to continue the program here in Toronto. They are speaking with front line staff, managers and associated networks and organizations **working with homeless youth** to determine the most effective way to do this.

If your organization would like to be involved in the project, or if you would like more information, please contact Kristy at the address above. Please respond prior to October 20th.

Housing & Homeless Services Network

Minutes

Tuesday, November 09, 2010
Metro Hall, Room 310

Attending: Elizabeth Agoston, Tammy Bays, LaToya Beckford, Dale Coppins, Michele Connell, Caroline Crawford, Dawn C'Cruz, Sarah Fernando, Alexandra Gunn, Eileen Janet Huynh, Jessica Loucks, Dora Londno, Cheery MacIntyre, Linsey MacPhee, Lynne McKee, Steve Milne, Sharmila Mohammed, Toby Mullally, Rodney Nembhard, Fanny Paz, Morag Perkins, Yvette Roberts, Fatim Saliu-Ediagbonya, Martiza Sanchez, Vicki Sanders, Mark Shapiro, Renee Shentow, Ryno Sheriff, Tanya Simpson, Yodit Wendim, Katherine White, Isabella Williams, Fanny Wong, Sonia Zyvatkauskas

1. Janet Fairfield assumed the Chair and called the ninth session of the 2010 Housing and Homeless Services Network meeting to order. Minutes of the meeting held on October 13, 2010 were not available for approval.
2. **HOPE Project, Gaye Hainsworth, Toronto Social Services, 416-397-5544**

Homeless to ODSP Project Engagement or HOPE is a provincially funded pilot project. It provides one on one support to individuals who are homeless and who might be eligible for the Ontario Disability Support Program.

HOPE assists individuals in accessing supports to help with the ODSP referral process, finding housing, and other services as required. The project improves access to appropriate financial support programs for homeless clients, links participants to the appropriate services and supports (e.g., housing, medical) and through collaborative partnerships with the community.

From the beginning of the program until October 29, 2010:

- 833 individuals enrolled in HOPE
- 529 Disability Determination Packages (DDP) have been submitted to DAU
- 479 applicants have been approved to receive ODSP: ODSP grants have doubled on a yearly basis
- only 2 individuals denied by Social Benefits Tribunal
- 292 individuals have obtained housing.

HOPE was evaluated in 2009. Significant findings from the evaluation:

- Intensive case management and medical partnerships increased the likelihood that homeless individuals would complete and submit a DDP.
- 70% of HOPE clients submitted a DDP compared to a 25% prior to HOPE involvement.
- Client success in applying for ODSP increased from 14% to 75% once they received HOPE support

- Higher rate of "Disabled" (favourable) decisions among HOPE clients both from the original DDP submission and on appeal
- partners are more informed and more service delivery is more effective for clients.

Ongoing Challenges:

- Establishing and maintaining contact with clients
- Affordable/appropriate housing
- Ongoing support for clients
 - Leaving Ontario Works
 - Requiring medical care.

For more information contact Gaye Hainsworth at 416-397-5544 or e-mail: ghainsw@toronto.ca. Or visit the City of Toronto web-site at www.toronto.ca.

3. Homeless and Jailed: Jailed and Homeless Report, Greg Rogers, John Howard Society

Research has established that being homeless increases the likelihood of ending up in jail, while imprisonment increases the risk of homelessness and the length of time that homeless people spend in shelters. The number of homeless prisoners in Toronto area jails is increasing, and a small but growing number of men are caught in a revolving door between jails and shelters.

This report explores the housing situation of men who are jailed in the Toronto area; their housing options and service needs on discharge, with a focus on homeless prisoners. It maps their residential locations to compare the level of services in the neighbourhoods or areas where they live to highlight where resources can be directed to minimize chronic or repeat homelessness within this population.

Findings

1. Demographics:

- Aboriginal men are over-represented - 19% of survey sample reported having Aboriginal ancestry (1% of Toronto population are Aboriginal, according to 2006 Census).
- More than one in five survey respondents were homeless when incarcerated.

2. Comparisons between Housed and Homeless Clients

- Homeless prisoners were more likely to:
 - Be older (22% are 50 years and up)
 - Be charged with a property-related offence
 - Be in custody for a shorter time
 - Have a health impairment (43% had a physical or psychiatric disability or chronic illness)
 - Rely on income support programs, whose benefits they lose while in jail.
 - Request more types of service to deal with community re-entry

3. Housing Plans

- Prisoners' housing plans indicated their rate of homelessness would increase by 40% from the pre-custody level
- 32% were planning to go to a shelter, live on the street, or couch-surf at the home of a friend
- Another 12% did not know where they would live and were at risk of homelessness

- 20% were homeless both before and after being jailed (85% of homeless expected to be homeless again on discharge)
- 16% of those who had been housed lost their housing
- 10% of those who had been employed lost their jobs

4. Service Needs

- When asked to anticipate their service needs within the next 6 months, almost all respondents (95%) wanted help of various kinds
- Most critical services are help to get transport, housing, furniture, and replace identification documents
- Length of time in jail was not related to the number of services needed (a few weeks in jail may be as disruptive as a year).

5. Mapping results

Survey respondents were somewhat more likely than the general population to live in City-designated priority neighbourhoods which lack adequate services for the needs of residents.

Recommendations

The report makes recommendations to the Ontario government, which include

- Adopting a policy that no person who is discharged from jails or courts in Ontario be released to the streets without access to adequate, rent-geared-to-income housing.
- Consulting with agencies who serve prisoners and ex-prisoners to improve discharge planning services, and increase funding for programs and services to provide discharge planning.
- Increasing funding for community reintegration programs and services, including those that support and maintain connections between prisoners and their families.
- Developing and implementing a two-staged admission screening process when individuals enter the correctional system to screen for mental health care needs.

For a copy of the report or more information go to www.johnhowardtor.on.ca.

4. Language Translation Services for Homeless Newcomers, Judy Abraham, Multilingual Community Interpreter Services

The role of the interpreter is to deliver, as faithfully as possible, messages transmitted between individuals who do not share a common language. It is important to know when to engage a professional interpreter. Many community service organisations have individuals on staff or as volunteers that speak many different languages and often use them as interpreters. Volunteers/staff can be used for simple communications or for translating routine activities. A professional interpreter should be engaged for legal, medical or any important documents or testimony

- When choosing a professional interpreter , look for:
 - language certified
 - Specialized training
 - Protocols for engagement
 - Police clearance

- Insured for errors and omissions
- Quality assurance measures
- Consequences of not working with a professional interpreter
 - Delays in seeking help
 - Reduced access to services and supports
 - Delays in assessment
 - Poor coordination between services
 - Limited comprehension and success
- Interpretation can be provided in a variety of methods and at different price points
 - SKYPE
 - Face to face
 - Video interpretation
 - Telephone interpretation
 - Message relay
 - Group/conference interpretation
 - Sight translation
 - Document translation

For more information visit www.mcis.on.ca or judy@mcis.on.ca.

5. New Business/Announcements

Resources Exist for Networking and Training (RENT), Janet Fairfield, 416-686-3390 x9989

- RENT is hosting a Landlordconnect.ca Semi-Annual Networking Lunch on December 2 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at 947 Queen Street East. Housing workers and landlords can meet to exchange information. St. Stephens Community House will be sharing information about their services and share some of their best practices.

Welcome Home Guide, Sonia Zyvatkaukas, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, 416-392-1264

- Shelter, Support Housing Administration has produced their second edition of the "Welcome Home Guide, A Guide to Services for Tenants". Hard copies will be available shortly. The new Guide includes additional maps and services. We are grateful to everyone who helped compile and check content. If you do not find the services you are looking for in this guide you can call 211 for information on community services or 311 for services provided by the City of Toronto.

If you would like to order copies, please send an email to ssha@toronto.ca with your agency name, address, contact person and phone number along with the number of copies being requested. If you are requesting more than 30 copies, please include a brief outline of how the copies will be used and distributed.

The Guide is available at www.toronto.ca/housing. If you have any comments or feedback, please write to us at ssha@toronto.ca.

Sonia Zyvatkaukas, Support and Housing Administration, Agency Wish List for the City of Toronto, 416-392-1264

- During the run-up to the holiday season, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration gets many requests from people who want to help those in need. SSHA is again posting a “wish

list” from agencies serving people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The list provides potential donors and volunteers with information about what agencies need, volunteer opportunities over the holidays, and fundraising or other special events. To review the list visit www.toronto.ca/housing/wishlist.htm.

Rooming House Networking Group, Tracey Smith, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, 416-397-4830

- The Rooming House Networking Group is holding a meeting for rooming house landlords and housing workers on December 8 at Queen West Health Centre, 168 Bathurst Street, from noon – 3 p.m. Toronto Public Health will host a workshop on bedbugs and there will be an Information Fair to provide agencies and landlords opportunities to network.

To reserve a table or for more info contact Pablo Escobar at 416-388-1186 or pescobar@woodgreen.org.

Housing & Homeless Services Network

Minutes

Wednesday, December 12, 2010
Metro Hall, Room 309

Attending: Lara Allen, Rob Aversa, LaToya Beckford, Jayne Caldwell, Luis Carrillos, Lorraine Clarke, Dale Coppins, Caroline Crawford, Donna Dalrymple, Dawn D'Cruz, Kim Dwyer, Evelyn Fox, Jorge Hidalgo, Emily Hill, Dana Kirkcaldy, Dora Londono, Cheery MacIntyre, John Methven, Peter Menzies, Steve Milne, Toby Mullally, Rodney Nembhard, Fanny Paz, Stella Pinnock, Michael Rosenberg, Vicky Sanders, Mark Shapiro, Renee Shentow, Tanya Simpson, Tracey Smith, Gord Tanner, Nick Volk, Danielle White, Katherine White, Steve White, Isabella Williams

1. Janet Fairfield assumed the Chair and called the tenth session of the 2010 Housing and Homeless Services Network meeting to order. Minutes of the meeting held on November 10, 2010 were not available for approval.
2. **Streets to Homes Access and Referral Centre (SHARC), Gord Tanner, Manager, Streets to Homes**

The new Streets to Homes Access and Referral Centre (SHARC) at 129 Peter St. is the hub for services targeting street involved individuals. SHARC is specifically targeted to individuals who:

- sleep outside
- spend the majority of time on the street
- are seeking shelter services, and
- do not regularly use, or are unable to use, the shelter system.

Programs and services out of SHARC include:

Street Respite Centre

- harm reduction philosophy and approach
- quiet space to seek respite from the street
- 24/7 walk-in
- access to laundry, washrooms, showers, support, snacks and computers

Shelter Referral

- walk-in shelter access point for singles and couples daily from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.
- referral to appropriate shelter with transportation provided

Housing Access

- access to Housing Counsellors Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- regularly scheduled times to access youth program
- housing case plans established
- informal assessment, counselling support and linkage to other needed programs and services

Bedded Program

- emergency beds (for Streets to Homes clients) available night and day
- women's and men's areas plus five small rooms (couples, adult family, youth)
- will be organised to accommodate current client needs within the program

Local Neighbourhood Outreach

- specific outreach team attached to the SHARC to work in the local community (7:00 a.m. to 11 p.m.)
- neighbours will have one number to call for supports
- will develop partnerships and casual employment opportunities with local business community

On-site services include scheduled access to:

- Toronto Employment and Social Services staff,
- Ontario Disability Support Program staff,
- psychiatric and primary care supports provided by Inner City Health Associates, and
- the Mobile Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team.

The Access and Referral Centre and Central Family Intake have been combined into Central Intake and now all requests for shelter services are centralized through our toll-free number 1.877.338.3398 or you can call 311.

For more information see the website at www.toronto.ca/housing.

3. Aboriginal Day Treatment Program, Peter Menzies, Centre for Addictions and Mental Health

In May 2000, CAMH created the Aboriginal Services (ABS) in response to the unique service needs of Aboriginal people. The mandate of the ABS is to develop culturally appropriate services in partnership with the Aboriginal community using a holistic approach based upon Aboriginal values, beliefs and traditions. To that end, a two-year proposal was initiated in March 2009 to examine and develop a model of how CAMH's residential inpatient treatment programs can adapt existing resources to provide culturally appropriate and effective mental and substance abuse treatment services to Aboriginal men in Toronto. This is being done in partnership with Toronto's Aboriginal community, and non-Native agencies that deliver social services to Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal consultants were engaged to provide clinical recommendations that would inform the development of a culturally and clinically, safe, effective residential program, including:

- review of Aboriginal mental health and substance abuse treatment services throughout Ontario,
- interviews with key treatment practitioners throughout the province to identify best practices,
- needs assessment of 166 Aboriginals,
- review of aftercare program, and
- audit of CAMH' services.

| After this work was completed, the consultants made 42 recommendations in the following areas:

Capacity Building

- Develop mentoring opportunities so that Aboriginal practitioners can enhance their skills
- Training for clients, if desired, so they can participate in research

Service Provision

- Consult Elders, clients, treatment centres, Aboriginal mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals, governments, students, volunteers, families, etc. on an ongoing basis.
- A room be designated in the residential treatment building for smudging and other Aboriginal ceremonies
- Training sessions made available to all in-patient staff and managers with regards to traditional teachings and practices
- Intergenerational trauma and systemic oppression should be the framework for understanding how residual traumas and historical issues continue to impact individual's lives
- A holistic approach to wellness treatment should be considered, with identity issues addressed as well.
- That treatment include Aboriginal specific elements including: historic trauma, aboriginal teachings, aboriginal identity and internalized racism, sharing circle etc. along with the more traditional elements such as: anger management, addiction and recovery, stress skill practice, education, and nutrition.

Aftercare

- Address the determinants of health (education and stable, affordable housing have been shown to be as effective, or even more effective, than treatment in maintaining sobriety/reduced substance use goals)
- Integrated case management approaches to provide additional community support and healing

The first 21 day inpatient residential treatment cycle operated from November 25 to December 16, 2009. The second residential treatment cycle operated from March 4 to 25, 2010 and the third cycle operated from July 2 to 23, 2010.

The evaluation of the first two residential treatment cycles show the program to be beneficial; particularly the cultural components and psycho-educational instruction on stress management, anger management and relapse prevention. Participants became more involved in the Aboriginal community and connected to resources, as well as exhibited increased interest and pride in their culture. Fifty percent of participants have continued to be engaged in aftercare programs at CAMH or elsewhere.

As a result of the positive impact of this approach, a residential treatment cycle focused on women will be starting in 2011.

For more information contact Peter at peter_menzies@camh.net.

4. Health Concerns Regarding Contaminated Cocaine, Jayne Caldwell, Toronto Drug Strategy

Public Health has issued a warning regarding contaminated cocaine. Most of the crack/cocaine that is currently available in Toronto contains Levamisole. Levamisole is a toxic substance that is used for de-worming animals. There is no way of telling by looking/tasting the crack/cocaine whether or not it contains Levamisole. If you or any of your clients have any of the following symptoms, go to the hospital emergency room immediately:

- Skin Conditions
- Dark skin patches on your body. At first it looks like a bruise, then gets darker and forms scabs. The skin can then necrotize and flake/peel off.
- Infections
- Rapid onset of fever, chills, sore throat, pneumonia (fever, chills, shortness of breath, coughing). The infection is treatable, so help should be sought as soon as possible.

Make sure that the hospital staff know of any cocaine/crack use, and that the symptoms could be from Levamisole. They need all the facts to help and clients need to be seen quickly.

If you have any questions, concerns or want to know more about the effects of Levamisole, call 416.392.0520 or go to www.toronto.ca/health/levamisole/index.htm.

5. Entertainment

Paula Reid, a young woman who has received services from Evergreen Youth Shelter and is now in her first year at Ryerson in the Social Work program, performed spoken word for the members.

Elevated Grounds, a youth empowerment group that focuses on music, dance and theatre to change lives and communities, provided three young people, with Olivia Lynch singing a number of songs for the members and Nyahsa Ysayl and Harold Clarke helping with the technology.

6. New Business/Announcements

Resources Exist for Networking and Training (RENT), EYET, Janet Fairfield, 416-686-3390 x9989

Workshops:

"Effective Housing Work with People In Conflict with the Law" on Tuesday January 18, 2011, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at 947 Queen Street East.

Register at www.housingworkers.ca.

Info Sessions:

The Rooming House Networking Group is holding a second rooming house session for rooming house landlords and housing workers on December 8, at Queen West Health Centre from noon – 3 p.m. The event will feature an Information Fair, networking opportunities for agencies and landlords and Toronto Public Health will host a workshop on bedbugs.

Contact Pablo Escobar at 416-388-1186 or pescobar@woodgreen.org for more information.

Housing and Human Rights Day Forum, Mark Shapiro, www.thedreamteam.ca

December 10th, is International Human Rights Day. A group of low-income people and their allies will gather, from 10 a.m. to noon at 155 Dalhousie St., near Church St. and Dundas St.

E., to promote the message that housing is a human right. The Forum is being organized by the Right to Housing Social Action Committee, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and the Dream Team. Speakers will include Linda Chamberlain, member of the Dream Team; Fay Faraday, a lawyer involved with the Charter challenge; Leilani Farha, from the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation who will discuss Bill C-304 and the right to housing internationally; and Cathy Crowe on Housing as a Human Right. A representative from the Housing Network of Ontario will also give a short update about the provincial long-term affordable housing strategy which has just been released.

Please RSVP to Yutaka Dirks at dirksy@lao.on.ca or 416-597-5855 x5243.