

APT Deputation to Budget Committee February /2/2015

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Hello..My name is Pearl Chrimes.

I am here today on behalf of The Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto, a coalition of community groups, agencies, Toronto residents and people living in poverty.

I would like to thank The Budget Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Let's face it poverty is not an alluring Issue!..... it does however, deserve our attention!!

I want to thank Mayor Tory, Pam McConnell , Joe Mihevc, the Budget Committee and City Councillors for Acknowledging poverty as an issue.

As part of a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) for the city of Toronto,
Thank you for taking some steps necessary for tackling the issue - it is a welcome focus.

Thank you for the proposal that kids aged 12 and under travel free on the
TTC - this will benefit greatly low-income & poor families.

Thank you, for the proposed 181 new shelter beds, including 54 beds for LGBTQ2S youth -
which are very much needed.

Thank you also, for the allocated funding to open up 2 new 24 hour Drop-in centres
for homeless and marginalized Women in Toronto - that will provide much needed safe spaces
for women.

For me as a community support worker, working in a downtown drop-in for women, at the end
of the day it is heartbreaking to see women with no home to go to and some sleeping on the
street!

Briefly, There was one missed opportunity for the Budget Committee to have allocated some of
the paid jobs for the up-coming PAN AM and PARA PAN AM Games to adults and youth
from racialized and marginalized communities, such as Rexdale (in the West of the city),
Malvern (Scarborough) .

(I understand that there has been a city outreach initiative with the Jane-Finch community,
where a few paid jobs for the games have gone to people from this area) , however, it would
have been more helpful to these communities if a bigger part of the pie was offered to
them....extending to them a hand-up..not a handout!

My main concern however, is that we have a HOUSING CRISIS in the city
of Toronto.

A major root cause of poverty is a lack of AFFORDABLE HOUSING , the Shelter beds are welcomed, however, these are temporary fixes! or Band-Aid solutions!

what is needed, is Permanent and affordable housing..so the City has to address this root cause, if, we are to see any real reduction of poverty in Toronto.

In 2012, 43% of Toronto renters were paying 30% or more of their income on housing. Rents are very expensive and out of many people's reach...so in order to get more stable and affordable housing they apply for Affordable Housing (from the City)..it's more affordable! .

An example is that in 2013, 2, 016 Households in Toronto were added to the Affordable housing Wait-list, but only 281 households were housed from the list!

In May, 2014 there are 92, 161 households on the Affordable housing Wait-list.

What does this indicate ? It tells us that we desperately need more affordable housing units NOW!

You may ask, Where can the City find the revenue to pay for all the social housing that's needed?

One possible solution: would be for the city to Advocate with the Provincial government to allow the city to implement a progressive property tax - that is, a slightly higher rate of taxation on properties of high value (say over \$1 million). The proceeds could be allocated to fund OR dedicated to improving access to affordable housing, child care, and recreation for low-income residents.

There are apparently 118,000 Millionaires (a hundred and eighteen thousand millionaires) living in Toronto. Surely they can afford to pay a little more so that the basic needs of others can be met.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.

Af Chrimes