

# Attitude to poverty must change

By **JULIA LE and DAVID LEA**  
*Metroland Media Group*

People in poverty are just busy surviving, says Community Development Halton (CDH) Research Associate Rishia Burke.

Some are barely scraping by on social assistance; others are caught up working multiple jobs so that they can continue to provide for their families.

Burke said she can't imagine the "tremendous stress" that comes along with surviving—the hard choices people have to make each and every day, the isolation felt when you feel you have no one to turn to for help.

She said communities are fragmented in a way now where we're too afraid to talk to each other when we could be working together to build healthy neighbourhoods.

CDH believes that poverty can be eliminated if everyone, including governments and community groups, come together to build strong and supportive communities.

"It is structural in how we respond to it and poverty is something we know enough about that we can change it," said CDH Executive Director Joey Edwardh.

Edwardh said that, although the recession has helped people understand there are bigger causes that create unemployment than a person who just doesn't want to work, there are still misconceptions about those living in poverty.

"Halton's stereotyping of the poor when you don't see people and don't want to know has always been something we've had to deal with here at CDH," she said, adding that CDH has been going out into the neighbourhoods to break these stereotypes, engaging in community building activities.

A part of its strategy to tackle poverty is bringing neighbours together to build "their own relationships and trusts and what we call in our business 'social capital' to effectively take action together to make their neighbourhood a better place for them to live and for their children to grow up in or for their seniors to be contributing members," said Edwardh.

It's a slow methodical process, but one CDH believes is essential.

The organization has been working with other groups to build community gardens. It has also been engaging groups across Halton to hold events in their respective communities like dinner and movie nights or community dinners.

CDH has also been working with sports groups to make recreation more accessible to low-income families.

Meanwhile, members of the Halton Poverty Roundtable (HPRT) have been working

## Living in Poverty

*A Special Report*



### Part 4 of a 4 part series

to raise awareness among the region's poor about government services, such as guaranteed income supplements, tax credits and more, which many qualify to receive but which few actually use.

Easing the bureaucratic nightmare low-income families must go through to get the services they need was another suggestion that emerged from talks with the community undertaken by the HPRT.

Specifically the group is calling for the creation of a Halton Housing Centre so there would be one place people could call to find out about housing supports within the Halton community.

In an effort to address the affordable housing needs in Halton communities, Halton Region has been looking at ways to increase the units currently being offered.

Sheldon Wolfson, the Region's social and community services department commissioner, said Halton administers 4,299 assisted housing units, which is a mixture of social housing units (3,997), affordable housing units (302) and rent supplement and housing allowances (684).

Through its Investment in Affordable Housing Program, the Region plans to build 300 assisted housing units by 2014.

Wolfson said the units will be a mix of new units and subsidies through new rental assistance programs.

"In partnership with Habitat for Humanity Halton, 20 eligible households will receive down payment assistance," he added. "These units are included in the 300 assisted housing units."

Its investment in building these units is \$1.6 million, according to the Region's 2013 budget, and another \$810,000 will help support low-income residents through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, which combines five housing and homelessness programs into a single, municipally-delivered program to better address local priorities.

The Region's budget also includes an additional 100 child care fee subsidies for low-income families and additional special needs services for about 20 children.

**For more visit [www.theifp.ca](http://www.theifp.ca)**



Rishia Burke is a Research Associate with Community Development Halton, who goes door-to-door looking to foster inclusion.

*Photo by Graham Paine/Metroland West Media Group*

**MAY 3-5** Careport Centre, Hamilton - 270 Longwood Rd. South (corner of Longwood & Aberdeen)

**Shop Till You Drop** from lots of exhibitors with fantastic show specials!

**Lynn Spence - Sunday May 5**  
Home Decor, Fashion Expert & Contributor to CityTV's CityLine  
Lynn Spence truly knows home decor and fashion.  
Discover new trends and get inspired with new ideas as Lynn dishes expert advice at the Ultimate Women's Show on Sunday May 5.

Brought to you by **Andersons**

**Admission: \$10** **Hours: Fri 5-9 pm, Sat 10 am-6 pm, Sun 10 am-5 pm**

**THE Ultimate Women's SHOW**

**GREAT SHOPPING**

UltimateWomenShow | UWomenShow | [www.ultimatewomensshow.ca](http://www.ultimatewomensshow.ca)

Photo Credit to Andrew Trethewey/CFR

A MEMBER OF **metrolandmedia**

# FRESH CO.

"the food we buy at FreshCo is so fresh and such a good price"

Alicia Tait, Mississauga

come see for yourself

# Thank You!

## Elementary School Volunteers

Dairy Farmers of Ontario would like to thank all of the volunteers that help run the Elementary School Milk Program. Milk Coordinators and their helpers have been volunteering their time in over 2800 Ontario elementary schools for the past 26 years. Cold, nutritious milk is made available to over 1,000,000 students daily, with their dedicated help.

Get involved! Learn more or to start an Elementary School Milk Program please visit [www.milkinschool.ca](http://www.milkinschool.ca).

**Milk. Really keeps kids going.**

LOOK FOR

ONTARIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MILK PROGRAM

100% CANADIAN MILK