

Poverty forum told affordable housing is 'a pervasive concern'

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has increased by 27.6 per cent from 435 families in 1986 to 555 in 1996, and the number of poor individuals has jumped 58.4 per cent from 505 in 1986 to 800 in 1996.

Edwardh said 6.5 per cent of Halton Hills residents are living below the poverty line.

About 45 people came out to the meeting organized by Halton Hills Emergency and Affordable Housing Coalition, Inter-Church Council of Burlington, Milton Affordable Housing Coalition, Halton Region and Halton Social Planning Council. The need for affordable housing

was a key issue raised.

"A really significant pervasive concern is lack of affordable housing," said Adelina Urbanski, Halton's Commissioner of Social and Community Services Department, a speaker at the meeting.

Dr. Deborah Zeni, an audience member, asked how many affordable housing units were needed in Halton. Urbanski said over the next 10 years 14,000 units would be required to meet the need.

She said Halton Region can't develop affordable housing alone.

"All levels of government have a part to play," said Urbanski. "There are a lot of things that can be done if we all come

together at the same time."

She said its easier for developers to build condo units and sell them, but lately she said there does seem to be some interest in affordable housing from developers.

She said those who want to see more affordable housing should support local applications, not oppose them.

"We can't underestimate the power of a whole lot of us going to the MPP," said meeting facilitator Reverend Stephen Gross of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

A member of the audience who chairs a committee at St. Andrew's Church working on developing an affordable

seniors housing project there said representatives of the development industry run in the opposite direction when approached about the affordable housing project but the volunteers on the committee continue to work hard to make it happen.

The meeting in Georgetown, was similar to others held in Milton, Oakville and Burlington, and the turnout at the Georgetown meeting was the highest.

Gross said they hope to hold follow-up meetings to look at practical solutions to poverty, homelessness and affordable housing.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

Feds give cash to fight homelessness

Halton Hills Community Support and Information Centre (HHCSI) is one of five Halton organizations to receive a share of \$770,000 in federal funding to combat homelessness.

HHCSI is to receive \$28,980 to provide transitional housing in an apartment for homeless families in Halton Hills. The money is to cover the cost of renting and furnishing the apartment and the families are to receive on-going support and advocacy.

HHCSI executive director Joan Barham welcomed the funding.

"We certainly do have housing problems in north Halton," said Barham.

The announcement, the first of \$1 million in federal funding to prevent and alleviate homelessness allocated to Halton under the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI), was made by Regional Chair Joyce Savoline and Oakville MP Bonnie Brown at HHCSI Thursday morning. The bulk of the funding will be administered by Halton Region, and \$212,511 of it will be provided by Human Resources Development Centre Homeless Youth Special Project funding.

"Homelessness in Halton is a reality and a lack of emergency homeless support systems, including emergency and transitional housing, are a growing concern and we are committed to finding solutions," said Savoline.

Another project applied for by HHCSI in conjunction with Halton Hills Homelessness Task Force—the Out of the Cold program—was denied funding. That program was to provide overnight accommodation for about 14 homeless people, aged 16 and up, from Acton, Georgetown and the rural area under supervised conditions during the winter in a house on the Sheridan Nurseries property.

John Day, chairman of the task force, said they plan to reapply for that funding as a second round of requests for project proposals are due Thursday, Nov. 22.

Cathy Gerrow, community support co-ordinator for HHCSI said a steering committee for their transitional housing project consists of HHCSI, Salvation Army Halton Hills, the local ministerial association and the two Halton Hills food banks.

Anyone who has a two-bedroom apartment available should call Gerrow at 519-853-3310, 905-873-6502 or Susan Kuechler at 519-853-5610.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI) will receive funding from the federal government to provide transitional housing for homeless families in town. The funding announcement for HHCSI, and four other Halton groups, was made at HHCSI Thursday. On hand for the announcement were from left, Mayor Kathy Gastle, Councillor John Day, Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative advisory committee chair Esther Clark, Halton Chair Joyce Savoline, Oakville MP Bonnie Brown and HHCSI executive director Joan Barham. Photo by Ted Brown

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