

Funding to aid homeless, help prevent eviction

Halton Region commits \$3 million for seven community initiatives

The Region is dishing out more than \$3 million for seven community initiatives that address homelessness and eviction prevention.

The expenditure was approved by regional council at its last meeting.

The funded projects represent significant progress by the Region in meeting priorities from its Comprehensive Housing Strategy to develop a basic level of service for homeless individuals and families and to enhance eviction prevention services to keep people housed.

"By funding these programs, Halton Region is helping people in each local municipality remain in safe, affordable and accessible housing in their own communities, regardless of their age, income or stage of life," said Regional Chair Gary Carr.

Four of the projects previously received a total of \$233,702 in federal homelessness funding and will continue to provide transitional housing programs and outreach to homeless and at-risk youth, with some expansion.

Three newly funded initiatives include support for singles and families, the first transitional housing project for homeless youth and housing allowances to make rent affordable and prevent eviction.

The seven projects are as follows:

- The Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) — \$565,893 for program and capital costs over 15 months and two housing allowances for three years totaling \$21,600. The HMC will provide transitional housing to newcomer families in a four-unit dwelling with support services for three years. Rent will be offset by housing allowances. The council formerly assisted newcomer families in two units.

- Home Suite Hope Shared Living Corporation — \$58,895 over two years to provide support services in the organization's transitional housing units

- Links2Care — \$185,744 over five years to continue to serve homeless families in Halton Hills in three apartment units with support services

- Summit Housing and Outreach Programs — \$432,000 to assist 12 individuals with serious mental illness with housing allowances over 10 years

- Support and Housing-Halton — \$168,832 for program costs over two years and \$180,000 for five housing allowances over 10 years to help five individuals with serious mental illness move to more independent living in the community

- Transitions for Youth — \$789,099 for program costs over three years for the Bridging the Gap program, which provides outreach assistance to troubled youth throughout Halton

- Transitions for Youth — \$585,427 for program and capital costs over three years and \$32,400 for three housing

allowances for three years to develop Halton's first transitional housing project for homeless youth through the purchase of a dwelling for three to four youth at one time

Ellis Katsof, Transitions for Youth's executive director, said the agency is thrilled to have been awarded the funding.

"The Region's commitment to responding to homeless issues and affordable housing issues goes beyond just having a housing strategy," he said.

"The Region creatively found funding from three levels of government to create this exciting opportunity for homeless youth in Halton. We look forward to implementing these programs beginning in January 2008."

The approved dollars are the result of a two-stage, com-

munity-wide proposal call initiated in July 2007. The process included interviews with each applicant organization and an evaluation by a committee of senior staff and the chair of the Homelessness Advisory Committee.

Funding for the projects comes from the federal Homelessness Partnering Initiative (\$435,592), the Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy (\$500,000) and the Provincial Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters (\$2.09 million).

"It is critical that we work to ensure long-term, stable funding for initiatives such as these to reduce homelessness in our community," said Carr.

He noted that regional council will continue to urge senior levels of government to develop a national housing strategy to help people in need in Halton and across Canada.

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