

# EveryOne's Home

## First Community Report on Housing and Homelessness

November 23, 2009

The Red Deer & District Community Foundation is pleased to provide our first report on housing and homelessness to the community of Red Deer. Since 2006 The Red Deer & District Community Foundation has been working with the community towards the implementation of "EveryOne's Home Vision and Framework on Ending Homelessness by 2018" and now "EveryOne's Home 5 Year Community Plan ~ Towards Ending Homelessness in Red Deer." This report will introduce many of the agencies and groups working to reduce homelessness, it will highlight some of the work that is happening throughout the community and it will hopefully paint a picture of the need for these things to be supported. This report will identify some interesting and significant statistics and it will provide many opportunities for further discussion. There are many more programs, many more stories and many more statistics to share.

### Housing

Affordable housing stock	2,420
Individual Rent Subsidies	785
Vacancy Rate	3.9%
Average Rent	\$799/month for all unit types*
Housing First Units	48

### 2008/2009

### Income

Income Support - Single individual expected to work	\$583/month
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)	\$1188 /month
Minimum Wage in Alberta	\$8.80/hr
Average Hourly Income in Red Deer	\$19.61/hr

### Homelessness

Number of shelter beds in Red Deer	127
# of different individuals using Winter Inn Program (2008/2009 Season)	363

\*(Bachelor, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom)

Sources include the Red Deer & District Community Foundation Vital Signs 2009, Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Government of Alberta.



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# Glossary

## Some Good Terms To Know

**At Risk of Homelessness** – A person or family that is experiencing difficulty maintaining their housing and has no alternatives for obtaining subsequent housing. Circumstances that often contribute to becoming at-risk of homelessness include: eviction, loss of income, unaffordable increase in the cost of housing, discharge from an institution without subsequent housing in place, irreparable damage or deterioration to residences, and fleeing from family violence. (Government of Alberta definition)

**Affordable Housing** – The commonly accepted definition, used by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is the cost of adequate shelter should not exceed 30% of household income. Housing which costs less than this is considered affordable. However, consumers, housing providers and advocacy organizations tend to use a broader definition of affordability and take into consideration core housing need.

**Core Housing Need** – Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation states that core housing need refers to households which are unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability, and affordability norms. The norms have been adjusted over time to reflect the housing expectations of Canadians. Affordability, one of the elements used to determine core housing need, is recognized as a maximum of 30 per cent of the household income spent on shelter.

**Homeless** – Those who do not have safe, affordable, appropriate, permanent housing to which they can return whenever they choose.

**Absolute Homeless** – Those living on the street with no physical shelter of their own, including those who spend their nights in emergency shelters.

**Relative Homeless** – Those living in spaces that do not meet the basic health and safety standards including protection from the elements; access to safe water and sanitation; security of tenure and personal safety; affordability; access to employment, education and health care; and the provision of minimum space to avoid overcrowding.

**Chronic Homeless** – Those who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter.

**Episodic Homeless** – A person who is homeless for less than a year and has fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (Government of Alberta definitions)

**Housing First** – Housing First is a client-centered approach which holds to the belief that before someone can break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and secure home is necessary, with support services readily available. Housing First places priority on providing affordable, safe and permanent housing quickly, with minimal requirements beyond a standard lease agreement. Services, such as medication support, drug or alcohol treatment, and counselling are available as needed. (Government of Alberta definition)

**Housing Options** – Providing housing to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This broad statement

might include private rental housing that historically would not have been available for lease by these individuals and families due to it being unaffordable or the landlord's reluctance to rent to them but that is now available due to a combination of factors including rent supplements and a rapid re-housing program. It might also include new housing stock that is built through various grant programs for a specific purpose.

**Rapid Re-housing** – Rapid Re-housing means that there are housing search and housing placement services available to rapidly re-house all people losing their housing or who are homeless and who want permanent housing.

## Good Things To Know About

**Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness** – On January 23, 2008, the Government of Alberta announced the establishment of the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness (the "Secretariat"). The Secretariat was given a mandate to develop a 10-year provincial strategic plan outlining "a comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable approach" to ending homelessness – including goals, timelines and financial requirements. Rather than a task force or committee, the Secretariat was established as an agency of the Alberta government, intended to not only develop but also to lead implementation of the provincial plan. <http://housing.alberta.ca/603.cfm>

**City of Red Deer Social Planning Department** – The Social Planning Department assists human services organizations that support and enhance the lives of individuals, families and the community. The Social Planning Department provides appropriate leadership and resources, including information, knowledge and support to the Community Housing Advisory Board as well as the administration of funding provided to each organization that is funded through this process. <http://www.reddeer.ca/default.htm>

**Community Housing Advisory Board** – When funding is designated to our community for housing and homelessness, recommendations on who gets funding or what programs are funded are made by this committee of Red Deer City Council. There have been name changes for this committee over the years however, the Community Housing Advisory Board includes a diverse group of community leaders who have been advising Red Deer City Council on the allocation of Federal and Provincial funds administered through The City of Red Deer since 2000.

**Red Deer & District Community Foundation** – Established as a registered non profit organization on June 27, 1989 the Red Deer & District Community Foundation (RDDCF) is a community catalyst committed to growing a legacy which strengthens the quality of life in Red Deer and surrounding areas. The Red Deer & District Community Foundation hosts the community based leadership position that was established to help Red Deer plan and implement the work to end homelessness. <http://www.rddcf.ca/>

**EveryOne's Home Advisory Committee** – Established at the request of the Mayors Task Force on Ending Homelessness, The EveryOne's Home Advisory Committee (EHAC) includes members of the Task Force, the Aboriginal community, the Red Deer Housing Committee, the community at large, the Red Deer & District Community Foundation and The City of Red Deer. EHAC is a committee of the Red Deer & District Community Foundation.

# What's Happening in Red Deer

## An Updated Plan for Red Deer.

On October 5, 2009 Red Deer City Council approved "EveryOne's Home 5 Year Community Plan Towards Ending Homelessness in Red Deer." This was an update from the work that was done by the Mayors Task Force on Ending Homelessness from 2003 - 2005 resulting in "EveryOne's Home Vision and Framework on Ending Homelessness in Red Deer by 2018." This new Plan will guide our community over the next five years as we work towards our ultimate goal of ending homelessness. Currently the Plan is being professionally designed and will soon be available online or in print however, at this time only the text is available. It can be received by contacting the Red Deer & District Community Foundation.

## Partnership Charter

The City of Red Deer and the Red Deer & District Community Foundation hold key roles in assisting our community to end homelessness. Recently, these groups have come together to develop a Partnership Charter which clearly identifies roles and responsibilities for much of the work that needs to happen at an administrative and community development level to successfully implement the community plan. Both The City of Red Deer and the Red Deer & District Community Foundation are excited about the work that will unfold over the next five years.

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Gross Monthly Income</b>	<b>30% of income*</b>	<b>Bachelor \$622</b>	<b>1 bedroom \$723</b>	<b>2 bdrm \$858</b>	<b>3+bdrm \$1,000</b>
AISH	\$1,188	\$326	×	×	×	×
Income Support Single**	\$583	\$175	×	×	×	×
Single mom 2 kids under 12	\$953	\$285	×	×	×	×
Maximum Employment Insurance	\$1,937	\$581	×	×	×	×
<b>Wages</b>	<b>Gross Monthly Income</b>	<b>30% of income*</b>	<b>Bachelor \$622</b>	<b>1 bedroom \$723</b>	<b>2 bdrm \$858</b>	<b>3+bdrm \$1,000</b>
FTE minimum wage earner	\$1,525	\$458	×	×	×	×
Trades helper	\$3,166	\$950	✓	✓	✓	×
Admin Assistant	\$2,900	\$870	✓	✓	✓	×
Bank Teller	\$1,792	\$538	×	×	×	×
Restaurant Manager	\$2,758	\$827	✓	✓	×	×
Retail Sales	\$2,300	\$690	✓	×	×	×
Optician	\$3,500	\$1,050	✓	✓	✓	✓
*(Affordable Rent)						
**(Expected to Work)						
Note: Affordable rents calculated as per CMHC Housing Outlook Alberta April 2009						
Sources include the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and the Alberta Wage and Salary Survey.						

# What's Happening in Red Deer

For years, even before Red Deer officially started planning around affordable housing and homelessness, community agencies, groups and collaborations have demonstrated compassion and leadership in housing solutions. Since the release EveryOne's Home Vision and Framework on Ending Homelessness by 2018 in 2005 these groups have continued to be a part of the solution, they have grown and changed to respond to our community needs and priorities. They work tirelessly to ensure that everyone in Red Deer has a place to call home. Some of this work is highlighted within this report.

## The Piper Creek Foundation: Working to Provide Seniors with Appropriate Housing Options

Piper Creek Foundation continues to see a significant number of seniors looking for affordable housing, appropriate housing and housing with supports. The Foundation is very excited to say that all programs have waiting lists, an example of the success, however we also are discouraged by the number of stories we hear about seniors not being able to access affordable and appropriate housing. Here is a quick update on the four programs provided by the Piper Creek Foundation:

**Seniors Self-contained** – Piper Creek Foundation took this over from Twilight Homes Foundation in January and it has gone very well. The province is currently looking at what upgrades are needed at the 3 largest buildings.

**Affordable Housing** – A 49 suite building rarely has a vacancy and a long waiting list. In September the Piper Creek Foundation responded to the provincial call for proposals to develop a new 40 suite apartment building and hope to hear soon if this project will be funded.

**Lodge Program** – The Piper Creek Foundation Board approved a concept plan for the redevelopment of Piper Creek Lodge. Efforts are underway to try and find an appropriate government program to fund this.

**Supportive Living** – The only Designated Supportive Living option in Red Deer, it continues to get rave reviews.

Issues facing seniors housing include a lack of affordable housing options, especially at the lodge/retirement home level. Private rents are high enough that people who do not qualify for the provincial lodge program are using their savings to pay for rent. Piper Creek Foundation's concern is what is going to happen to these folks when those savings run out.

## A Safe Harbour

Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing (SHS) is a significant resource in our community, providing support, detox, shelter and housing. SHS has really stepped up to the plate to end homelessness in Red Deer, working with local agencies and funders, participating in community planning and providing a voice for the individuals they serve. They provide the majority of shelter spaces in Red Deer with dignity while working to provide longer term solutions such as Housing for families and Housing First for homeless individuals.

**SHS Housing First Project** – Harbour House opened late in 2007. It provides housing and twenty four hour support for eight of our community's most vulnerable and hard to house individuals. These individuals live with persistent mental illness, significant health concerns and/ or addictions. Some of these individuals had previously lived on our streets for many years, cycling in and out of hospitals and correctional facilities. Each individual's suffering was profound and the impact on the community was certainly noticeable. Of the eight original tenants four remain, some have moved on to independent housing, some have reconnected with their families; all of them have had an opportunity to have a stable home.

It costs approximately \$126.00 per day for someone to live at Harbour House; it costs approximately \$1200.00 per day for someone to stay in an acute care bed. This is an example of not only saving lives but saving money as well.

## Red Deer Native Friendship Society and Heritage Family Services Partner to Develop a Great New Housing Initiative

The Red Deer Native Friendship Society (RDNFS) and Heritage Family Services have partnered together to build 16 affordable housing units for Aboriginal individuals and families.

Phase one will be four floors, the first two floors will house the RDNFS program and office space with the two top floors being apartments. Phase two plans include the addition of a three story walk up, with up to 32 units, on the same site. All of the apartments will house low-income individuals, seniors, Elders, families and those requiring barrier free suites. This project will be able to accommodate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families. Approximately 25 percent of the clients served by the RDNFS are non-Aboriginal and approximately 75 percent of the clients served by Heritage Family Services are Aboriginal.

The first and second floor of the RDNFS building will have a gathering space for Aboriginal celebrations, meeting space for community and visiting elders, daycare, Aboriginal support services, a youth room and outreach services. All of these services encourage inclusiveness, cultural support and promote an overall sense of community.

Currently these partners are working with the City of Red Deer and Alberta Infrastructure to secure land for the development of the project.

# What's Happening in Red Deer

## The Road Home Pilot Project

This new project hosted by Family Services of Central Alberta is in response to our local priorities. The Road Home provides Central Alberta families who have at least one child 0-6 years of age with outreach support and education while on waitlists for housing and to help ensure that current housing can be maintained. Outreach workers can assist families to ensure their basic needs are met and that young children have a safe and clean home to develop in. Educational workshops and referrals provide parents with knowledge to end the cycle of homelessness, learn how to manage their money effectively, cope with issues of addiction, mental illness, and more, depending on familial needs.

## Schizophrenia Society Provides a Variety of Housing Options Through Creative Partnerships

**Lovella Center:** is a mentored apartment complex located above the Schizophrenia Society offices Red Deer and owned by the Lovella Society. There are seven tenants who have experienced minimal success living independently until coming into Lovella where now their housing stability and quality of life have improved drastically.

**Kentwood Place:** is a partnership between the Schizophrenia Society, Alberta Health Services and a local philanthropist. It is a twenty-five bed psychosocial rehabilitation recovery transition home for individuals whom had previously been hospitalized due to a severe mental illness, often for many many years.

**Rosewood Manor:** is a ten-unit apartment building providing safe, clean, affordable housing for persons with schizophrenia who can live well independently but who benefit from the support provided by outreach workers. The Red Deer Housing Authority owns the building and support is provided by the Schizophrenia Society.

## Buffalo Housing First

The Buffalo is owned by Potters Hands Development Limited and operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association. The Buffalo has 40 units and is staffed twenty four hours a day. The Buffalo uses a "Housing First" philosophy which moves people directly into permanent housing from living on the streets or in shelters. Staff members assist tenants with day-to-day tasks such as laundry, cooking and housekeeping. Support staff may also help tenants find suitable activities, volunteer or employment opportunities or medical services. The Buffalo has provided a significant resource in the community and is a critical component of the requirements a community has to have in place when working towards ending homelessness.

## Nightreach Project

Nightreach is a joint initiative between the Central Alberta AIDS Network Society and the Red Deer Native Friendship Society. This project is currently being run as a pilot project, with funding from Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) until the end of December 2009 in order to capture preliminary research on the level and types of need in the downtown core between 6:00pm and 10:00pm. The program's objective is to provide information, referrals and direct-care services to individuals in the downtown which are otherwise only accessible during business-hours. The services that the Nightreach team offers include the provision of information raising awareness of community services, referrals to appropriate services, harm reduction supplies, basic counselling and crisis intervention, cold weather clothing, water/coffee, and first aid/wound care. The anticipated target population for this project will be adults, both male and female, although services will be provided to any who may need them in the downtown core, including youth. Nightreach runs two nights per week, each night consisting of two staff from two partner agencies providing outreach services.

Staff are equipped with emergency alarms and cellular phones in case of emergencies. Staff walk up to and throughout the downtown core and relevant City Parks areas to provide outreach services to the target population. The Nightreach Project addresses early-stage prevention largely by providing vital information on, and referrals to, key community agencies and service providers, ensuring that awareness of available resources in the community is heightened and that these services are utilized by those in need. It is expected that many of the contacts established through this project will consist of, but are not limited to, street-involved individuals who are underserved at night and who, as a result of the project's services, will be better equipped to access resources which will mitigate/eliminate various immediate risks (inadequate clothing, dehydration) as well as prevent the worsening of underlying physical/mental afflictions.

To date, Nightreach staff have had 88 recorded contacts over 10 shifts, 48% of which are Aboriginal community members. Further, staff have made 28 referrals to health and social service entities, and have distributed various supplies on 125 occasions.



# What's Happening in Red Deer

## CCOT:

### Working together to create a strong network of outreach support.

The Coordinated Community Outreach Team (CCOT) is comprised of four local agencies, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society, Red Deer Native Friendship Society and Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing.

This team provides practical support, using a case management model, to individuals and families who are without housing, experiencing a housing crisis, or require assistance to keep their housing. Each individual outreach worker and each individual organization within CCOT are an imperative part of our local housing support system and their willingness to collaborate and partner together makes them even that much more able to meet the needs of their clients.

## Youth Homelessness

According to the report "Youth Homelessness in Canada: The Road to Solutions" by Jeff Evenson and Carolann Barr with Raising the Roof.

- It has been estimated that one-third of Canada's homeless population are youth. That means that close to 65,000 young people are without a place to call home at some time during the year.
- Abuse and neglect are two of the major reasons why young people leave home. Several studies show that nearly 70% of homeless youth have experienced some form of sexual, physical or emotional abuse.
- Homeless youth are exposed to significantly more physical abuse, sickness, injury and mental health problems than their non-homeless peers. A Quebec study found that the death rate among homeless youth was 11 times higher than in the general population.
- The majority have not completed high school. Their lack of education is standing in the way of getting careers.
- About one-third live in shelters.
- More than two-thirds said they'd grown up in a family that found it hard to maintain consistent housing.
- Over 70% indicated that they did not have a positive role model in their life.

Red Deer has homeless youth and programs such as Street Ties run by Parkland Youth Homes and The 49th Street Youth Shelter run by The Youth and Volunteer Center work hard on a daily basis to support these youth and keep them safe.

The Youth and Volunteer Center has recently started operating a temporary winter shelter for youth, Youth Winter Inn will run through to April 2010. This program was developed through broad based community support and will ensure no youth has to sleep outside or put themselves at risk of harm during the harsh winter.

Youth agencies work along side others in the community also hoping to help with the issues of homelessness and related concerns as well as the solutions to these things. The Red Deer High Risk Youth Coalition is comprised of community agencies, school divisions, municipal representatives, provincial representatives and various other concerned citizens and groups. This coalition is engaged throughout the community and is working on developing a strategic framework to meet the community needs.



# Helping Homeless and At-Risk Individuals and Families....

## Housing Services

Piper Creek Foundation  
Red Deer Housing Authority  
Potters Hands  
Lovella Society  
Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing

## Supportive Housing

Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing  
Schizophrenia Society of Alberta Red Deer & Area Chapter (in partnership with the Lovella Society, Red Deer Housing Authority and Alberta Health Services Mental Health and Addiction)  
Canadian Mental Health Association (in partnership with Potters Hands)  
Catholic Social Services  
Alberta Health Services

## Drop-In and Support Services

Berachah  
Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society  
Coordinated Community Outreach Team:  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Red Deer Native Friendship Society  
Central Alberta Woman's Outreach Society  
Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing  
Loaves and Fishes Benevolent Society  
Nightreach Team:  
Red Deer Native Friendship Society  
Central Alberta AIDS Network Society  
Potters Hands  
Red Deer Native Friendship Society  
Salvation Army  
Schizophrenia Society of Alberta Red Deer & Area Chapter  
Seventh Day Adventist Centre  
Shining Mountains Living Community Services  
Street Ties Youth Outreach

## Organizations Serving the Aboriginal and Multicultural Communities

Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association  
Central Alberta Diversity Association  
Central Alberta Refugee Effort  
Shining Mountains Living Community Services  
Red Deer Native Friendship Society  
Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing

## Shelters

Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing (operating the Winter Inn Program in partnership with the local faith community)  
Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter  
Youth and Volunteer Center

## Health Organizations for Homeless People

Central Alberta AIDS Network Society (Turning Point)  
Red Deer Primary Care Network-Street Clinic  
Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing

## Support Services For Those With Mental Illness

A Gathering Place  
Alberta Health Services - Mental Health and Addiction  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Schizophrenia Society of Alberta Red Deer & Area Chapter  
Red Deer Primary Care Network Street Clinic



Note: This list is not exhaustive. Contact information for all of the agencies and supports is available by calling Community Information and Referral Society (CiRS) at (403) 346-4636.

# Helping Homeless and At-Risk Individuals and Families....

## What can YOU do - Become part of the housing solution

- Support local housing initiatives
- Donate your expertise on a board or committee
- Donate or make available land for affordable housing
- Build affordable housing
- Rent out a room
- Provide a job to someone who has a disability
- Build a secondary suite in your basement
- Learn about the root causes of homelessness and work within your community to address them
- Encourage policy that will ensure adequate housing is in place
- Make a donation of time or funds to agencies that provide housing and support to homeless and at risk individuals and families
- Be aware of and help reduce the stigma associated with homelessness

## Join the Red Deer Housing Committee

Since 1994 the Red Deer Housing Committee has been an active, informative committee comprised of a broad cross section of the community including concerned citizens, individuals directly impacted by housing issues problems, non profit service providers, regional authorities and municipal, provincial and federal governments.

The Red Deer Housing Committee is the community voice in increasing available, affordable, accessible and decent housing options for citizens of Red Deer through the promotion of collaborative partnerships, education and advocacy.

Red Deer Housing Committee meetings are open to the general public. Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month in January, February, March, May, June, September, October and November. The meeting is scheduled from 1:15 - 3:15 p.m. at City Hall

Everyone is welcome. If you are interested in membership contact Jennifer Vanderschaeghe, committee Chair at 403 346-8858 or submit an application online at <http://www.cirsonline.ca/housing/>



## Local Supporters In The Work Of Ending Homelessness

Red Deer & District  
**Community  
Foundation**

