

MEDICINE HAT COMMUNITY HOUSING SOCIETY

**HOMELESS AND COMMUNITY
HOUSING DEPARTMENT**



**2006 – 2007
ANNUAL REPORT**

This annual report will cover the fifteen month period from January 1 2006 to March 31 2007. This is because much of the 2006 – 2007 National Homelessness Initiative funding was not available until the first quarter of 2007, resulting in the bulk of capital expenditures occurring after the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society's 2006 fiscal year.

2006 – 2010 Priorities

Based on the outcome of the focus groups, public forum and questionnaire the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society commits to the following priorities:

Priority: With the continuation of the SCPI and the Alberta Homelessness Initiative, continue to financially support the existing homeless programs in Medicine Hat.

Program	SCPI Funds	UAH Funds	AB Homelessness Funds
Salvation Army Family Support Centre	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
McMan Youth Inn Between Shelter	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
MHCHS Social Housing Outreach Program	\$88,695	\$0	\$0

Priority: Work to increase services and resources at all points on the housing continuum.

Program	SCPI Funds	UAH Funds	AB Homelessness Funds
Construction of 2 – three bedroom transitional units	\$0	\$0	\$250,000
Purchase of 4 bedroom transitional housing home	\$0	\$232,510	\$0
Repairs to existing transitional housing units	\$5,630	\$24,102	\$12,040
Purchase of five transitional housing condominiums	\$361,395	\$0	\$387,954
Provide funding to purchase the Champion's Centre – 9 transitional beds and hot meal program facility	\$0	\$0	\$100,310

Priority: Work to enhance community capacity by encouraging the collaboration, cooperation and coordination of services by community organizations and all levels of government.

- Participated in the Crisis Assistance Network including the Housing, Financial Administrator, Promotions and Food Distribution Committees.
- Participated in the Salvation Army Family Support Centre Advisory Committee.
- Partnered the Salvation Army and Champion's Centre in moving the hot meal program to the Champion's Centre building and offering evening meals.

Priority: Work with existing service providers to increase publicity around homelessness and poverty and the services that are provided by community organizations.

- Continued to work with the Crisis Assistance Network Promotions Committee in making presentations to various community organizations and groups, using the Poverty and Homelessness in Medicine Hat video.

Priority: Work to enhance community capacity by encouraging partnerships between the private sector/individuals with community helping organizations.

- Continued our relationship with Classic Communities and the development of their affordable home ownership programs. This includes administering the subsidies for the units in these developments.

Priority: Work to influence change in government subsidized housing policy.

- This work was carried out by the social housing department of the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society as they have direct contact with government about these issues.

Priority: Work to influence governments to consider the interrelatedness of housing and social supports, encouraging the funding of both.

- These efforts have resulted in the Government of Alberta announcing \$16 million for Outreach Initiative Pilot Projects covering the period April 2007 to March 2009. Of this amount, Medicine Hat will receive \$1 million.

2006 – 2007 HIGHLIGHTS

Salvation Army Family Support Centre

The seventh year of operation of this 30-bed adult and family homeless shelter proved to be the busiest. 1076 people were admitted to the shelter during the year. The number of different people served was 697 making the recidivism rate 35%.

Category	2006 – 2007	2005 – 2006	change
Admissions to shelter	1,076	814	+32%
Number of different people served	697	620	+12%
Rate of recidivism	35%	23%	+12%
Males as a percent of total admissions	80%	79%	+1%
Females as a percent of total admissions	20%	21%	-1%
Aboriginals as a percent of total admissions	3%	7%	-4%
Visible minorities as a percent of total admissions	35%	14%	+21%
Left shelter because found housing	15%	14%	+1%
Left shelter because found work	18%	23%	-5%
Left shelter because moved on to another locale	20%	32%	-12%
Total bed nights	7,505	6,414	+17%
Average stay per client	7 days	8 days	- 1 day
Meals supplied	22,383	19,242	+16%

The Family Services component of the Family Support Centre was also very involved with those who are at risk of homelessness. These people find themselves unable to meet their financial demands with the income they have. As a result they approach the Salvation Army for one-time support.

Category	2006 – 2007	2005 – 2006	change
Accommodations & Security Deposits	\$5,170	\$5,506	-\$336
Medical needs	\$1,397	\$455	+\$942
Utilities	\$850	\$651	+\$199
Transportation	\$2,097	\$1,466	+\$631
Food vouchers and food supplies	\$30,970	\$16,257	+\$14,713
Household goods (furniture, kitchen supplies, etc)	\$21,143	\$19,169	+\$1,974
Number of people assisted by Family Services	1,921	1,617	+304

Social Housing Outreach Program

The Social Housing Outreach Program was created to assist in the delivery of services that address issues in social housing resident's lives that contribute to homelessness or increase the risk of homelessness. Outreach workers assist program participants in overcoming barriers to

independence and self-sufficiency. The inherent logic behind the program's outputs is that as people increase their knowledge, use more community services, develop skills and increase their coping mechanisms, their ability to deal with challenges in their lives increases and the risk of homelessness decreases.

Category	2006 – 2007	2005 – 2006	change
Number of people served	255	213	+20%
Males as a percent of total people served	47%	38%	+9%
Females as a percent of total people served	53%	62%	-9%
Aboriginals as a percent of total people served	7%	8%	-1%
Visible minorities as a percent of total served	16%	8%	+8%

The Outreach Program employs two tools to evaluate participant progress as a result of program involvement. The Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Tool was used to assess participant progress in meeting personal goals. At entry to the program, participants were required to set personal growth goals. At various points in the program the participant's progress in meeting each goal is assessed. Of the 255 people served by the program, 67 participants were evaluated with the GAS Tool. These 67 participants had established a total of 95 goals that were evaluated on a five point scale once during the program duration:

Assessment	Score	Number of Goals	% of Goals
Greatly below expected results	-2	7	7.3%
Below expected results	-1	18	18.9%
Achieved expected results	0	25	26.3%
Exceeded expected results	1	19	20.0%
Greatly exceeded expected results	2	26	27.4%

Eighty-eight participant goals were reviewed twice. On the second assessment the goal was reviewed on a three point scale:

Assessment	Score	Number of Goals	% of Goals
Result was lower than prior review	-1	15	17.0%
Result was maintained at prior review	0	49	55.7%
Result was greater than prior review	1	24	27.3%

The Goal Attainment Scaling Tool demonstrates that goal setting, an essential component of the Outreach Program, is taken seriously by program participants. Following the program logic, this should lead to greater independence and a reduction in the risk of homelessness.

A second scale was used to demonstrate participant progress as a result of program participation. This is the Massachusetts Family Self-Sufficiency Scales and Ladders Assessment. At entry to the program, participants are evaluated as to their position with regard to a number of factors. These include: housing, income management, employment, health, adult education and literacy, nutrition, transportation, etc. This rating forms a baseline from which future assessments are based.

The more critical factors for participants in the Outreach Program are housing (assessing affordability, housing options available, risk of homelessness, housing stability, and quality of housing); health (availability of coverage, affordability, quality of health, substance abuse, mental health); income management (income stability, debt, ability to budget, savings, credit rating); and employment (stability of employment, adequacy of income, benefit coverage, work skills).

The ability of program participants to progress in these areas was truly remarkable:

Category	Result
Housing: increase over baseline	72.0%
Housing: same as baseline	9.3%
Housing: lower than baseline	18.6%
Health: increase over baseline	68.2%
Health: same as baseline	9.1%
Health: lower than baseline	22.7%
Income: increase over baseline	75.7%
Income: same as baseline	10.8%
Income: lower than baseline	13.5%
Employment: increase over baseline	72.7%
Employment: same as baseline	18.2%
Employment: lower than baseline	9.1%

McMan Inn Between Youth Shelter

The Inn Between Youth Shelter operated by McMan Youth, Family and Community Services provides shelter to homeless and at-risk youth to the age of 18 years. The six bed facility provides four beds for children with Child Welfare Status and the other two beds are for homeless youth. This is a very efficient operation, enhanced by the contribution of funding and building by the Southeast Alberta Children and Family Services Authority.

Category	2006 – 2007	2005 – 2006	change
Number of people served	61	71	-10
Males as a percent of total people served	44.2%	49.3%	-5.1%
Females as a percent of total people served	55.8%	50.7%	+5.1%
Aboriginals as a percent of total people served	7.5%	9.0%	-1.5%
Visible minorities as a percent of total served	7.5%	3.0%	+4.5%

Outcomes:

- 52% Percent of total youth served returned to parents or family
- 69% Percent of "at-risk" youth returned to parents or family
- 26% Percent of youth who left shelter without a discharge plan
- 11% Percent of youth who entered the Child Welfare system
- 15% Recidivism rate

- 85% Percent of youth who completed an Action Plan while in shelter
- 28% Percent of youth who participated with their family in McMan's parent/teen mediation

The Champion's Centre Inc.

The Champion's Centre Inc. is a national organization that provides permanent housing on a room and board basis. The organization's original facility is located in Ponoka, AB with Medicine Hat being the second location.

The organization purchased a restaurant with upstairs living quarters. The living quarters were renovated to create six, two-person bedrooms, a common washroom, laundry room and lounge. Since opening the capacity has been reduced to nine as three bedrooms were seen to be too small to house two people.

The building was purchased in January 2006 and residents were moving in, in July of the same year. At the same time the restaurant opened to the public. The restaurant has multiple purposes including providing meals to the upstairs residents, fund raising, and very importantly providing a locale for the Hot Meal program in Medicine Hat.

The Hot Meal program is a partnership between the Champion's Centre Inc. and the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army took over the program when it was dropped by the local food bank. They operated the program out of the homeless shelter during the lunch hour.

During community consultations in the fall of 2005 it was learned that many people are unable to access the program. It was recommended that the program be moved to a supper hour to catch the working poor and those with mental health issues whose "body clocks are mixed up."

The Salvation Army was unable to accommodate this change and the partnership was developed with the Champion's Centre. The Salvation Army provides funds and food donations while the Champion's Centre prepares the meal and provides the locale. Volunteers from both organizations serve the meal and complete clean up after.

The change has resulted in 45 - 50 people using the service each weekday evening, which is up from the 30 - 35 people who used the service during the lunch hour.

Transitional Housing for Families

This was a very productive year for the acquisition of transitional housing units for families. The Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services was provided the funds to purchase a three bedroom home in a well established neighborhood. Additional funds were used to provide upgrades to their transitional housing facility in downtown Medicine Hat.

The Medicine Hat Community Housing Society added to their transitional housing portfolio. A duplex with three bedrooms per side was built. This has been rented to an organization providing support to unwed pregnant teens and teens at risk of homelessness. At this facility the teens are cared for and provided with programming intended to increase their independence.

Five condominium units in the newly built Northlands Pointe complex were also purchased to be used as transitional housing for families. Two of the units are two-bedroom and the others are three-bedroom units. The units were purchased from Classic Construction Ltd. who provided a grant in excess of \$25,000 per unit to the Society.

Finally, some minor cosmetic changes and electrical upgrades were provided to the Transitional Housing complex owned by the Society. This complex houses up to 19 individuals or couples without children.

In total eight units were added including a total of 22 bedrooms.

Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative

The construction of 28 below market units commenced in 2006 and was completed in early 2007. The City of Medicine Hat provided the land and the Federal and Provincial Governments provided a grant under the Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative. Classic Construction Ltd. was the contractor for this development aimed at low income individuals and families who are on the

social housing waiting list. With this development the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society has endeavored to provide quality housing at a substantially less cost than market.

Unit size	# of units	\$ Rent/month	Average \$ rent/month for a same sized unit in Medicine Hat Spring 2007	% <u>below</u> the average rent/month for a same sized unit
One bedroom	9	\$383	\$531	27.9%
Two bedroom	7	\$466	\$630	26.0%
Three bedroom	12	\$535	\$709	24.5%