



The Alliance to End Homelessness

www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca

ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS STEERING COMMITTEE

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Dan Sabourin, *Vice-Chair*

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Simon Brazier
Senior Programs Manager
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Community Representative

Tony Cruickshank
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Action-Logement/Action-Housing

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Wanda MacDonald
Executive Director, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre

Christine MacIntosh
Director of Child and Youth Services,
John Howard Society

Meg McCallum
Ottawa Social Housing Network

Terrie Meehan
Community Representative

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Ray Sullivan
Executive Director
Centertown Citizens Ottawa Corp.

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City of Ottawa

Michelle Couture (*Ex Officio*)
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Election outcome leaves homeless and housing questions unanswered

The Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH) was looking for federal leadership to end homelessness in this election. *"The pressing question is whether or not the federal government will now strengthen or continue to weaken its commitment to ending homelessness and creating affordable housing,"* said Marion Wright, Chair of the group.

"Federal government has provided significant support to our community, but things are changing," said Ms. Wright. *"In the 2011 Spending Estimates, the government indicated that it is making a 39% cut in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation spending from 3.1 billion in 2010 to \$1.9 billion in 2011 as well as an 11% cut in Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) from \$124 million in 2010 down to \$110 million in 2011."*

During the campaign ATEH invited candidates to lunch at the *Shepherds of Good Hope* to dine and talk with homeless people about housing. Representatives from the other parties agreed that Canada needs a National Housing Strategy and that the cuts should be reversed but the Conservatives were not in attendance.

"It's hard to imagine that MPs John Baird, Royal Galipeau, and Pierre Poilievre will turn their backs on our community, but we need to hear clear statements from them on the Conservative's intentions," said Ms. Wright. *"So far the Conservative Party has said nothing about new investments in housing to fill the void when the Affordable Housing Initiative runs out in March of 2014 and the two year stimulus funding ends this year,"* said Ms. Wright. *"That doesn't mean they won't and we will ask our local MPs that when take them our latest Report Card."*

Ottawa has had federal support for innovative projects like Cornerstone's 42 new supportive housing units which will open this spring. That one project received 5 ¼ million from the federal government. The nine affordable housing projects now underway in Ottawa are funded in large part by joint federal/provincial money. In 2010 the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy covered housing services in Ottawa for 32% of the 21,557 households that were helped through programs like Housing Loss Prevention and housing searches or street outreach and drop-ins.

The Conservative platform offered no commitment to a long-term affordable housing strategy or targets to end homelessness. Re-elected NDP MP Paul Dewar and Liberal MP Mauril Bélanger, who did attend the Alliance lunch, agreed Canada needs a National Housing Strategy that includes a commitment to \$2 billion per year on new social housing units, protecting the 600,000 existing social housing units across Canada, and reinvesting money from expiring social housing operating agreements.

"There is no getting around the fact that the CMHC and HPS cuts are not a good sign for federal housing leadership," said Ms. Wright. *"Nonetheless, we are very pleased that the Conservatives did commit \$400 million to continue the Eco-Energy Retrofit program for one year" said Ms. Wright. "The continuation of this program would provide owners with grants of up to \$5000 per unit to offset the cost of energy efficiency upgrades from 2011-2012."*

The Alliance to End Homelessness recently released its *Report Card on Ending*

Homelessness in Ottawa, Jan-Dec 2010. It revealed that:

- 7,156 homeless individuals stayed in an emergency shelter in 2010, including 1,408 children.
- Homeless families with children are spending an average of 72 days in shelter before finding housing, a whopping increase of 9 days since the previous year.
- Housing affordability is worse than ever, resulting in a first-ever “F” grade in this category.
- While 344 new affordable housing units were added to housing stock in the past year, this falls far below the ATEH target of 1,000 per year, which would end homelessness in Ottawa by 2020.

ATEH is an Ottawa based non-partisan group that represents 75 community organizations taking action together to end homelessness.

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FOR FURTHER COMMENT, PLEASE CONTACT:

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2010 Report Card available on the Alliance website: www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca