



# National Aboriginal Housing Association Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference & General Meeting

*“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”*

**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL**  
100 Lyon Street  
Ottawa Ontario

**September 22 to September 25, 2010**

**CONFERENCE CHAIR: Harold Tarbell**

## **REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS**

### **Day 1: Wednesday, September 22**

#### **Tour:**

Shortly after registration began at 1 pm, 19 registrants participated in a tour of Madawan Elders' Residence, the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, then a guided tour of the First Peoples' Exhibit at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau QC.

#### **Reception:**

At the opening reception sponsored by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) that evening:

- NAHA President Patrick Stewart Welcomed delegates to the conference, noted the conference would make adjustments to attend the First Nations Education Rally on Parliament Hill and introduced the Guest Speaker
- Bruce Pearce, President, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
  - Introduced the CHRA staff present (CEO; Policy and Programs Manager)
  - Provided overview of the CHRA an organization based national voice on the full range of affordable housing & homelessness issues
  - Discussed ways to strengthen the CHRA – NAHA partnership (membership based approach, related social issues, poverty) and invited delegates to attend the CHRA Congress

“If we are focusing on social issues then we have to overcome the divisions between ourselves and focus on Aboriginal control of housing.”

The evening closed with a presentation of traditional Native American song and dance.

### **Day 2: Thursday, September 23**

Elder Thomas Louttit provided a morning song prior to breakfast.

The Ojibway-Cree Singers opened the conference with a flag song and honour songs. The Elder then conducted the opening invocation.

At lunch, the Elder gave thanks for the food and spoke over a spirit plate, and provided inspirational remarks.

**Local  
Host**





**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Opening Address by NAHA President Stewart:**

- Welcomed delegates, acknowledged the traditional territory of the Algonquin, and thanked the sponsors and vendors
- He called on the participants to actively engage in the dialogue to make the conference successful

“The time has come for us to generate our solutions and strategies on housing”

**GREETINGS:**

**Dr. Aaron Burry, General Manager, Community and Social Services, City of Ottawa**

- Described the Aboriginal population of Ottawa (20k) and the city’s efforts and accomplishments in working with the Aboriginal community, and increasing the awareness of city service provides
- Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, Mayor’s proclamation, Police services soccer mentor program, and focus on youth employment readiness; he said the City supports the idea of “Homes First”
- Noted City Council resolution to support Bill C-304

“Initiatives to support affordable housing are a key social determinant”

**Erin Wolski, Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC)**

- Provided greetings from the NWAC
- Referred to her direct experience and continued priority for housing issues
- Urged participants to look at the data and information on housing from a gender and family structure perspective
- Noted that 70% of Aboriginal women live in urban environments
  - 80% are raising families
  - 40% living in poverty

“Housing is an area where most Aboriginal women find the most challenges”

**Dewey Smith, Assembly of First Nations (AFN)**

- Noted the difficulties in achieving substantial progress on a number of efforts over a 12 year relationship with NAHA
- Described the emergence of the First Nations jurisdiction based response to ‘occupying the field’ and meeting the needs of First Nations citizens living off reserve
- Stressed that collaboration with NAHA and others already ‘occupying the field’ was important in order to address the delicate balance of jurisdictional and on the ground strategies
- Expressed hope that Aboriginal peoples themselves will develop a comprehensive collaborative housing strategy where roles are clarified, capacities and centres of excellence are built, and links made to eliminate transitional homelessness and other issues

“We’d like to see solutions respectful of First Nations jurisdiction that address the spectrum of housing needs”

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**Dr. Paulette Tremblay, CEO, NAHO: Impacts of Housing on Health & Well-Being**

- Noted that she started her career in housing working with Charlie Hill at AFN on the housing file, developing a “Learn Not to Burn” curriculum for Native children in First Nations Communities
- Provided an overview of NAHO’s purpose, goals, and definition of good health
- Examined how traditional identity and traditional practices don’t fit easily with current definitions
- Encouraged us all to tell the story of Aboriginal housing – our story and the voice of the community
- Reviewed the research and literature findings on how poor quality and crowded home affects health (e.g. increased risks and rates of infectious disease, mental health issues, family violence, etc.)

“We need to find ways to work together rather than fight or compete with each other”



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Don McBain , Executive Director, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Support Services Corporation, Sault Ste. Marie**

**Aboriginal Social Housing and Home Ownership in Ontario**

“To understand how we arrive at the home ownership program we have to look at where we’ve come from.”

- Described the evolution of the development of the OAHS and the delivery of housing programs in the province of Ontario and its relationship to issues of Aboriginal control, advocacy and home ownership.
- To assert Aboriginal control will require that Municipalities be required to do their part to fulfill the ‘duty to consult’
- Some guidelines were working as barriers such as increasing rents within safe and affordable housing programs
- The key role, components and resources within the First Nations, Inuit, Métis Urban and Rural (FIMUR) Rental Housing Program
- How the Home ownership program operates and the supports within it:
  - Pre-approved mortgage required
  - Geographic and population based distribution
  - Needs expansion/\$ to enable more home ownership
  - Being cognizant of the social returns beyond the statistics - Opens up rental/social housing, A hand up, break the cycle, homeowner pride and appreciation
  - Economic returns

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Luncheon**

**Libby Davies, MP Vancouver East, Bill C-304**

“We all come to the same conclusion that in a country so diverse and wealthy it is unacceptable that we do not have a national housing policy”

- Noting that it was a lack of federal support for housing that resulted in her pursuing a political career she addressed housing as a fundamental human right and Bill C-304 in particular
- Described the explosion of homelessness as a direct result of failed public policy and housing supply and not a failure of individuals and families
- Complimented the NAHA 10 year action plan and how it reflects a common message from many groups
- 1) Uncertainty about what supports will be available for homelessness and affordable housing is the result of the federal piece meal, stop and start approach
- 2) The impact on the existing stock of affordable housing when programs end, agreements run out, and renovations/upgrades are necessitated
  - Shared a recent letter from the Minister Responsible for Housing expressing her concerns about the wording relating to the ‘long term viability of social housing’ and the lack of reference to Aboriginal participation in the federal/provincial, territorial working group
- 3) Lack of supply to meet the demand
- Bill C-304 creates a legislative framework to ensure the federal government addresses well known housing challenges and issues:
  - Forces consultation with all stakeholders including Aboriginal people on and off reserve
  - Calls for a national housing strategy with specific goals and targets within specified time frames
  - Recognizes the right to adequate housing acknowledged within international treaties and covenants to which Canada is a signatory
  - Provides for more financial transparency for housing funds within the F/P/T and Municipal systems
- Short term program and budget commitments aren’t good enough – we need a national strategy
- Supports the “1% (additional) solution” which is approximately \$2.5 billion/year
- Encouraged delegates to ask their local member of parliament, especially conservative members to support the bill (around October 20th) and offered easy access to available advocacy materials



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Note: Participants had agreed to join Aboriginal rally during the morning on Parliament Hill to bring attention to insufficient funding for Education, then resume conference activities at midday.**

**PANEL ON HOUSING INITIATIVES**

**Nancy Martin, E.D., Miziwe Biik, Toronto: *Aboriginal Homeownership: Initiatives in a Large City***

- Housing is part of Miziwe Biik’s strategy to address economic development which focuses on 3 areas of problems/opportunities (Housing, Youth, and Culture)
- Described the history and content of the 5 programs being delivered by Miziwe Biik (ABRG, Microloans, Housing, Carpentry Social enterprise, Arts/culture organization (in development))
- Provided insight into the development and content of the \$20 Million project being supported by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through federal Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust funds
  - Democratic, accountable, efficient, Aboriginal controlled
  - 3% to admin, \$19.4 million to 3 program components (ADLP, AHRP, AARDP)

**Jim Lanigan, Pres., Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corp., Ottawa: *Social Enterprise in Aboriginal Housing***  
Definition, impact and opportunities/benefits for not-for profits

- Business ventures operated by non-profits selling goods or services to create a financial and social return for the business....application of business skills and methods to social issues/problems
- Initially Aboriginal Housing Social Enterprise more focused on social impact rather than re-investment in the business (and surpluses were required to be returned to funder)
- Beginning to change in a number of Aboriginal housing associations (e.g. revenue generation, other business lines, investments in affordable housing)
- Reviewed the social enterprise environment:
  - Netherlands – social housing = investment
  - US Columbia Business School – traditional division between profit and social good fading.
  - Approach and program receptiveness improving

“There are many who think the idea is good but few who are willing to pay the price”

**Jayshree Thakar, National Mgr., Aboriginal Housing Program, Habitat for Humanity, Ottawa: *Increased Participation in Aboriginal H4H Program***

- Clarified the distinction between Habitat for Humanity globally (which began in US) and Habitat for Humanity Canada which began 10 years later (1985)
- Described Habitat for Humanities success indicators (a home every 21 minutes)
- Reviewed Habitat for Humanity Canada’s core programs with a special emphasis on the Aboriginal pilot program that will soon be broadened
- Provided insight into the process for participating in the program and the early Urban Aboriginal and First Nations success stories (13 completed, 10 being built, 21 being planned)

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Donna Mayer, CMHC Affordable Housing Centre, Toronto**

“In my job I get to work directly with people building houses”

- Described CMHC’s Assisted Housing’s work:
  - Existing housing programs (social housing, affordable housing, renovation programs)
  - Affordable Housing Centre’s direct services to organizations producing affordable housing
    - Refers to website ([cmhc.ca/affordablehousing](http://cmhc.ca/affordablehousing)) as place to get started and access an extensive collection of tools and resources
    - Financial Assistance (seed and proposal development)
  - Other CMHC work with Aboriginal and First Nations groups (Collaborations, Habitat for Humanity, home ownership, First Nations specific, Canada’s Economic Action plan)
  - Mainstream and Aboriginal success stories



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Brenda Torpy, Champlain Housing Trust, Burlington, Vermont: *Community Land Trusts***

Ms Torpy spoke to the definition, structure, operations, growth and proven track record of the Community Land Trust model

- Emerges from a long international tradition (and civil rights movement)
- Community ownership of the land and individual ownership of the structural improvements
  - Long term ground lease, balancing the interests of both parties
  - Membership open to anyone within the geographic area
  - Interests balanced within the governing structure, i.e.,
  - Board comprises (1/3 leaseholders/tenants, 1/3 public interest reps, 1/3 community members)
- 1982 Community Land Trust Handbook and other resource materials developed
- Growth: versatility of model, municipal support, and stewardship
- Does Stewardship work – 2008 study
  - Expanding access to home ownership to lower income
  - Continued affordable homes
  - Average ownership – 7 years and \$12,000 gain (25%)
  - 68% entered mainstream market
  - 3% vs.5% default rate
  - Home ownership success rate (91% vs 50% and less nationally)

**Note: The link to the Power Point Presentation that Ms. Torpy used is:**  
[www.champlainhousingtrust.org/publications](http://www.champlainhousingtrust.org/publications) (Document labeled "NAHA Ottawa Presentation.")

**Day 3: Friday, September 24**

**PANEL ON HOMELESSNESS**

**Dr. Tim Aubry, University of Ottawa: *Mental Health and Homelessness Project of the Mental Health Commission of Canada***

- Dr. Aubry is a community psychologist; focus on homelessness and mental health; interest in issue of closing of psychological hospitals, and how to help people coming out of those situations. Participates in the Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH), set up 15 years ago, when homelessness less visible.
- Homelessness in Canada: there are no policies that really target housing and poverty. Mental health issues are tied to homelessness, and the two feed off each other. Levels of mental health problems are very high in young people who lose their housing.
- In 2009, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) carried out an environmental scan: “*Turning the Key: Assessing Housing and Related Supports for Persons Living with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses*” to provide data on housing and community support needs for people living with mental health problems and/or mental illness in Canada. The scan showed numbers have increased and people have been staying longer; the scan was completed over year ago and is now in implementation phase.

**MHCC Mental Health and Homelessness Project**

- History of Project: A Senate Committee did “Out of the Shadows”, a study of the state of mental health service in Canada; confirmed relationship between homelessness and mental health. If we are going to help people back on their feet we really need to do something about housing and homelessness.
- Canada created Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), which is federal, while Health is provincial responsibility; current funding is \$110 million over 5 years, in 5 different cities; to be a combination of service with some research; to engage community; to build on what would exist.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- Principles for Research: work with people who have lived with mental health and homelessness issues; focus on housing and support requirements; identify new and innovative approaches in Canada; aim for lasting results and sustainability; and demonstrate project to be worthwhile in terms of costs
- Housing First: Started in US; found to be effective in New York City and Washington DC. Provides for client choice on what kind of service they want; RGI 30% maximum; tenants not required to go through treatment; people will be offered a chance to get own place, with no conditions. In Toronto "Streets to Homes" Project is a local adaptation.
- Current project testing 3 approaches:
  1. assertive approach
  2. intensive case management
  3. local adaptation
- Target population: adults who have no housing or precariously housed, in great housing inadequacy, and presence of serious mental health issue; out of 2000 participants, 1300 will get housing and the rest will get other services.
- Sites:
  - Vancouver: drug abuse, people are located in congregate housing similar to apartments.
  - Winnipeg: focus on Aboriginal homeless population and local adaptation with Aboriginal organizations
  - Toronto: focus on working with multi-ethno culture groups, newcomers and refugees
  - Montreal: due to well developed social housing, focus on getting people back into work force
  - Moncton: small city, flexible supports; not as many models/cases to manage; has rural regions
- Milestones: Initial work started in 2008; Now, several 100 people involved & over 70 researchers in the 5 cities; started putting people in housing in October, 2009 and now at about 50% of enrolment, with 30% RGI; most on Social Assistance
- A Benefit: after getting housing you start thinking about school work and social life.
- Recovery: it's not that you don't have a problem any more but you are able to carrying on a normal life despite the mental health problems
- Projects are going, no solid research to date but it in progress.

**Don Robinson, Program Manager, We Che Win, Winnipeg: *At Home/Chez soi – MHCC project***

Mr. Robinson acknowledged and thanked the Algonquin Nation for welcoming us to their territory. He said the project was set up as part of the MHCC program that also operates in four other cities, and besides working at the local level, he is also involved with National Planning Committee.

- Many partners emerged through this project, including several different participants from the provincial government, from health wellness centres and some landlords..
- Housing Plus - project provides part of the furniture in the apartments; decided to work with the community organization which created "Housing Plus", rather than large commercial companies, so make deals with local furniture suppliers such as COPE, providing jobs for people with mental health issues; this also offers jobs for Aboriginal people,
- Wi Che Win asks a person to come in to new place; I envisioned them accepting but also implies "I will go with you but you have to help me".
- Challenges: Average rent for bachelor apartment is \$451, but social allowance is only \$271, and the waiting list for social housing is long Overwhelming shortage of housing mainly for families, approximately 5000 on waiting list, Most houses very dilapidated, total private housing stock 52 430, average 500 vacant units which is less than 1% vacancy rate, Landlords have power: tend to avoid renting to people with mental health issues and racism is a problem.
- Housing First approach is used: no treatment required, harm reduction model, we don't expect people to stop addictions dead but we work with reduction efforts; people need to have a home first before they look at life, just surviving day to day and no knowing where you'll be sleeping or eating next is unacceptable.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- A Place to Call Home: This is one of the organizations we work with, that has 50 participants, 30% are female, 80% Aboriginal. Work primarily with Aboriginal people but we do not close the doors to anyone in trouble.
- We encourage participants to get involved, and we help a person choose a home, we help choose furniture, choose their moving date and arrange for moving, get them into their home, we have a little celebration to honour their new home. Rental supplement of \$200 per unit to cover the rent, and support is provided by a team.
- Ma mawi wi chi tata cente ince component: we are non judgmental and respect their path, embrace them as relatives, become part of their social network, we begin goal setting and try to be vision oriented. We include and look at spirituality, because even though they may be dealing with addictions, they are still very spiritual.
- We help them look at budgets and personal finances, to help them figure out how to manage now that they have responsibility.
- We look at their social network, and try to develop a different social network that doesn't revolve around drinking or drugs, look at the family settings, help them find more meaningful and healthier ways to live, look at healthier nutrition and steer them toward education and employment, and get away from misuse patterns.
- We help them develop an individual plan, because every one is unique,
- Support self-efficacy: looking at different goals, volunteer work, reconnection with family members, going back to church or going to a sweat lodge. We work with them to achieve the balance of the Medicine Wheel
- Lessons learned: not all of participants succeed, some have been rehoused still struggling with mental health but we don't give up on them. The landlords working with us remain committed to the project. Great team. Met some great people, have met well educated people and we helped get them back on track.

**Renée Masching, Research and Policy Manager, Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN),  
Dartmouth: *Homelessness Among Persons Living With HIV/AIDS***

**Renée Masching, Research and Policy Manager, Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, Dartmouth:  
*Homelessness Among Persons Living With HIV/AIDS***

Mme Masching acknowledged we are in Algonquin territory.  
She said she is a research and policy advisor for the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN).

- CAAN founded in 1997 as a national non profit organization with over 400 partners. Very strong emphasis across Canada on community-based building, housing projects, acquiring up-to-date information, skill-building events, and harm reduction techniques
- CAAN partners with Aboriginal and non Aboriginal persons and organizations to promote increased awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS.
- HIV/AIDS is a very serious problem among Aboriginal peoples. In 2007 overall Aboriginal HIV/AIDS was 2.2 times higher than among non-Aboriginals,
- Aboriginal women are large part of those affected. From 1998 to 2006, Aboriginal women made up 49% of all HIV reports. Aboriginal people are diagnosed at a younger age than non Aboriginals.
- The majority of those affected are younger than 30 years.
- The proportion of drug use is 50% of the Aboriginal population, but 25% in non-Aboriginals.
- Suggestions to the Canadian government and to community organizations include suggestions for action about HIV and housing,
- No, or poor, housing is key risk factor for HIV and AIDS and lowers the health of those living with AIDS.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- Homeless people are high risk for HIV and AIDS. Layer upon layer of discrimination may make landlord reluctant to rent to someone. Examples - Aboriginal, drug, looking like aids is present.
- Costs of HIV and AIDS are expensive.
- Housing stability gives access to health care service.
- HIV treatment has progressed, but it is important that a person takes pills at the proper time; if medication is not taken at specific times and on a routine basis, this may lead to the risk of the medicine being less effective because proper amounts are not being taken.
- Positive Spaces, Healthy Places: emphasis on Aboriginal people. Research in Ontario looked at links between HIV and housing.
- The study has used both shorter and longer interviews with 80 Aboriginal participants and shows:
  - There is a repetitive pattern of a cycle of homelessness and
  - People who move frequently have lower health care services; Aboriginal people also reported discrimination when trying to get housing.

## **PRESENTERS**

### **Rob Rainer, Executive Director, Canada Without Poverty, Ottawa: *Bill C-545 (An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada)***

- Bill C545 is a Bill proposed in order to eliminate poverty.
- Trying for decades; we don't have to go far to encounter homelessness or someone struggling at that level.
- This Bill around some content: poverty is so pervasive, causing large ripple in society; poverty is a condition that injures our entire society
- Recent Engagement from businesses; thousands of organizations now working to eliminate and rectify the consequences of poverty.
- At another level, we have municipalities that are recognizing the problem, e.g., Hamilton round table. Whole municipality and cities seizing this agenda
- Also provinces, such as Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador, have been moving forward with a plan that started with the provinces with highest rates of poverty that will give them the lowest rates of poverty by 2014.
- Public engagement policy needed; an example: the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services established the Office of Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in order to guide the development, implementation and on-going management of YG's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Working in partnership with other YG departments, the Business and NGO Community, the Office serves as YG's central resource and lead on issues related to social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- Federal level help is also needed: no one can solve this problem on their own; ways the federal government can help: tax revenue and redistribution e.g., income security, child supports, disability supports, etc.
- The federal government signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and number of other human rights treaties committed to addressing problems
- We believe strong federal government involvement is an essential part of success. Tony Martin introduced Bill C-545 (e-mail: [rob@cwp-csp.ca](mailto:rob@cwp-csp.ca) for a copy); it is not a long Bill, 14 clauses in preamble, anchored in UN declaration commitments,
- Addressing poverty is an enormous expense, so all have to work together.
- Other things that have to be in plan include housing; there has been talk about monitoring and reporting, and about an office of poverty elimination commission; the latter would provide an ongoing reporting method even when government changes.
- One reason why efforts in past haven't been successful: there has been no system of accountability. One way to facilitate this is to mandate a stronger role for the National Council of Welfare including a greater research and secretariat role through this strategy.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act: for example, if you are on social assistance now, you may not have protection from slander from other people about living on welfare, creating a situation of discrimination.
- The Bill (C545) is go to second reading and hope it will pass, as it has the support of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. It is then go out to the HUMA committee and consultation. We are looking for endorsements and need public support.
- This Bill will be one step towards the right direction. On October 19, there will be a Canada-wide day of support with a “Red Tent Campaign” in support of housing as a human right.
- The Campaign will include a Red Teepee, to draw attention to the poor housing conditions endured by Aboriginal peoples. The Campaign is also in support of Bill C-304.

**Steve Pomeroy, President of Focus Consulting Inc., Ottawa: *The NAHA 10-Year Plan: A Call for Action***

Observation: To maintain a decent standard of living, people need to have at least 70% of their household income available for use on non-housing items.

NAHA began in 1994 as an advocate for improved housing for Aboriginal peoples in non-Reserve (urban and rural) areas. With regard to advocacy, you need to know what you want and make sure people hear you. In 2003, NAHA asked me to do a paper (released in 2004) based on figures contained in the 2001 Census, comparing urban Aboriginal housing and mainstream Canadian housing. The paper showed significant differences between the two.

In 2009, I did a follow-up report, “**A Time for Action: A National Plan to Address Aboriginal Housing**”, based on the 2006 Census, looking at the same parameters as in the 2004 report.

- Guiding principles: Aboriginal control and accountability is critical in have a successful funding.
- Some Key Observations:
- Three-quarters of Aboriginal population do not live on reserve.
- Aboriginal families tend to be bigger and younger.
- Aboriginal population is increasing much faster than non Aboriginal population.
- Growing non-reserve population: 2001-2006, growth rate of 5.4% non-Aboriginal and 25% among Aboriginal population.
- Geographic distribution: policy tends to be done with thinking and programming geared to large cities, but Aboriginal population is also in rural communities and mid size cities.
- Funding allocations tend to go to bigger cities, resulting in equity issues in terms of funding
- Government should be funding Aboriginal off reserve, as there is a high level of need and unsuitable and poor living conditions exist.
- Aboriginal need much higher than for non Aboriginals, and we need funding along with a strategy.
- Housing need: affordability is a major problem; also poor condition and crowding issues.
- Hard to go from reserve to mainstream; people end up in poor housing with people with mental health issues and other problems, and then develop their own similar health issues.
- There should be strategies to address people before they get in a spiral; emergency costs are much higher than pro-active, preventative support measures. By stabilizing them at the beginning, institutional costs are lowered and do not accumulate
- Housing advocates should go and speak to police chief and medical chiefs, etc., advocating to the appropriate people, not just governments.
- Expiry of operating agreements: good news: mortgage is paid for, bad new no more subsidies.
- Aboriginal housing is worsening, as shown in our reports
- A national housing strategy is needed, especially for Aboriginal peoples



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- Funding to help should be set up as an Aboriginal Housing Trust under Aboriginal control and accountability
- Priority action and targets:
  1. prevent further growth in housing need.
  2. reduce and equalize core housing
  3. preserve housing stock
  4. reduce Aboriginal homelessness
  5. increase non-reserve Aboriginal home ownership

**Tony Shirt – Peace Hills Trust, Edmonton**

*Peace Hills Trust had rented space for a kiosk and Mr. Shirt was asked if he wished to speak to registrants in plenary, to which he agreed.*

Peace Hills Trust is a Business Development Corporation, set up originally to provide banking services to First Nations, but they service all clients.

- Peace Hills is full service banking institute.
- Branches in Kelowna, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Fredericton.
- As a trustee, Saddle Lake Cree Nation also wants direction toward Aboriginal housing committees
- Peace Hills has a different mind set from mainstream bankers. (Peace Hills Trust was not among the banks that got money from government when recession hit).
- They are looking to put funds into providing First Nations with off reserve housing.
- They have also experienced political controversy for helping people with mental health issues, so there is a range of issues that need to be kept in mind
- Peace Hills is looking for developers to work with.
- Peace Hills is an “Approved Lender” as approved by CMHC

**LUNCHEON:**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute, Toronto ON**

“... in some ways we do have to remind ourselves about some the key messages and key opportunities.”

**Upcoming Opportunities and Possible Partnerships:**

A report on “**Precarious Housing in Canada**” was released by the Wellesley Institute in 2010

- Considered physical and mental health links to poor housing, including links to things like diabetes and respiratory illness.
- Message: bad housing is bad health; there is more and more evidence of a number of complex links between bad housing and poor health.
- When we talk about health, it is not just physical but also cultural health.
- There are many components used to rate housing: affordability, condition, etc., but more than just four walls and a roof.
- Culture is a key component: housing has to be culturally adequate and constitute an expression of people’s culture.
- When people are deprived from culture it also has health impacts.
- Research shows when people have strong sense of culture and identity their health improves
- On the other hand; good housing is good for your health.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

- “Positive Places, Healthy Spaces” tracked 600 people living with HIV and AIDS, looking at before and after they were in good housing. 250 participants with HIV/AIDS in San Francisco added up all times they were in emergency before and after having good home; they ended up spending \$5.5 million on health care, and after moving into good housing, only \$2 million.
- Problems shouldn’t just be put in “silo” type categories because problems are intertwined.
- When it comes to Politicians keep it as simple as possible.
- Four observations :
  1. although there are ups and downs in numbers, housing insecurity and homelessness is deep and persistent in Canada. Example - think about being homeless in northern territories
  2. nation wide issue of housing is costly, also disrupting communities, economy and costing the government. Increasingly, business organizations are recognizing the economic issue, but there is still hostility from certain businesses. Next week, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the biggest voice for small and community based businesses is meeting in Gatineau and will be looking at a resolution stating that Canada needs a national homelessness and poverty plan. When it went to the C of C policy committee, it was unanimously passed. Homelessness is not just personal or social issue; it is a collective economic, governmental and social issue.
  3. federal homelessness cuts are coming. One way cuts are assessed is by economists measuring the GDP. This has shrunk by almost half in the last 29 years. Signs are that things will get worse
  4. while Canada does have a fragmented plan, we have no comprehensive national plan; even though there is lots of paperwork, no actual plans are in place.
- Even though this may sound like all bad news, there is still hope, as there are many bright, smart and effective people working on this issue. Comparisons and calculations show in 2009 governments were spending the same amounts as in 1989; governments haven’t cut back over all, but what is significant is the shift. In 1989, the federal government was spending the most and provincials spending less. By 2009, municipal governments are spending the same as the federal government. That change is significant for housing and especially Aboriginal people.
- We are not sure of future pictures. The database we used to use has been cancelled by government. Response to all this bad news is there needs to be a 10 yr housing plan, very similar to the proposed Aboriginal plan. We think that a plan built from the community up is the right way to go. We wait for communities to assess their own needs. If federal government were to maintain the same level of spending as in 2009 instead of making cuts, we can be successful. One amount that people have been advocating is the 1% solution (1% of the GNP). We wanted \$2 million from government for a national housing plan.
- Policy opportunities:
  1. Bill C-304, still has support from Liberals, the Bloc and the NDP, and some Conservatives.
  2. “In From the Margins”, Senator Eggleton’s report, talks about housing, poverty and education, etc; asked for National Guaranteed Income; adopted unanimously by Senate. 59 Conservatives, 57 Liberals and 4 others. The federal government has to respond to the report within a certain amount of time. The federal government is hoping it will just blow away.
  3. UN treaties –Universal Periodic Review – 150 countries – federal government said they were committed to resolving some homeless issues.
  4. Federal budget coming up – Great Britain making wholesale cuts on housing needs, calling it “the Canadian way” to do things. We need to stand up to this. Important role for government is money. More important issues that we should focus on than gun registry. Work to get Aboriginal housing strategy to the table.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

5. Hopefully we can now start a more constructive dialogue once the Senate proposal has been passed.
6. New national home advocacy partnership – national alliance of homelessness, good example: Obama 10 year plan to end homelessness is a specific strategy. Sets aside money. Not sure if congress will embrace whole idea but it's a start.

**Friday Afternoon, September 24**

## **WORKSHOPS**

Delegates were asked to go to one of three workshops initially, as it was felt that Workshop 4 was a major part of the solution to the problems that currently exist, rather than being a separate forum. Participants were asked to discuss and recommend on action needed to promote development and implementation to address four issues; after their input had been exhausted (20 - 30 minutes), they moved to another table to deal with another of the issues, building on the work that had been done by the previous group(s). The facilitators remained at the respective groups, and in the end presented reports in plenary.

## **REPORTS ON WORKSHOPS**

### **Workshop 1: NAHA's Proposed Action Plan and a National Housing Strategy** **Facilitator – David Seymour**

“Did not discuss the actual report but our task was how do we get it implemented. Support for doc in broad sense.”

Key solutions:

- action items were inclusive of testimonial,
- government embarrassed,
- broad coalition of support,
- recognized as voice of Aboriginal housing,
- partner with first nations community,
- speak both as partnership at national level develop national Aboriginal strategy on and off reserve “are one chapter of several chapters to make a overall book”,
- ensure that we be part of all organizations and consolidate our support from CHRA and cooperate federal government.
- Support from regional Aboriginal organizations such as AMA, Ontario groups and well documented in going forward,
- keep debate going forward as momentum keeps building,
  
- showcase we what have to offer first nation communities,
- develop support from non-housing sectors such as education and health ex: “if your supporting hosing it also makes good health and educational stability”
- direct to chiefs,
- all members all communicated with and develop their support individually,
- ensure we develop database that has all member unit number value, value and waiting list,
- make waiting list revealed but have direct involvement in things such as red tent, etc.,
- direct action on street,
- explore ability to look at 3 concepts –
  1. duty to consult
  2. use commercial use,
  3. go to UN and exploit federal government lies.

**Local  
Host**





**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Workshop 2: Bill C-304:**

**Facilitator – Charlie Hill**

Overview:: Bill C-304 would require the federal government to convene a National Conference within six months of the passing of the Bill and from there put in place a national strategy. First two readings had support of Liberals, NDP and the BQ. Then went to HUMA for final revision; after 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, the Bill was subject to amendments. The 3<sup>rd</sup> reading is to be held October 20, 2011.

How do we get the Bill passed?

- Identify people we need to talk to in Bloc and Conservative Party; if enough Conservatives vote in favour, that would guarantee passage.
- Send information out, letters and email to identified political figures, everyone at all levels as soon as possible.
- contact universities and colleges.

Idea: Federal conference should be convened whether Bill is passed or not.

**Workshop 3: Aboriginal Homelessness: Solutions and Alternatives**  
**Facilitator – Harold Tarbell**

**Issues/Considerations:**

- Stop federal government from offloading programs to provincial and municipal governments,
- go to the United Nations (UN),
- explore and enter partnerships,
- get political commitments, go at election time as this is easiest time to get into political receptions,
- make sure dollars go to Aboriginal housing at provincial level,
- accountability to Aboriginal people,
- go to private sector,
- asserting our jurisdiction based on Aboriginal law and use media,
- getting UN to report back on special interlocutor tours and reports,
- getting UN to be accountable,
- world Indigenous conference in New York, NAHA should go,
- research on number of people that have died due to homelessness

**Solutions:**

- emancipated youth housing,
- having partnership with child and family services,
- advocacy with larger Aboriginal organizations,
- greater percentage of dollars to Aboriginal housing group from federal pots; use CHRA for this

**Prevention:**

- before people move from reserve, there should be an orientation i.e. life skills program through Friendship Centres and schools on reserve,
- student exchange from on and off reserve and Friendship Centres,
- Aboriginal people should have control of UN
- funding going to Aboriginal hands, not through other levels of government,
- going to regional chiefs for resolutions,
- regional communication between all players (provincial, municipal, across Canada) this will build strength,
- need for elder and youth housing,
- transitional housing,
- national research on vacant housing. ,



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Summary of Workshop Content: Conference Chair Harold Tarbell**

“Growing NAHA, provide training certification, engage in some kind of awareness with First Nations leaders, securing resources, resource revenue sharing, develop a specific trans plan, roles for financial institutes, educational and training, we need to maintain treaty rights, we shouldn’t be ashamed to ask but we also need to shift our approach, social enterprise, business footing, number of associates who have already made transitions, as pursuing alternative forms of resources. Another need is for the ability to purchase or construct new buildings, as opposed to buildings already established as apartments with current tenants.”

**Next Steps:**

Conference Chair Harold Tarbell provide a wrap up by way of bringing this part of the Conference to a close. Based on input of participants during the workshops and what has been voiced throughout the Conference, he identified the following:

**Recurring themes:**

- expansion of NAHA is needed,
- exploring collaboration with other organizations,
- work to establish a broader a social coalition within Canada and international,
- putting a face on the issues identified during the Conference,
- combining inherent rights with stated UN human rights,
- advocating for continued and expanded federal role in housing
- urge establishment of long-term funding for Aboriginal housing
- direct assess for funds via an Aboriginal Housing Trust.

**Suggestions:**

- increase NAHA profile,
- keep networking with all housing organizations and researchers,
- increasing and expanding NAHA activities,
- offering a training webinar,
- collaborating with CMHC to off set costs of training, etc.

Assembly tomorrow – make more decisions

90 days – red tent, consideration of taking issue nationally October 19, 20, 2010

Midyear – natural things

**President’s Closing remarks:**

**Patrick Stewart** thanked everyone for coming, saying he felt very energized by the Conference and that we have enough ideas for the whole of next year.

He reminded participants of the Awards Banquet to be held in that evening and the AGM to be held the next day.

He wished everyone well in their travels back home.

Chairman Tarbell then called on Elder Louttit to do the closing thanksgiving, who did so, before which he added his well-wishes to those good words of the president, then called on the drum for closing songs.

The Ojibway-Cree Singers sang a victory song and a travelling song, after which the Elder did the closing



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

**Friday Evening, September 24**

**GALA AWARDS BANQUET:**

After the 6 pm reception, Mrs. Elaine Kicknosway and her son Theland conducted an opening ceremony and sang a welcoming and thanksgiving song at 7 pm.

NAHA President Stewart extended his greetings and welcome to all, and spoke of the need to continue to work together to achieve our goals.

After dinner, Mr. Stewart called on the Key Note Speaker, Senator Art Eggleton, who currently serves as Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology as well as its Subcommittee on Cities. The Committee recently released a report on poverty, “In From the Margins”.

Senator Eggleton delivered the following address:

**WE CAN'T AFFORD POVERTY ANYMORE**

“ In our study of poverty, housing and homelessness, the Committee held 35 hearings, hosted five roundtables and visited 20 agencies in nine cities across Canada. We had the opportunity to hear from close to 200 witnesses, some living in poverty and/or homeless themselves, others working for community agencies or serving as analysts in universities, and voluntary organizations.

What we heard was appalling. We found that a staggering one in 10 Canadians lives in poverty. That's 3.4 million people - the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan - combined.

For these people - our fellow citizens - every day is a battle with insufficient income, unaffordable housing, inadequate clothing and unsatisfactory nutrition. Every day brings wrenching decisions – about whether to buy groceries or pay rent; whether to buy new shoes for the kids or make the mortgage payment; whether to drop out of school and get a job to help the family. Just struggling to get by, these families can't even dream about getting ahead. One witness who has experienced poverty expressed it this way: “Poverty steals from your soul leaving you with little or no hope. It robs you of all that can be good in life. It leaves you isolated, lonely and hungry. Every day is a struggle”.

What's particularly disturbing is that approximately 800,000 of those living in poverty are children - a statistic that is all the more deplorable given Parliament's commitment, in 1989, to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Instead, we have hardly made a dent - with double digit rates of child poverty in most provinces.

We also found that certain groups in Canada are over-represented in poverty. Older people, lone parents (largely lone mothers), the disabled, new immigrants and Aboriginal people are all more likely than other Canadians to live in poverty or are homeless.

With respect to Aboriginal people, since our study was about Canadian cities our focus was on off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.

As per the 2006 Statistics Canada report, more than half the Aboriginal population (54%) live in urban areas. We heard that some Aboriginal peoples in cities are integrating well into middle-class jobs and communities. However, while they tend to fare better on a range of socio-economic indicators than their on-reserve counterparts, the statistics are rarely encouraging. In 2000, the Canadian Council on Social Development found that Aboriginal people living in cities were more than twice as likely as other Canadians to be living in poverty. Aboriginal women, particularly single mothers, are much more likely to live in poverty.

Although, in some cities, native peoples are catching up to their urban neighbours, in terms of school attendance, recent research has shown that native students are over-represented among those with less than a high school diploma, and vastly under-represented among those with a university education or higher.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

One of the main culprits for this situation is the continuing debate about jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments. As Evelyn Peters said before our committee “We have had almost half a century of debate between federal and provincial ministers and ministries about

who is responsible for urban Aboriginal people. The royal commission suggested that that be resolved. It really needs to be resolved and [...] it needs to be resolved with the input of Aboriginal people. Fifty years of debate is getting to be too much.”

I agree. This situation is tragic and needs to be rectified.

Now, we all understand the moral arguments against poverty. The jarring juxtaposition of suffering and want in a land of plenty. The unacceptable toll in terms of lives diminished, dreams deferred and potential denied.

What I don't think most Canadians realize is how much poverty is costing each and every one of us. It is forcing up our tax bills, depressing the economy, increasing health care bills and breeding alienation and crime.

Today, I want to examine those economic costs and outline some of the measures we have proposed to lower them. Because make no mistake, with the demographic and economic challenges before Canada today, we simply can't *afford* poverty, anymore.

A recent Ontario study, guided by economists and policy experts such as Don Drummond, Judith Maxwell and James Milway, estimates that poverty costs this country about seven and a half billion dollars every year in health care costs alone and between \$8 and \$13 billion in lost productivity. All told, they set poverty's bill at over \$30 billion annually – more than half of the current federal deficit.

Imagine what eliminating poverty would mean to our fiscal situation! To our ability to pay for education and innovation and health care. To our capacity to care for the elderly.

A recent report by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce puts the looming demographic challenge in stark terms - as our population ages and the growth in the working age population slows - we're going to face significant labour shortages. A third of our workforce is going to retire in the next 20 years. Put another way, we'll have about half the ratio of people working, paying taxes, contributing to pensions and health care as we do today.

In its report, the Chamber also said that in order to address the coming shortages in our labour supply, we need to tap into the underutilized segments of our society - older people, Aboriginal people, the disabled, and new immigrants.

Those are the very groups, along with lone parents (largely lone mothers), that, as I mentioned, are most vulnerable to poverty. Turns out the very same groups that are languishing in poverty are the very ones we'll need to fill the jobs and pay the taxes in the future.

So here we have the intersection of two of the greatest challenges facing our society - the ongoing economic costs of poverty and the demographic time bomb of aging.

The good news - and the tremendous opportunity - is that we can address both at the same time! Give more people a way out of poverty and we'll help fill the jobs we need filled. Give more people a way out of poverty and we'll save billions of dollars that poverty's costing all of us.

Now, it's not as if we're not doing anything about poverty. According to Statistics Canada, we spend \$150 billion every year in federal and provincial transfer payments to individuals. That doesn't include education and health care costs. So what are we getting for our \$150 billion? The short answer is not enough.

Those numbers on children for example - 800,000 living in poverty - those are not just sterile statistics. They are a flashing red light. We know, for example, that a child born poor has a greater chance of dying in infancy and that if he/she lives, is likely to have a lower birth weight and more disabilities.

As they grow, they are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and poor health. They'll miss more school and slowly, but surely, fall further and further behind. Not surprisingly, they are less likely to do well - and are more likely to drop out.

As adults, they will have higher rates of chronic illnesses. With a poorer education, they will earn less, pay less in taxes, be less productive workers, have more health problems and use more social services.

And all of that means higher costs to society.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

Our Committee also discovered something else - something more systemic about poverty in this country. We saw that decades of social policy making, by all levels of government - well meaning as it may have been - has resulted in two equally devastating results.

First, even when all of the programs are working as they should, the resulting income is often only enough to simply *maintain* them in poverty.

Second, at their worst, existing policies and programs actually *entrap* people in poverty, creating unintended but nonetheless perverse effects that make it almost impossible to escape the reliance on income security programs or homeless shelters.

Or as Senator David Croll put it in his landmark Committee Report almost 40 years ago “we are pouring billions of dollars every year into a social welfare system that merely treats the symptoms of poverty but leaves the disease itself untouched”.

However there are some good signs. During our work, we found examples of promising practices and programs, largely community based, that actually do work. That do lift people out of poverty and homelessness. And we identify - and celebrate - these initiatives in our report.

A good example of a promising practice is Aboriginal Friendship Centres. We heard time and again, that despite their funding being frozen since 1996, the important role that Friendship Centres play in Canadian cities, providing locally determined programs to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal peoples. The government should expand funding to these organizations to meet the growing need so that Friendship Centres can continue to play such a crucial role.

Sadly, examples such as Friendship Centres are pockets of promise in an otherwise dysfunctional system that must be overhauled.

Our committee studied the whole range of income security programs, from tax breaks to social assistance; Employment Insurance to Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement and we make a number of specific recommendations, 74 in all, for improvement.

With Employment Insurance the biggest problem is that most of the unemployed don't qualify for benefits. What sense does that make?

Recommendations 7 through 15 in our report suggest a number of specific changes to make income support for the unemployed more responsive and effective.

On education and training - as you well know, success in today's fast-moving job market often depends on having the right skills. Simply put, there is a clear connection between the level of education achieved and the level of income received. Yet, here we found a classic catch-22. For many, poverty keeps them from acquiring the kind of education and training they need. And their lack of skills keeps them from getting the jobs that would lift them out of poverty. Breaking this cycle is critical – and breaking it begins in the earliest years of life.

Study after study confirms that children who arrive at school ready to learn become adults prepared to succeed. Among our recommendations, therefore, is a nation-wide, federal-provincial initiative on early childhood learning. Referring to early childhood development programs, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer's recent report notes that \$1 invested in the early years saves between \$3 and \$9 in the future spending on the health and criminal justice systems, as well as on social assistance.

We also witnessed first hand the importance of middle-school support for vulnerable children and for high school completion as well as for literacy upgrading and skills building at every age.

That is why we propose offering additional tax support for post-secondary education for students in groups, like Aboriginal people, that are under-represented in those institutions as well as for initiatives that keep disadvantaged young people in school.

According to one study, if aboriginal Canadians were able to increase their education attainment to the level of other Canadians, our cumulative economic output would grow by an additional \$179 billion by 2026 and government tax revenue would be \$3.5 billion higher. That would be good for aboriginal peoples and all Canadians.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

We also looked at health because there is a strong connection between *being* poor and having poor health. The poorest quarter of Canadians uses twice the health care services as those in the wealthiest quarter.

In fact, according to Statistics Canada, poverty reduces life expectancy more than cancer!

Also, in our study, we've seen examples of tax credits that work well. The National Child Benefit Supplement, for example, is putting money into the hands of low-income individuals and households. And, as a critical step to eradicating child poverty, we propose increasing the National Child Benefit to \$5,000 by 2012 from the current level of \$3,400.

The Working Income Tax benefit, which supplements earnings for those with very low incomes, is another tax measure that holds great promise by “making work pay”. We recommend increasing this benefit so that no recipient would fall below the poverty line.

And because our seniors deserve dignity in their retirement, we also recommend increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement so that no one falls below the poverty line.

A quick word on those struggling with disabilities. As a group, persons with disabilities are highly marginalized. They face exclusion from quality education, have lower employment rates, and are more likely to be poor.

We believe that what's needed is to provide a basic income guarantee for people with severe disabilities. Just as the Guaranteed Income Supplement lifted tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty, a guaranteed income for those with severe disabilities would immediately take about a half a million people off social assistance rolls.

Let me now turn very briefly to housing and homelessness.

I think all of us understand intuitively the importance of having decent shelter. A home anchors a person, a family, provides the foundation for higher educational attainment and leads to greater stability in the work place.

Health experts also tell us that adequate housing is a key determinant of health and long-term health outcomes.

Today in Canada, 12% of Canadians are struggling to find affordable housing. It is almost double for Aboriginal people with CMHC reporting that 20% of Canada's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations were struggling with affordable housing. And by affordable I'm using CMHC's standard rule of thumb of about 30% of income going to housing that is adequate and in suitable condition.

We need to do better and we need leadership from the federal government.

Specifically, we recommend adequate - and sustained - funding through the Affordable Housing Initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing.

We need to make the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program permanent. And we need to make housing programs longer term - to reflect planning and development time lines at the local and provincial levels.

Addressing the issue of homelessness is not just about doing the morally right thing. It's also about dollars and cents. The fact is that it is more expensive for us to leave someone on the street than to provide them with decent housing and support services.

Recently Premier Stelmach of Alberta said that an average homeless person costs society roughly \$100,000 a year including health costs. The annual cost per person drops to about \$35,000 annually if that person is given a long-term home.

So we need to do a better job on both housing and homelessness. It's time that the federal and provincial governments finally came to grips with this issue and develop a national housing and homelessness strategy.

A part of this strategy, the federal government must engage Aboriginal housing providers to determine the needs of the community. A good place to start is with the report of your Association titled “A Time for Action: A National Plan to Address Aboriginal Housing” in which you call for a permanent off-reserve Aboriginal housing trust with a focus on five targets over the next decade.



**Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference**  
**“Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions”**  
**Ottawa Canada September 2010**

In conclusion, underlying our report is a simple, common sense premise: that social programs should lift people out of poverty, not keep them there; and that it is time to give people the tools they need to lift themselves into a better life. Because poverty is not benign. It affects us all. It costs us all. We spend a lot of money and don't get the results we should. Overall, we don't need to spend more money, we need to spend smarter, more efficiently and effectively.

In today's global economy, with the looming demographic challenge of an aging society leading to a shrinking work force, the importance of creating those opportunities, of unleashing the creative contribution of those trapped in poverty, is more important than ever. In a very real sense, the future level of our prosperity depends on addressing the current level of our poverty.

Simply put, we can't afford poverty any more.”

Senator Eggleton's words were acknowledged with resounding applause, and he was thanked and presented with a gift by President Stewart..

### **AHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

The NAHA awards are presented annually to recognize the contribution to the advancement of Aboriginal housing by both an individual and an urban Aboriginal housing delivery organization.

The 2010 honorees were:

#### **Individual Recipient: Gary Gould, Skigin Elnoog Housing Corporation, Fredericton NB**

Gary was not able to attend this year's Conference, so the award was accepted on his behalf by Charlie Hill, Executive Director of NAHA and a long-time friend of Mr. Gould.

#### **Organizational Recipient: Nishnawbe Homes, Toronto**

This award was accepted to a round of applause by Mrs. Frances Sanderson, Executive Director of Nishnawbe Home.

The presentations were followed by a dance with music provided by a band from Kitigan Zibi Anishnabe Aski.

### **PARTICIPATION**

There were 47 paid and sponsored participants, and 36 presenters, speakers, performers, kiosk representatives and vendors, for a total of 86 persons in attendance.



Sixteenth Annual National Urban Aboriginal Housing Conference  
 "Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness: Strategies and Solutions"  
 Ottawa Canada September 2010

*Thanks to the Following for Their Sponsorship and Support*

*Platinum Sponsor*

**M'IS KOW A AO DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY**

*Gold Sponsor*



*Silver Sponsors*



Co-operative Housing  
 Federation of Canada  
 Fédération de l'habitation  
 coopérative du Canada

*Kiosk Rentals*



**TAMMY BEAUVAIS  
 DESIGN**

**BRAD HENRY  
 ARTIST**

**MARCOS ARCENTALES  
 CRAFTS**

Local  
 Host

