

2011-06-06

The preliminary results for the 2011 Homeless count were recently released by Metro Vancouver at a press conference. The results are very encouraging from a trending perspective. This is the first time since the count began in 2002 where the number of homeless found did not increase. The proportion of sheltered people to unsheltered people did however increase, which is a direct result of the efforts between the Province, City of Vancouver and Community to address people sleeping hard in the street. Shelters are an important first step in the housing continuum, connecting people with more supportive housing and the potential of self-sufficiency and independent living.

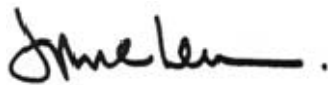
The homeless count was done regionally and the methodology was consistent with the count done in 2008, with the exception of the inclusion of people in facilities such as hospital with no fixed address, and a more focused look at Youth homelessness, which saw an increase within the region. The count highlighted two key populations which require a more focused approach by everyone involved: Aboriginal peoples who make up 24% of the total homeless population, and Youth under 25 years which saw a dramatic increase since 2008.

One of the key messages the results of the 2011 Homeless count tells us is, the effort of the provincial, municipal and community leaders like yourself over the past 7 years is starting to make a significant impact, on a situation that 20 years of neglect had created. In 2005 the homeless population went up 50% and in 2008 it went up 20%, and now in 2011 it has declined by 1 % in the Region. This is a dramatic impact on overall homelessness and should be applauded.

This is an encouraging change, but there is more to be done. If we are to truly “solve homelessness” in the near future, we need to continue to create more supportive housing, more prevention programs aimed at youth, and more facilities for people dealing with mental illness. We need to continue to work together at all levels of government and community to ensure we remain focused on the issue of homelessness. With a collective effort and focus on a plan, we can and will “solve homelessness,” and provide supportive housing to those that need it in a timely and systematic manner.

Thank you for all your support and leadership towards the Capital Campaign, as Streetohome Foundation continues to work with all levels of government, community leaders and service providers to “solve homelessness”.

Regards,



John McLernon
Chair, Streetohome Foundation
Foundation



Dick Vollet
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