Present were: Chair S. Strickland, L. Armstrong, J. Brewer, T. Cowan, D. Craig*, T. Galloway, J. Haalboom, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, K. Seiling, J. Wideman and C. Zehr*

Members absent: R. Deutschmann

MOTION TO RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

MOVED by T. Cowan
SECONDED by J. Brewer

THAT the meeting reconvene into open session.

CARRIED

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

None declared.

REPORTS – Public Health

a) PH-12-022, Ontario Injury Data Report

Dr. Liana Nolan, Commissioner/Medical Officer of Health, provided opening remarks regarding the progress made on reducing the incidents of falls, the involvement of the Local Health Integration Networks and the statistics related to incidents of intentional harm among youth.

Received for information

b) PH-12-023, Re-Engineering of Region of Waterloo Public Health’s Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program: Travel Clinic

Dr. Nolan introduced Karen Quigley-Hobbs, Director, Infectious Diseases, Dental and Sexual Health, who summarized the report, specific to the annual review and its findings. She outlined the rationale for transitionally discontinuing clinics, effective January 2014.

Staff responded to Committee questions regarding community awareness about travel vaccines and private travel clinics, and public education by stating that a comprehensive promotion campaign will occur over the next 18 months. Residents will have access to information in several forms and can expect to receive vaccines regardless of whether they have a local doctor. Dr. Nolan stated that two levels of service will exist in the Region with private travel clinics dealing with more complex vaccination requests.
* C. Zehr joined the meeting at 1:12 p.m.
* D. Craig left the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

MOVED by J. Wideman
SECONDED by T. Galloway

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo discontinue its International Travel Health Clinic operations as of January 1, 2014;

AND THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo amend By-law 12-001, being a By-law to Establish Fees and Charges for the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, to implement the fee schedule for services provided within the Public Health’s International Travel Health Clinic effective July 1, 2012 as shown in Attachment 1 - Report PH-12-023, dated May 29, 2012.

CARRIED

PRESENTATIONS

a) Greg deGroot-Maggetti, People in Poverty Program Coordinator, Mennonite Central Committee; Margaret Nally, Chair of the Board, Mennonite Central Committee; and, Jessica Reesor Rempel, Program Manager for Circle of Friends, provided a presentation to the Committee regarding the Circle of Friends Program: Social Return on Investment; a copy of the presentation is appended to the original minutes.

M. Nally summarized background information for the program and the partnership with YWCA Mary’s Place in assisting women in transition. J. Reesor Rempel gave an overview of the circles formed, the role played by volunteers and the benefits to women in need of support. A video was presented to the Committee to illustrate the impact that Circle of Friends has had on local women.

G. deGroot-Maggetti outlined the social return on investment for this program and the source of stability women have experienced as a result of participation with Circle of Friends. He gave an overview of the cost savings, the benefits to participants and volunteers, and the broader value to the community. He distributed a bulletin to Councillors which details the analysis of the social return on investment; a copy is appended to the original minutes. He extended appreciation to community partners and the Region for their support.

G, deGroot-Maggetti responded to Committee questions regarding the calculation of the return on investment and program access for residents in Cambridge.

REPORTS – Planning, Housing & Community Services

c) P-12-072 , Operating Management Plan for Hilborn Knoll Regional Forest

Rob Horne, Commissioner, Planning, Housing and Community Services, made introductory comments, stating that managing Regional forests is part of corporate strategic plan.

MOVED by T. Cowan
SECONDED by B. Halloran

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the Operating Management Plan for Hilborn Knoll Regional Forest, attached to Report P-12-072, dated May 29, 2012.
CARRIED

REPORTS – Social Services

e) SS-12-021, Sunnyside Community Alzheimer Programs Update

Mike Schuster, Commissioner, Social Services, introduced the report and advised that a day centre has been established in Cambridge.

MOVED by J. Haalboom
SECONDED by J. Brewer

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve a three month extension of the operation of 3 overnight respite beds for Alzheimer community clients until June 30, 2012;

AND THAT the 2012 Operating Budget for Seniors' Services be increased by $49,000 gross and $0 net Regional Levy to be funded by St. Joseph’s Health Centre in Guelph, as outlined in report SS-12-021, dated May 29, 2012.

CARRIED

f) SS-12-022/F-12-039, Children’s Services Revenue Collection Extended Day

M. Schuster gave a summary of the report, stating that as a result of the increased participation, more resources are required on a temporary basis.

MOVED by G. Lorentz
SECONDED by J. Mitchell

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the hiring of 1.6 FTE staff on a temporary basis to support the collection of fees on behalf of Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board effective July 1, 2012;

AND THAT the 2012 Operating Budget for Children’s Services be increased by $28,425 gross and $0 net Regional levy and for Finance by $22,575 gross and $0 net Regional levy to be funded by revenues resulting from the administration of fee collection for extended day kindergarten, as outlined in Report SS-12-022/F-12-039, dated May 29, 2012.

CARRIED

g) SS-12-023, Increase in 2012 Provincial Rent Bank Funding

MOVED by J. Brewer
SECONDED by B. Halloran

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve an increase to the 2012 Operating Budget for Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration of $10,856 gross and $0 Net Regional Levy, due to an increase of $10,856 in funding through the Provincial Rent Program;

AND THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo amend its current agreement with Lutherwood to provide additional one-time funding in the amount of $10,856 for the Rent Bank and Eviction
Prevention Program loan fund, for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012, in a form satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor, as outlined in report SS-12-023 dated May 29, 2012.

CARRIED

d) SS-12-020, Sunnyside Home Medical Director Annual Report 2011

M. Schuster gave opening remarks and introduced Dr. Fred Mather, Medical Director, who provided an update to the Committee. Dr. Mather highlighted the ongoing teaching program involving undergrad medical students, pharmacy students and family medicine residents. He provided an overview of the research project on the management of congestive heart failure in long-term care.

Dr. Mather responded to Committee inquiries about the Case Mix Index (CMI) in relation to the provincial funding allocation and the impact on resident care. Gail Kaufman Carlin, Director, Seniors’ Services, advised that staff are anticipating some additional provincial funding and will bring back a report with an update. Dr. Mather responded to a Committee question regarding the educational institution sources for students and stated that Sunnyside typically has two students at any one time.

Received for information

INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE

a) Memo: A New Manual for Developing Advisory Groups of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness and/or Poverty

Received for information

b) Ontario 211 Services Corporation Re: Data Management Update, dated May 10, 2012

Received for information

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking List was received for information.

NEXT MEETING – June 19, 2012

ADJOURN

MOVED by J. Brewer
SECONDED by T. Cowan

THAT the meeting adjourn at 1:52 p.m.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE CHAIR, S. Strickland

COMMITTEE CLERK, S. Natolochny
Circle of Friends
A Community Partnership
Social Return on Investment

$1.00 = $3.14

Investment = Social Value
Cost Savings

Reduced

• Ambulance Use
• Emergency Room Use
• In-Patient Mental Health
• Shelter Costs
Value to Community

- Participant volunteering in Community
- Increased well-being for Circle of Friends volunteers
- Transferrable skills and knowledge for Circle of Friends volunteers
Circle of Friends
A Community Partnership
Social Return on Investment Analysis

What is SROI?
Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis tells a story of change. More than a cost/benefit analysis, it illustrates the value of investing to strengthen our communities. By measuring all project outcomes, both social and economic, SROI more fully measures the overall value of an investment (A Guide to Social Return on Investment. 2009. p.8).

The Circle of Friends SROI has been carried out by the Poverty Program Researcher at MCCO, in collaboration with the MCCO Poverty Advocate, Circle of Friends Program Manager, Circle of Friends participants and volunteers.

Circle of Friends Background
Circle of Friends supports women and their children who are experiencing persistent homelessness as they transition to stable housing.

People experiencing homelessness are not a uniform group. For most, experiencing homelessness is a one time event, but a small minority of people often have a pattern of cycling in and out of hospitals or correctional facilities between periods of living on the streets and in emergency shelters. For this group, homelessness becomes the new "normal" and their life skills adjust to skills necessary to survive on the streets (Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy-Draft June 2011).

A partnership between Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and YWCA-Mary’s Place, Circle of Friends provides informal and unconditioned support to YWCA-Mary’s Place residents as they move to stable housing. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the women who have participated in Circle of Friends since 2005 have moved into stable housing.

Circle of Friends has two primary goals:
1. End the cycle of homelessness for each participant
2. Support the development of healthy relationships between participants and volunteers

A circle is made up of a woman who is experiencing homelessness, her children, and two to three volunteers. Together the circle works toward accomplishing the goals set out by the participant and designed to assist in her transition to stable housing. An MCCO staff person is actively involved in the first 6 months of a circle’s development as trust is built and relationships are solidified.

The objective is that by participating in Circle of Friends, participants are able to make their last move from Mary’s Place into the community. They also experience increased community support, decreased isolation and unconditional friendship.

Social Return on Investment Results
The research demonstrates that, on average, every $1 invested in women who participates in Circle of Friends results in a social return on investment of $3.14 after two years. This value includes cost savings to government as a result of decreased ambulance and emergency room use, and decreased use of in-patient mental health beds. The social value also includes the benefits received by volunteers and benefits generated when participants begin volunteering in their communities. The ratio does not include the increased well-being felt by participants and staff or the value of people achieving their full potential.

Social Value Created
In addition to the cost savings associated with moving from persistent homelessness to stable housing, Circle of Friends participants report experiencing a greater quality of life as a result of joining the program.

“My friends give me a reason to take my medication every day—consistently,” said one participant.

Another participant reports that during the first year of her transition “Circle of Friends made all the difference. Without them, I would not have been able to travel around town, get groceries or buy supplies. Without my friends I would not have been able to cope.”

One on one interviews with past participants has shown that the value of Circle of Friends lasts far into the future. Many of the circles continue to meet beyond the first year of the program. Participants continue to attend Circle of Friends community gatherings where they experience support to maintain stability in their lives and housing situations.

Volunteers report that the benefits they receive from Circle of Friends far outweigh the time commitment. Staff report feeling safer in their community because they have a better understanding of the issues surrounding persistent homelessness.

Some things you might not know about homelessness:
- It is estimated that 85%-90% of people who experience persistent homelessness have mental health or substance use
- In 2010, 2,649 people in the Waterloo Region accessed at least one local emergency shelter*
- Use of various emergency services is approximately 10 times more expensive on a daily basis than supportive housing**
Circle of Friends Success!

Since 2005, thirty-seven (37) women have participated in Circle of Friends. Thirty-four of the women became a part of a circle—all 34 of them were able to maintain stable housing for some time. The three women who were not able to maintain stable housing had started the process of joining Circle of Friends, but did not receive the benefit of a circle created specifically for them. These three women are a testament to the importance of informal and unconditional support as people transition from homelessness to stable housing.

Circle of Friends Participant Information

Though no participant is exactly like another, there are two distinct experiences evident in the participant information collected by the Circle of Friends Program Manager and MCCO Poverty Program Researcher. The first is of women with mental health and/or substance use issues, the second is of women who were leading stable lives and became homeless through a loss of income and savings depletion.

Group 1: Women Experiencing Mental Health and Substance Use Issues

Seventy-one percent of Circle of Friends participants became homeless as a result of experiencing mental health and substance use issues. People in this group often have a history of inappropriate use of emergency services, including ambulance and emergency room use, and lengthy stays in in-patient mental health facilities. They are also more likely to be inappropriately housed in correctional facilities. When not using emergency services, women in this group tend to cycle between living on the streets and using an emergency shelter, like YWCA-Mary’s Place.

For Circle of Friends participants, joining a circle and moving to stable housing means a dramatic decrease in the use of emergency services, which results in a large decrease in costs to regional and provincial governments. Participants also report decreased isolation, increased mental stability and increased participation in community activities.

Group 2: Women Experiencing Loss of Income and Savings Depletion

Twenty-nine percent of Circle of Friends participants became homeless as a result of a loss of income, due to job loss or non payment of alimony. This then led to the depletion of their savings accounts and other assets. Women who are a part of this group may also be newcomers to Canada or may have recently left an abusive relationship.

For these women, receiving unconditional support from Circle of Friends makes the difference between moving to stable housing instead of continuing the use of YWCA-Mary’s Place as a residence. Once their transition to stable housing has been made, these women often become volunteers in their communities and are able to assist others to maintain housing as well.

Supplemental information with the stories of women who have participated in Circle of Friends is available on the MCC Ontario website at [http://ontario.mcc.org/poverty/circlefriends](http://ontario.mcc.org/poverty/circlefriends).

Calculating the Social Return on Investment

From cost savings for Regional and provincial government, to increased community connectedness for participants and increased feelings of safety in the community for program staff, Circle of Friends creates social value in a number of different ways.

During one on one interviews, Circle of Friends participants reported that participation in the program results in an increased ability to maintain stable housing. In addition, participants report that they experience unconditional support, perhaps for the first time in their lives. They report an increased knowledge of community supports, increased mental health, and increased ability to cope in situations that, before participating in Circle of Friends, would have been immobilizing and result in a reoccurrence of homelessness.

Volunteers and program staff also report many benefits of their involvement with Circle of Friends, including increased feelings of safety in the community, gaining valuable experience towards further education and increased sense of well-being as a result of doing something good for the community. Volunteers reported that participation in the program results in rewards far greater than the cost of time invested.

People experiencing persistent homelessness often cycle through costly public services such as emergency shelters, the emergency and institutional health system, and the judicial system (Pomeroy, S. 2007. p. 2). By preventing persistent homelessness, participation in Circle of Friends results in high cost savings for government.
Monetizing the Social Value of Circle of Friends

Every $1 invested in Circle of Friends has the potential to create $3.14 in measurable social value. This number is a weighted average of the social value created by the two groups of women who participate in Circle of Friends.

Every $1 invested in a woman experiencing persistent homelessness accompanied by mental health and substance use issues results in a social return of $3.82. This is the direct result of a drastic decrease in use of emergency services, including ambulance calls, psychiatric facilities and police calls. There is also a decreased cost in housing of $820 per year because they are no longer using shelters, which cost about $59 per night (Wallenius, M., personal communication. February 14, 2011). Instead, they are stably living in subsidised housing, at a cost of about $22 per night (Pomeroy, S. 2007, p. 18).

Investing in a woman experiencing persistent homelessness because of a loss of income and depletion of savings results in a return of $1.48 per $1 invested. Women in this group have likely lost support from their friends and family. Participants indicate that this loss of support often happens when a woman is experiencing divorce or domestic abuse—family and friends do not want to believe that the unimaginable is happening in their family or community. By supporting these women, Circle of Friends helps them to avoid persistent homelessness, resulting in cost savings to the government of $8,550 per person per year. Once they have made the transition to stable housing, women who are a part of this group tend to get involved in their community through volunteering. It is estimated that these women will volunteer an average of 4 hours per month. Each hour is valued at $12. Beginning one year after their initial involvement with Circle of Friends, volunteering in the community creates additional social value of $576 per year for each participant who is a part of this group.

### Social Return on Investment: Circle of Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SROI Indicator</th>
<th>Year 1 Value</th>
<th>Year 2 Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Savings to Regional and Provincial Government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Ambulance Use</td>
<td>$19,084.80</td>
<td>$11,928.00</td>
<td>Fewer calls per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Emergency Room Use</td>
<td>$11,587.20</td>
<td>$7,242.00</td>
<td>Fewer visits per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced In-Patient Mental Health Ward Use</td>
<td>$86,835.84</td>
<td>$54,272.40</td>
<td>Fewer weeks per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Housing Cost to Government</td>
<td>$20,151.68</td>
<td>$12,594.80</td>
<td>Cost differential between YWCA-Mary's Place and Subsidised Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value to the Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Participant volunteering in the community</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$668.16</td>
<td>Participant may volunteer about 4 hours per month - only in year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased well-being for volunteers</td>
<td>$19,200.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$12 per hour, 2 hours per week, 50 weeks per year for 16 volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferrable skills and knowledge gained by volunteers</td>
<td>$2,240.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>Value of comparable training available in the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SROI Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1 Value</th>
<th>Year 2 Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Value Created</td>
<td>$159,099.52</td>
<td>$86,705.36</td>
<td>$245,804.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$78,208.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SROI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants reported that, without Circle of Friends they would not have been successful in their transition from homelessness to stable housing. It is also important to recognize the commitment and determination each woman must have in order to make the transition. In order to recognize, both the partnership between Circle of Friends and participants, and the increasing ability of participants to manage stable housing on their own, Circle of Friends is attributed with 80% of the change in year one and 50% of the change in year two.

Volunteers benefit from an abundance of social value as well. Volunteers the researcher spoke with reported that the benefits of participating in Circle of Friends far outweigh the costs. For the purposes of the SROI, we simply offset the value of the time invested with an equal dollar amount of social value to each volunteer. Volunteer time was included as an investment in Circle of Friends at a value of $12 per hour.

Volunteers receive ongoing training throughout the year on issues such as coping with vicarious trauma and dealing with domestic violence. The training aims to build transferrable skills and knowledge for volunteers. A social value of $140 per volunteer, based on the cost of comparable training available in the community, has been included in the ratio (Waterloo Region Housing and Stability Training Centre. 2011. p. 2).
Though not included in the final SROI ratio, one on one interviews indicate that Circle of Friends creates an abundance of immeasurable social value. It is impossible to put a monetary value on the increased well-being experienced by participants, nor can one put a number on the value of experiencing trust and unconditional friendship for the first time. Increased mental stability, a reason to take one’s medication on a consistent basis and place for a child to call home are three more ways that social value is created.

Landlords are another group of stakeholders who benefit from Circle of Friends. They report that Circle of Friends has a positive impact on landlords because “they provide coaching about life skills and budgeting. They also provide cleaning supplies and coaching on how to keep an apartment clean and sanitary” (Rohrbacher, R., personal communication, July 21, 2011).

Finally, Circle of Friends creates a foundation from which participants are able to reach their full potential. For some, that means volunteering in the community and helping to improve community services for people who are experiencing homelessness. For others, this simply means regularly taking medication and participating in community events as they arise. For all this means an increased sense of well-being and an improved quality of life.

**Conclusion**

Research has shown that many people who are experiencing persistent homelessness utilize public services at a far higher rate than people who are living in stable housing (Pomeroy, S. 2007. p. 2). The analysis of Circle of Friends demonstrates that, for every $1.00 invested in a woman who is experiencing persistent homelessness a social return of $3.14, over two years, is realised.

The social value is created via a combination of cost savings for regional and provincial government, value experienced by volunteers through volunteer training and increased well-being and value created when participants begin to give back to their communities.

Not only does the social value of Circle of Friends last long into the future, it also goes far beyond any measurable indicator in this analysis. Increased ability to cope with life’s challenges, the experience of unconditional friendship, increased occupancy for landlords and increased feelings of safety in the community are just a few examples of the many other benefits experienced by people involved with Circle of Friends.

**References**


Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration (2011). We’ll leave the lights on for you: Housing options for people experiencing persistent homelessness who use substances (alcohol and/or drugs). Waterloo, ON: Regional Municipality of Waterloo


Circle of Friends is a partnership of the YWCA and MCC Ontario and receives funding from the Region of Waterloo

YWCA | Region of Waterloo | Mennonite Central Committee Ontario

This research was supported by a Grant from The Catherine Donnelly Foundation