Regional Municipality of Waterloo  
Community Services Committee  
Minutes  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011  
12:51 p.m.  
Regional Council Chamber  
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener  

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

Members absent: J. Mitchell and C. Zehr  

Declarations of pecuniary interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act  
None declared  

Presentations  

a) John Shewchuk, Chair, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, gave a presentation to the Committee on the organization’s new four-year strategic plan, “Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region; a copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes and copies of the strategic plan, which had been previously distributed to Councillors, can be viewed online at www.smartoncrime.ca.”  

J. Shewchuk provided an overview of the plan implementation, which includes significant community engagement and public consultation. He stated that the priority directions of the plan consist of research and inquiry; education and learning; strategic leadership; and organizational development. He outlined the key principles of the plan, acknowledged past and present involvement of Regional Councillors with the organization and the support of the staff and volunteers of the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council. He thanked the Region for its past and continued support.  

J. Shewchuk responded to Committee questions about the organization’s website design and the development of the strategic plan.  

Delegations  

a) Poverty Reduction Strategy  

i) Mary MacKeigan, Executive Director, Opportunities Waterloo Region, addressed the Committee; a copy of her submission is appended to the original minutes. She summarized the role her organization has played in engaging people around the issue of poverty, including community collaboration and encouraging the involvement of all levels of government. She advised that Opportunities Waterloo Region led a collaborative initiative, involving several community agencies, focus groups and other sources, to develop recommendations for a region-wide poverty reduction strategy. These recommendations are contained in a draft report, “Putting People First,” and she requested that Regional Council consider these when developing a poverty reduction strategy. M. MacKeigan identified the distinctions between alleviating,
preventing and reducing poverty and suggested that if alleviation and prevention programs are to be included in the Region’s poverty reduction plan, that the title of the plan be revised to reflect this, as these areas are vital and can overlap with reduction. She thanked the Region for its progressive actions to address poverty in our community.

Chair Strickland and Mike Schuster, Commissioner, Social Services, clarified that the Regional staff report recommendations, as referred to by M. MacKeigan, are related to staff report SS-10-033, which included appendices with staff recommendations for a poverty reduction strategy, and was approved by Council in June 2010.

M. MacKeigan clarified that the report prepared by Opportunities Waterloo Region is currently in draft form but that she will provide copies for Regional Councillors. The Committee also requested that the staff report, SS-10-033, be re-distributed to the Committee for the benefit of the new Councillors; this was done during the meeting. Copies of the report’s appendices are available in the Councillors’ Library.

ii) Eleanor Grant, Alliance Against Poverty, didn’t appear as a delegation.

iii) Catherine Stewart Savage, Coordinator, Out of the Cold, Kitchener, addressed the Committee; a copy of her submission is appended to the original minutes. She thanked Regional Council for its continued support of Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW). She provided real-life examples of the people she has met who live in poverty. She encouraged Regional Council to reinvest the savings from the uploading of social assistance benefits into funding poverty reduction initiatives in Waterloo Region.

In response to a Committee question about the current needs for additional housing, C. Stewart Savage stated that in an analysis of the last two months of 2010, there was an average reduction of 16 people accessing Out of the Cold services. She stated that 24 people made use of the SHOW program and that another 12 came through the STEPs to Home program. She advised that in the past two weeks, the numbers being served at Out of the Cold have increased, likely due to the current winter temperatures.

iv) Greg de Groot-Maggetti, Poverty Free Waterloo Region, addressed the Committee; a copy of his submission is appended to the original minutes. He encouraged Regional Council to develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy as part of the 2011-2014 corporate strategic plan. He provided background information about the network group, Poverty Free Waterloo Region, and indicated that approximately 600 local residents have endorsed the organization’s four-point appeal through personal comments and a petition. He provided the Regional Clerk’s office with a copy of the endorsements and the petition. The network group is seeking the reinvestment of savings from the uploading of social assistance benefits to fund poverty reduction initiatives; calling upon the provincial government to reaffirm its commitment to the Poverty Reduction Act; and calling upon the federal government to develop a national strategy to eliminate poverty.

In response to a Committee question about the status of advocating with provincial and federal levels of government, G. de Groot-Maggetti stated that he has met with some members of government but also plans to meet with local elected officials, and that he is hoping to make poverty reduction an election issue, both provincially and federally.

v) June Anderson, Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, addressed the Committee; a copy of her submission is appended to the original minutes. She stated that as a spiritual care provider, she is aware of the impact poverty has on local seniors. She provided statistics indicating a 15.6% increase overall during 2009-2010, with 26% of clients being over the age of 55 years.
She highlighted the real-life challenges faced by seniors that she has counselled. She encouraged Regional Council to support the initiative proposed by the Poverty Free Waterloo Region network.

In response to a Committee request for a copy of her submission, the Regional Clerk’s office will arrange for copies to be circulated to Councillors.

vi) Wendi Campbell, Executive Director, Food Bank of Waterloo Region, addressed the Committee. She thanked Regional Council for their support of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. She stated that food security is key in reducing poverty and, as such, advised that more than 380,000 meals were served by the Food Bank of Waterloo Region last year. She identified the factors that lead to use of food banks and stated that recent analysis shows that as the local population increases, so will the need for emergency food services.

In response to a Committee inquiry on the status of the Region’s poverty reduction strategy, Chair Strickland stated that a plan hasn’t yet been developed but he suggested that the Committee could refer this issue to the Region’s strategic planning process for consideration.

Regional Ken Seiling clarified the process by stating that, traditionally, four or five themes are selected for adoption and subsequently, incorporated into the corporate strategic plan.

In response to a Committee question about the inclusion of a poverty reduction strategy in the current budget review process, Chair Strickland advised that such a strategy would not be included in the budget review until such time as it has been adopted for inclusion in the Region’s corporate strategic plan.

vii) Frank Mowatt, ALIV(e), addressed the Committee and expressed his appreciation to the Region of Waterloo for reinvesting in supportive housing.

viii) Peter Thurley, federal candidate for the New Democratic Party (Kitchener-Centre), addressed the Committee. He stated that he supports the efforts of the Poverty Free Waterloo Region coalition and extended his appreciation of Regional Council’s support of Bill C-304, a bill to create a national housing strategy. P. Thurley encouraged Regional Council to support the petition from Poverty Free Waterloo Region. He stated that Tony Martin, MP (Sault Ste. Marie) who has introduced a Private Member’s Bill, Bill C-545, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada, will be speaking at a local event to be held this evening.

* T. Cowan left the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

P. Thurley summarized the priorities of proposed Bill C-545, which includes income security, housing and social inclusion; a poverty measurement; gender based analysis; and, the establishment of an independent Commissioner to oversee the national poverty strategy. He advised that a copy of the Private Member’s bill is available on the Parliament of Canada website.

Chair Strickland called for additional delegations but none came forward.

Chair Strickland stated that Regional Council is very aware of the challenges that face people who live in poverty and, as such, the Region has done much to address the issue. He stated that it’s a complex issue and often difficult to determine the best course of action. He recommended that Councillors review staff report, SS-10-033, for further insight about the local challenges.

* T. Cowan returned to the meeting at 1:58 p.m.
Chair Strickland reiterated that referring the matter of a poverty reduction strategy won’t have any impact on current budget deliberations.

In response to a Committee inquiry about the savings referred to in the submission from Poverty Free Waterloo Region, M. Schuster stated that it is referring to the savings derived from the provincial uploading of funds for income support programs.

Regional Chair Seiling clarified that municipalities can use this savings to fund other municipal functions as it’s not intended that income redistribution programs be funded through property taxes.

MOVED by: J. Brewer
SECONDED by: G. Lorentz

THAT the development of a community-wide poverty reduction strategy be referred to the Region of Waterloo’s 2011-2014 strategic planning process.

CARRIED, unanimously

* D. Craig left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

REPORTS – Social Services

b) SS-11-007, Community Outreach Program Update

Heather Froome, Administrator, Social Development Programs, gave a presentation to the Committee; a copy is appended to the original minutes. She summarized the program highlights, the program description and the delivery model. She stated that in 2009/2010, the program received a new name and that the staff title changed to Family Outreach Worker. She highlighted the program accomplishments from the past year, including Motivational Learning Groups, Web 2.0 Data Collection System and Outreach to Linguistically Diverse Families. She provided information about identified areas of community need, including priority groups and local statistics. In closing, she summarized the future plans for enhancing the program.

Chair Strickland acknowledged the Family Outreach Workers in the audience and thanked them for their dedicated service.

Received for information

* R. Deutschmann left the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

b) Social Services – Overview of Major Issues and Priorities

M. Schuster gave a presentation to the Committee; a copy is appended to the original minutes. He provided an overview of the issues facing each of the department divisions. Current issues and priorities for Social Services include social assistance caseload; modernization of technology; provincial review of social assistance programs; transition of the new Early Learning framework and the related stabilization funding; the impact of the Long Term Care Homes Act on the operations at Sunnyside Home; seniors services planning; wait lists for supportive housing; a poverty reduction strategy; and homelessness/housing stability.

* R. Deutschmann returned to the meeting at 2:28 p.m.
REPORTS – Social Services

a) SS-11-006, Consultation Process for Next Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy

Received for information.

REPORTS – Public Health

a) PH-11-005, Immigrant Fact Sheets

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Associate Medical Officer of Health, introduced the report. Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Manager, Population Health, Planning and Evaluation, stated that this is the last in the series of Immigrant Fact Sheets and that the sheet attached to the report is an update on 2004 information. She advised that the whole series can be found on the Public Health website.

She highlighted the findings including statistics which reveal that immigrants make up 22% of the local population and will reach 25% by 2030. She identified the country of origin for current immigrants and the demographics. Despite high levels of education, the unemployment rate among immigrants is more than double that of non-immigrants.

In response to a Committee question about the listing of visible minorities, D. Seskar-Hencic advised that these are the same classifications as used in the Statistics Canada census.

Received for information.

INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE

a) Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, Re: Making Seniors a Priority

Received for information.

b) City of Cambridge Re: Poverty Free Waterloo Region Resolution

In response to a request from a Committee member that this correspondence be referred to the Budget Committee, Regional Chair Seiling advised that this was circulated for information only and isn't a request for funds; it will be dealt with through the strategic planning process.

Received for information.

c) Memo: Service Training Initiative

Received for information.

d) Memo: One-Time 100% Provincial Funding Allocations to Region of Waterloo Public Health Department

The Committee raised a concern that a portion of the one-time funds for the Food Safety Program will be used for the hiring of staff. Dr. Wang stated that the staff position will be a temporary contract.

Received for information.
e) Memo: Update on Influenza Activity in Waterloo Region (as of January 18th, 2011)

Received for information.

f) Waterloo Wellington Adult Day Program Network Re: Community Alzheimer Program

There was general agreement that this correspondence be referred to Social Services staff for further investigation and action.

Received for information.

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking List

Received for information.

NEXT MEETING – February 15, 2011

ADJOURN

MOVED by J. Haalboom
SECONDED by L. Armstrong

THAT the meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

COMMITTEE CHAIR, S. Strickland

COMMITTEE CLERK, S. Natolochny
Sustainable Momentum, Actions & Results Today
Quite simply, preventing crime before it happens, \textbf{IS} the smart thing to do.
A New Direction

Smart on crime means....

engaging communities,
identifying needs and
developing strategies

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Our Priority Directions

- Research & Inquiry
- Education & Learning
- Strategic Leadership
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• Be Flexible
• Living document
  • Web based – www.smartoncrime.ca
  • Transparent
  • Accountable
• Be Green!
Smart Ambassadors

- www.smartoncrime.ca
- Be our guest
- Spread the word
- Attend events & workshops
- Live, Work and Grow SMART
"Recognize complexity,
Accept uncertainty,
Embrace possibility,
Trust community,
Proceed with humanity."

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"Innovators in Action" Speaker Series
Members of the Community Services Committee, regional staff...

I am very happy that the Region’s staff are recommending the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

As you know, Opportunities Waterloo Region has played a critical role since 1996 in engaging people around poverty, working collaboratively with the regional government on issues such as employment and food security, and we continue to play a role in ensuring that the voices of people who live on low-incomes are heard.

In 2007 Opportunities’ Leadership Roundtable created a central position statement that says:

“That the local community and government at all levels (federal, provincial and local) adopt a poverty reduction plan with set targets, timelines, a dedicated budget and ongoing monitoring.”

After the development of this statement, Opportunities’ staff gathered recommendations for a regional poverty reduction strategy from many different sources including:
- three Community Conversations Series events,
- discussions with staff, board, ALIV(e) and Leadership Roundtable members,
- focus groups,
- a written survey conducted at our ‘Working to Make Ends Meet’ forum,
- and other prominent sources.

These recommendations were compiled into a draft report called: Putting People First: Recommendations for a Poverty Prevention and Reduction Strategy for Waterloo Region. Further actions on these recommendations were waiting until staff resources were available and the right time presented itself.
I’m not here today to present the recommendations from this report, but I would like to take a minute to mention a few highlights. We hope that the following suggestions will be used as the Region develops its plan and that all the recommendations within this document are considered along with other suggestions that emerge from new consultations.

- The draft report suggests using four different lenses through which to develop the plan. These are:
  1) The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, signed and ratified by Canada
  2) The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Section 7
  3) The Social Determinants of Health
  4) The Sustainable Livelihood Approach

- It recommends the inclusion of nine guiding principles, including the following three:
  1. that the focus be on system change and not individual blame
  2. that all policies be developed assuring that the values of dignity and integrity of the individual are front and centre.
  3. that there be coordinated, collaborative policy development, planning processes and implementation across government departments, working with all levels of government.

- Two of the many other suggestions in this report are that regional government:
  1) work collaboratively with community to develop and implement a poverty reduction plan, ensuring that the voices and experiences of those living in poverty are represented and heard.
  And that
  2) alliances between community groups, networks and government are encouraged
There is one more important point I wish to make.
There’s a difference between alleviation, prevention and reduction of poverty. They are all important to address. And they can overlap.
I believe it is important to state in the strategy which one or more of these areas are being addressed and to what extent in each of the initiative.
In fact, if alleviation and/or prevention programs are being included in this plan, then I’d like to suggest that the name of the plan be changed to reflect these additions.

In closing,

We ask that you support the staff’s recommendation to develop a regional poverty reduction strategy.

On behalf of Opportunities Waterloo Region, I want to thank the Region for the progressive actions it has taken (and continues to take) to address poverty.

We are fortunate to have a Regional government that values collaborating with community. We look forward to being active partners and we’re willing to leverage our resources and community networks to support the development and implementation of this plan.

Thank you for listening and for your time today.
Living with Poverty In Waterloo Region

My name is Catherine Stewart Savage and I am one of the coordinators of Out of the Cold in Kitchener Waterloo. We deal with some of the poorest people in the region. I also volunteer twice a week at Supportive Housing of Waterloo. Most of the people at SHOW came from the Out of the Cold.

I see these people weekly, just as I did when they were coming to our church, but sometimes it is hard to believe they are the same people. They walk proudly with their heads up and their backs no longer stooped to carry all their belongings. Some of them are looking for work, some of them are getting long needed medical and dental care. There are often smiles on their faces and they are truly beginning to feel safe at last.

I addressed the region two and a half years ago asking that funding for Supportive Housing of Waterloo not be revoked. One of the things I said at that time was that the people we serve at Out of the Cold are people just like you and me, who have had the misfortune of finding themselves in difficult circumstances, so let's try to put ourselves in their shoes.

First you lose your health, then you lose your job, Employment Insurance runs out. What do you do?

You apply for disability, you are totally humiliated and exhausted by the process, and then you are turned down anyway. They say you don't qualify and that leaves your spouse to support your entire family. You use up your savings, you can no longer maintain your house. The roof is leaking, the plumbing is breaking down and you can't ask for help because you are afraid someone in authority will see how bad the conditions are and take away your children. One of your neighbors complains to property standards and they come in and demand you address brick work and painting. So what do you do?

Or, you are a single parent cycling between OW and low paying jobs. You rent a small house, but can't always make the utility payments. Each time the hydro is cut off, you need to find that much more to have it turned back on. The sewer keeps backing up into your basement and the landlord says it's your fault, your kids are using too much toilet paper. What would you do?

Or, you are homeless with mental health issues. Your feet are covered in sores from walking in wet boots and you will not go to the hospital because you are afraid they will cut off your feet. What would you do?

Or, you are disabled and raising your grandchild as well as your high school aged children. You need to access the Food Bank to feed your family. The elementary school is having a food drive and your grandchild wants to take something in to the school so their class can win the contest. What would you do?

Or, you are a young married woman with a disability. Your husband has a full time job, but works for low wages. You are one of over 3000 families on a waiting list for subsidized housing, but for now you cannot afford your rent. You take in a roommate who is abusive when your husband is not around. What would you do?

I know stories like this to have been true. This is what living in poverty in Waterloo Region is like for countless people.

Once you have sunk into the depths of poverty, it is very difficult to find your way back out. It seems that we, as a society, do everything in our power to make it so. We are reluctant to offer any assistance until the situation becomes desperate. We demand that people use up any assets they have before we will help, and we don't allow them to build any assets either.
demean and devalue these people to the point that they, themselves beginning to doubt their own worth.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.1 states:

> “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

Somehow we seem to think that this “right” is only for those who can afford it. We resent every dollar that goes to someone in need.

I find it ironic that those with a good, steady income envy people who have so little getting anything for “free” and yet none of them would be willing to trade places with the poor.

We think it is OK to dictate and control how any money we give to the poor is spent. We don’t do that for seniors, we don’t do that for employees, we often don’t even do that with the allowance we give our children. But we tell the poor how much they should spend on housing, food, or entertainment. And then we criticize them for not dressing well, for having bad teeth, for bad haircuts.

I was very much ashamed that in the past municipal election it was reported that some politicians in Waterloo region would not campaign in poor areas. Some of them said they felt unsafe in those neighbourhoods, and yet people need to live there. So I ask you, would those places be safer if the people living there were not living in poverty? Is living in poverty a crime?

Today I led a worship service for a senior’s luncheon. I chose a Daily reflection that talked of humanity. One of the quotes in the reflection is carved above the entrance to the United Nations building:

> Human beings are all members of one body.  
> They are created by the same essence.  
> When one is in pain, the others cannot rest.  
> If you do not care about the pain of others,  
> You do not deserve to be called a human being.

The following prayer asks that we see the face of ourselves in the faces of others so that we can care for the others and call ourselves human.

People living in poverty need our compassion, our support, and our respect. They need programs that will help them regain their dignity and feeling of self worth.

We can help people get out of poverty so that they can become regular members of society who live normal lives, going to work and paying taxes. Some could even go on to great things, if only we give them a chance.

So I am here to ask you to please consider reinvesting the savings from the uploading of social assistance benefits to funding poverty reduction initiatives in Waterloo Region.

Thank You.
We believe in a poverty free Waterloo Region

Delegation to Community Services Committee of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo by Greg deGroot-Maggetto, MCC Ontario on behalf of Poverty Free Waterloo Region

Tuesday, January 25, 2010

I am speaking to you today on behalf of Poverty Free Waterloo Region to encourage Regional Council to develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy as part of the 2011-2014 Corporate Strategic Plan.

Poverty Free Waterloo Region is a network of groups and individuals who believe in the vision of a Region where everyone can live free from poverty. The network was launched by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Opportunities Waterloo Region, the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the Social Planning Council of Kitchener Waterloo.

We are happy to present to you today the names of hundreds of individuals and organizations in Waterloo Region who support the call for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for Waterloo Region. These individuals and organizations have signed onto an appeal with four points:

1) We endorse the Region of Waterloo’s initiative to create a strategic plan for a Poverty Free Waterloo Region.

2) We call on the Regional Council to reinvest the savings from the uploading of social assistance benefits to fund poverty reduction initiatives in Waterloo Region.

3) We call upon the Provincial Government and all parties in the provincial legislature to reaffirm their commitment to the Poverty Reduction Act, which was passed unanimously by the Provincial Legislature on May 6, 2009 and to extend this commitment to eliminating poverty for everyone, including single adults.

4) We call upon the federal Government to develop a strategy to eradicate poverty in Canada.

Today we are specifically supporting the work that Regional staff has done so far in the two volume report Building Resilient Communities: Understanding the Role of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in Poverty Reduction. That report concluded that:

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo clearly demonstrates a commitment to poverty reduction in terms of the depth and breadth of investment in the social infrastructure and the level of advocacy for effective social policies. While there is significant investment, more can be done to maximize the impact. This can be accomplished through the development of a coordinated, collaborative and
integrated strategic plan for poverty reduction across the Region and in partnership with citizens, clients, non-profit sector agencies, for profit sector businesses and other levels of government.

We ask council to include the development of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy as a part of the 2011-2014 Corporate Strategic Plan, based on the recommendations found in Building Resilient Communities: Understanding the Role of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in Poverty Reduction.

We look forward to being active partners with the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in developing and implementing a truly comprehensive and integrated strategy for a poverty free Waterloo Region. Part of that participation includes our commitment to call on our Provincial politicians to renew their commitment to poverty reduction and on the Federal Government to implement a national strategy to eradicate poverty that links to Provincial, Territorial and municipal strategies.
We believe in a

**Poverty Free Waterloo Region.**

1) A Strategic Plan for a Poverty Free Waterloo Region
In September 2010, the Region of Waterloo issued *Building Resilient Communities: Understanding the Role of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in Poverty Reduction*, which calls for:

> “the development of a coordinated, collaborative and integrated strategic plan for poverty reduction across the region and in partnership with citizens, clients, non-profit sector agencies, for profit sector businesses and other levels of government.”

*We endorse the Region of Waterloo’s initiative to create a strategic plan for a Poverty Free Waterloo Region.*

2) Reinvesting the Savings for a Poverty Free Waterloo Region
In 2008, Ontario’s Provincial and Municipal Governments laid out a plan to take responsibility for (i.e. upload) the costs of provincial programs for which municipalities have had to pay.

According to the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review the upload of Ontario Works benefits alone “will reduce municipal costs by more than $400 million annually by 2018.” In addition, the nearly $10 million in ODSP benefit payments that Waterloo Region paid in 2010 will be fully uploaded by the province in 2011.

*We call on the Regional Council to reinvest the savings from the uploading of social assistance benefits to fund poverty reduction initiatives in Waterloo Region.*

3) Recommitting to the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy

*We call upon the Provincial Government and all parties in the provincial legislature to reaffirm their commitment to the Poverty Reduction Act, which was passed unanimously by the Provincial Legislature on May 6, 2009.*

4) The Need for a National Strategy to Eradicate Poverty
The Region of Waterloo has endorsed the Dignity for All Campaign calling for a federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans.

*We call upon the federal Government to develop a strategy to eradicate poverty in Canada.*

The founding member organizations for Poverty Free Waterloo Region are: The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Opportunities Waterloo Region, The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries, and the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo
Good afternoon. My name is June Anderson I am the Spiritual Care Provider at the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank. I have become more aware of increasing needs of the older adult population that is utilizing the Food Bank. Before I address some of my observations of this population I would like to give you a little background and current status of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank. Although there is some optimism of this recession ending this is not evident in the population we are serving.

As I indicated I am here to briefly speak to you about the increase in senior attendance we are seeing.

Once again referring to the Cambridge Self-Help Food Banks recent document, Outcome Evaluation 2011 it stated that 26% of people using the Hunger Count or Hamper Program fall in the 55+ age group.

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As I indicated I am here to briefly speak to you about the increase in senior attendance we are seeing. 
• A 63 year old woman that is using her diabetic syringes 25 times before she changes it for a new one. Certainly it is recommended that she changes more often than once a month. Trillium coverage does not cover her diabetic supplies.

• A 60 year old woman that can only wear her hearing aids when she works at her minimum wage job because the batteries for her aids are too expensive.

• A 64 year old man that does not wear socks in the winter because he needs diabetic socks. Regular sock do not fit. He cannot afford diabetic socks.

• A 63 year old woman that receives $763.00 per month on her CPP disability. Her rent is $715.00 leaving her $48.00 to live on. She has been told there is a 6 year waiting list for affordable housing.

• Older adult women living on $11,310.12 per year (old age security $490.51 and Guaranteed Income Supplement $452.04)
The poverty level of a single person is currently, $17,894. (Stat. Canada Low Income Cut-Off). These women are living $6,583.88 below the poverty line.

• An older woman on CCP disability (63 years) does not have the monthly money to pay her portion of the oxygen costs. She has been told her CCP will cover 75% or $397. And she needs to cover 25% or $99.25 per month. Even though she has been advised to use oxygen she cannot afford to do so.

• Perhaps on hearing these stories you may feel that they are extreme. Unfortunately, they are becoming part of the norm of stories we are hearing. There are multiple reasons these folks are facing financial vulnerability.

Clearly there is a group of older adults that are experiencing severe poverty. While the Regional poverty rate for the elderly is going down (Vital signs Waterloo Region), there appears to
be a growing number of older adults that are coming to the attention of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank.

Older adults are often part of a silent group that endures poverty. They are not plaque carrying or letter writing adults because they are too busy surviving.

In your deliberations I would encourage you to support this initiative of a Poverty Free Region of Waterloo.

June Anderson,
Spiritual Care Provider,
Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank
54 Ainslie St. S,
Cambridge, ON
janderson@cambridgefoodbank.on.ca
Community Outreach Program Update

Presentation to Community Services Committee
January 25, 2011

Doc# 915801
Program Highlights

• National Child Benefit (NCB) Reinvestment Initiative – pilot project in 1999
• Ontario Child Benefit consolidated with NCB in 2008
• July 1, 2008 Region was no longer required to develop and submit a reinvestment plan
• Regional Council made the decision to continue annual funding in May of 2008.
Program Description

• Provides outreach support to families living in low income with children 0 – 17 years of age.
• Helps families to cope with and transition out of poverty, supporting connections to the work force whenever possible.
• Uses a Social Development Practice Framework.
Delivery Model

• 14 Community Agencies employ Family Outreach Workers in 25 neighbourhoods and communities of interest throughout Waterloo Region
  ✓ Cambridge 9
  ✓ Kitchener 10
  ✓ Waterloo 2
  ✓ Townships 4

• Regional staff administer the program and provide leadership through a convening role with a wide variety of community partners, including area municipalities
Transitioning the Name

- National Child Benefit Reinvestment Initiative – Community Outreach Program (formerly NCB Program) to 2008
Transitioning the Name

- 2009/10 removed NCB and developed a program identifier

- Staff title changed to Family Outreach Worker
2009/10 Program Accomplishments

• Motivational Learning Groups
• Basic Needs Fund Guidelines and Spending Caps
• Boundary Clarification
• Service Plan for Underserviced Areas
• Food Security Initiative
• Web 2.0 Data Collection System
• Outreach to Linguistically Diverse Families
• Rural Realities Network
• 10 Year Anniversary Celebration
Community Need

- In Waterloo Region, 10.2 percent of individuals and 11 percent of families lived in low income (2006 Census)
- Income gap is widening
- Unemployment rate rose from 5.3% to 10% in one year (now 7.4%)
- Ontario Works caseload increased by 36% (Sept '08 – Dec '10)
## Community Need

- In 2009, the program served **8,590** families and **19,980** children (42% OW cases)
- 150 new families expressing urgent need for support
- Significant number of increased contacts with current families
- Depth of poverty signalled by increased request for basic supports (i.e., food, shelter, clothing for children)
- Partner agencies are experiencing a sandwiching effect – significant increase in demand for service with simultaneous challenge in raising/sustaining funding.
Moving Forward

- Explore opportunities where families have limited access to the Community Outreach program.
- Investigate increased requests for support across existing sites.
- Implement action plans to enhance supports to families who are linguistically diverse.
- Address challenges for families in rural areas through the Rural Realities Network.
- Develop the integrated capacity building approach (i.e., Motivational Learning Groups and FRONT pilot project)
- Expand quality assurance initiatives.
Key Issues/Priorities 2011-2014

Presentation to
Community Services Committee
January 25, 2011
SOCIAL SERVICES
Employment & Income Support

- Social Assistance Caseload Growth /Reduction?
- Employment Ontario
- Social Services Solutions Modernization Project

- Provincial Review of Social Assistance
SOCIAL SERVICES
Children's Services

- Transition
  /Implementation
  of Early Learning
  Framework
- Develop Early Years
  System Plan
- Provincial Funding
SOCIAL SERVICES

Seniors' Services

- Long-Term Care Homes Act roll-out (Sunnyside Home)
- Seniors' Services Planning
- Supportive Housing
- Wellness Centre
SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration

- Poverty in Waterloo Region/Strategy?
- Homelessness /Housing Stability
- Emergency Social Services
- Local Immigrant Partnership Council