



HARVEST NEWS

MARCH
2006

Extending a hand up, not a hand out

Be Informed: Poverty on the North Shore



What does poverty look like? In our affluent North Shore communities, poverty is often well-hidden, but it stalks almost 6% of the families and individuals who live here – more than 8,500 men, women and children. Many of them might be your neighbours.

Let's start with some dry definitions: the men, women and children who live in poverty don't have enough income to meet their basic needs for healthy food, adequate housing or transportation. The Low Income Cut-Off line, commonly known as the poverty line, is less than \$30,000 for families and less than \$15,600 for individuals.

For Rebecca, a life-long North Shore resident, poverty means working the night shift in a part-time job at a gas station for minimum wage and living in a moldy studio apartment while she tries to take some job training during the day. Rent consumes more than half of what she earns; she leaves the heat turned off, even in winter. She often goes without food and is in poor health because of her living conditions. More than once she was unable to pay for medicine she needed to keep several chronic conditions under control and ended up in hospital. Many times she walks or hitchhikes

to work at night because she can't afford bus fare. Her clothes are drab and worn out and she can't see a way to buy new ones. Going to a movie or buying a coffee once in a while is out of the question. She admits she sometimes tempted to make ends meet by shoplifting.

For people like Rebecca, poverty means not having choices in life. It means men, women and children become marginalized and lack the same opportunities available to others. People living in poverty don't have the same chances: their academic achievements are lower, their health is more fragile and their life spans are shorter. Poverty also multiplies the stresses of the challenges we all face in parenting and relationships, often leading to domestic violence and abuse.

Our North Shore community as a whole is also affected by poverty. Unemployment, low incomes and socio-economic inequality saps vitality from our community. Crime, vagrancy, poorly maintained housing and social instability often result, along with rising costs for addressing these social issues. Poverty puts our neighbours at risk of homelessness.

One final fact: the Harvest Project works to lessen the impact of poverty on the North Shore to prevent homelessness before it starts.



I am filled with gratitude at the strong and wide-spread community support shown for the work of the Harvest Project throughout 2005. Particularly in the month of December, your outpouring of generosity towards the poor and vulnerable on the North Shore was both inspiring and humbling. Through your compassion, we were able to change the lives of more than 3,000 of your neighbours on the North Shore in 2005.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all for your continuing support now and throughout 2006.

Sincerely,

Bob Rogers
Executive Director

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"It took me a while to choose groceries because I really enjoyed the process. Having a choice without looking at a price tag and even finding organic food was wonderful. I may never have to do this again, but I will always remember what it was like to receive a 'hand up.'

— Clare
.....

Thank You!

We particularly want to thank the following individuals and businesses for freely providing services we could not otherwise obtain:

- **Tamara Roberts of Studio 2** took hundred of photos of our volunteers for use in our publications, displays and our website.
 - **Aspen Clean** has staff come to clean our facilities every second week.
 - **David Pol of Freedom Health Studio** arranged a 'Train the Trainer' push-up contest and raised more than \$7,000 for the Harvest Project. Freedom Health Studio, Weight Watchers, Joanne Macpherson of Mindful of Health and Better Meals are all providing services to help Bob Rogers meet his weight loss/fundraising goals.
 - **Mariana Prins of Zwé Studios** has donated countless hours of her time to do all of our graphic design over the past three years.
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Take a Tour!

We want you to get to know us better. Find out how the Harvest Project helps your neighbours by touring our workspace. We are now offering regular tours every Thursday at 11 am. Tours last about ½ hour. If possible, phone ahead to let us know you are coming but drop-in visitors are also welcome. For tours at other times, give us a call and we will be glad to show you around at a time that works for you. Call Celia at 983-9488 ext. 317.

In Her Own Words

"Last January I was referred to the Harvest Project's Dress for Success program by The Compass Group, which I was in to find out my aspirations in life and to find a job as well. I had been out of work for 3 months. I wasn't on EI, and I was in a rented apartment with my boyfriend at the time, age 18.

The Dress for Success program helped me out immensely. I didn't have any nice clothes and they took quite a bit of time to help me find everything from pants to jackets to boots to stockings. Needless to say, I left that meeting greatly impressed and feeling much more confident about finding a job. A week later, I met up with a temp agency and was set up doing odd jobs here and there. No less than a month later, I came to Transport Canada and greatly impressed them with my new clothes and new attitude – so much so that three months later they hired me on as an Environmental Assessment Administration Assistant.

To this day, I'm still working at Transport Canada, and just got an extended contract with them. I'd like to thank the Harvest Project very much for their support during my rough time. I'm now making good money and planning a trip to Europe of all things! Come April I'll be living out that particular life-long dream.

Thanks again." – *Melanie*

Volunteer Corner



Connie Gutierrez is beginning her fourth year volunteering in the Harvest Project's resource centre. After a long teaching career and then 15 years in sales at BC Tel/Telus, Connie trained as a career counselor but government cutbacks meant there was little work in the field. "I decided to volunteer at the Harvest Project to help people get back into the work world."

"Our emphasis is on helping clients get started," says Connie. "Our job is to keep abreast of the services available and to make sure our clients get the information that will help them take control of their lives. I don't know of another service quite like it."

At the Harvest Project's resource center, clients can get information on everything from child care and housing to free legal assistance to immigration to support groups, and more. "We're offering more and more services than ever before," adds Connie, explaining that many requests for information lead to the development of workshops on practical topics such as job interview skills, stress management, computer skills, budgeting and cooking.

"I like the fact that I'm helping people," Connie says. "Often people come in here lost and depressed. Before they leave, they feel confident. They know they can find a job or improve their lives because they feel different about their skills and about themselves. I like to know that I have helped with that."

A Mountain of Food!



December was a month of great celebration here at the Harvest Project. Boxes and boxes of dried and canned food kept coming through our doors until it was piled up high! We even had to rent a container to hold some of it. More than 60 schools, service groups, churches, businesses, clubs and charities brought us their gifts of food – far too many to mention by name. We thank you all! This wonderful and deeply appreciated support from our North Shore community means that the Harvest Project will be able to continue giving out food during the winter months.

It may be hard to believe, but even though we got lots of food in December – we need more! In 2005, we were able to provide almost

\$500,000 in food, an all-time record. In December alone, we gave away 504 boxes of food worth nearly \$60,000 – up 40% over December last year. While we were pleased to be able to do so much, we are also saddened because the need for food on the North Shore is becoming more desperate. More and more low-income families and people undergoing a temporary setback are coming to the Harvest Project for food. Keeping our shelves stocked remains a challenge. We always need more canned and dried food. Donations of grocery store gift certificates would help us purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat. We also need milk crates for food storage.

One reason so many come to the Harvest Project for food is the

uniqueness of our program. The local food bank operates only one day a week and clients have to line up and take what they are given. At the Harvest Project, our clients are able to maintain their dignity because they choose the food they like and need instead of being told what they can have. Our clients receive enough food for every person in the family for two meals a day for one month at a time. Because we are committed to giving a hand up, not a hand out, we encourage our clients to become self-sufficient as soon as possible so that they can provide food for themselves.

Our need for food is year-round because hunger never takes a holiday. Anyone wishing to collect food, gift certificates or milk crates on behalf of the Harvest Project can contact our Support Program Coordinator at 604.983.9488 ext. 303.



New Faces

Monica Drefs joined the Harvest Project as our Client Care Coordinator at the beginning of the new year. Monica joins us with degree in social work from UBC. She has worked with multi-disciplinary teams at the rehabilitation unit of the Lions Gate Hospital, been a career counselor in the downtown eastside, been



head camp counselor and worked in orphanages in Romania. Monica first became familiar with the Harvest Project while working with youth in 1999. Since then, she has volunteered as a client care partner and done data entry work for us.

: Less of Bob

: We are seeing a little less of our
: Executive Director, Bob Rogers. He began
: a campaign to lose weight and gain
: donations for the Harvest Project at the
: beginning of the New Year. As of the
: end of January, Bob had already lost
: 14 pounds. He has committed himself
: to a long-term life-style change, but
: will be raising funds through pledges
: per pound until the end of March.
: We'll keep you posted on his progress.
: Phone us to make a pledge today!

Thank You for your Continued Support

Major Donors of 2005

We are grateful to all who so generously supported the Harvest Project in 2005.

Needful Things

Food: non-perishable dry and canned food items are always needed, especially peanut butter, jam, fruit cups & canned pasta grocery gift certificates help us buy fresh food milk crates will help us store food better in our warehouse.

Clothing: Work clothes for all occupations from physical labour to executive, steel-toed boots, high quality women's pants and tops

Personal Care: Deodorant, baby wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors & feminine hygiene products.

Volunteer Opportunities

Our need for volunteers is constant because volunteers deliver most of our services. We need people who can work in the following areas:

Grocery Packing: stocking the shopping area, packing grocery boxes for clients, assisting clients

Warehouse: sorting and boxing food, stocking shelves

Driving: picking up food from suppliers, delivering boxes of food to families, errands

Kitchen: sorting bread products, preparing lunch, and maintaining the coffee/snack service

Fundraising: grant writing, public speaking, event planning, project committees, research, phoning, graphic design

Dress for Success: sorting clothes, helping clients choose wardrobes

Administration: data entry, phoning

We are open Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm. Volunteer shifts are four hours in length, once per week.

If you are interested in joining the Harvest team, please call 604/983-9488 to register for a Volunteer Information Meeting held the first Saturday of every month (except holiday weekends) at 11 am at the Harvest Project.

Design: Sandi Ma

Guardian \$10,000+

Bridge Community Church
Capilano Suspension Bridge
North Shore News
Mirja and Dan Pekovich
Vancity Savings & Credit Union

Leader \$5,000+

Anvarda Dental Services
City of North Vancouver
District of North Vancouver
Green Shield Canada Foundation
Lion's Club of Mt. Seymour
Lynn Valley Full Gospel Church
Kiwanis Club of West Vancouver
KP Wood
Don & Lois Martin
Prudential Sussex Realty
St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church
Taylormotive Ltd.
Vancouver Foundation

Friend \$2,000 +

Robert Boyce
Calvary Fellowship North Vancouver
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Gary Cuthbert
District of West Vancouver
Hilltop Business Consulting
North Shore Alliance Church
Pro Coach International
David Richards
St. Stephen's Anglican Church
West Vancouver United Church
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Helper \$1,000 +

A Grand Affair Design Ltd.
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Motion Picture Studio Production Technicians
North Lonsdale United Church
North Shore Christian Church
North Shore Community Foundation
North Shore Health and Wellness
Lance & Wendy Phillips
Polaris Management Ltd.
Porsche Club of America, Canada West Region
Rotary Club of North Vancouver
Royal Canadian Legion #118
Soroptimist Int'l, N. & W. Vancouver
Southwell Controls Ltd.
Starbucks Partner Giving Program
St. Stephen's Catholic Women's League
Whole Foods Markets

Donating is Easy

- By cheque
- Visa or Mastercard
- Pre-authorized bank payments
- In person or by mail
- Online through Canada Helps
- At the North Shore Credit Union
- Through the United Way

(designated to the Harvest Project)

We also welcome gifts of RRSPs, life insurance policies, stocks/bonds/mutual funds, trust and annuities through our Planned Giving Program.

Contact Information

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Volunteering & Donations

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If you would prefer not to be on our mailing list, please let us know by mail, e-mail (administration@harvestproject.org) or phone 604.983.9488 ext 305).

www.harvestproject.org