

HOUSING NETWORK OF ONTARIO

DECLARATION

We believe everyone in Ontario has the right to live poverty-free and with dignity in housing that is stable, adequate, equitably accessible and affordable.

FOUR PRIORITIES

1. **The affordability of housing**, including measures to increase the supply of affordable housing and to make existing housing more affordable.

2. **The availability of affordable housing** that is stable, safe and in a state of good repair, and which effectively addresses the diversity of needs in communities across Ontario.

3. **Supports, programs and protections** that help all Ontarians equitably access and maintain adequate affordable housing and thrive in their communities.

4. **A clear way to measure progress**, with overall and population specific targets and timelines to ensure that housing insecurity and homelessness are being meaningfully reduced.

OTTAWA ADVOCATES TO MINISTER WATSON:

"People in Ottawa ready to stand up for Affordable Housing at July 27th Consultation"

(Ottawa) Local housing and homelessness advocates will be informing Minister Watson that everyone – young, old, individuals and families – deserves a home at the provincial government affordable housing consultation July 27th at Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall, 153 Woodroffe Ave at 6:30pm.

They will take the message to the Minister of Housing that stable housing is a fundamental precondition of economic stability and good health. They will ask him to immediately kick-off Ontario's long term strategy with a significant increase in funding for affordable housing to close the shameful gap between the community's need for affordable housing and the number of units being built and they will ask him to quickly put in place measures to assist tenants who cannot afford Ottawa's rents.

6:00-6:30 p.m., Monday, July 27, 2009, members of Ottawa Branch of the Housing Network of Ontario will be available to speak with media at the entrance to 153 Woodroffe Ave before they go into this evening's Ottawa consultation session with real solutions for people struggling with housing in Ottawa (list of spokespeople below).

Perry Rowe, Chair of *The Alliance to End Homelessness* welcomed the consultation process. "Our members want Minister Watson to keep three numbers from 2008 in his mind and heart and ask Cabinet for much more money for affordable housing – **7,045 individuals using homeless shelters, 1,116 households at the point of eviction who were helped to stay housed and avoid being homeless and 9,692 households on the social housing waiting list,**" says Mr. Rowe. "All of these Ottawa residents have first hand – *and devastating* – experience of Ontario's housing crisis. We recommend the Ontario government do much more than match federal stimulus money and immediately act on two housing solutions – **one, substantially increase the provincial investment in affordable housing and two, deal effectively with the rent crisis to help tenants avoid homelessness.**"

Andrew Aitkens, Director with the *Seniors Network of the Centretown Citizens Community Association*, says, "**Affordable housing developments create communities where people know and help each other.** They provide a sense of belonging and security when vulnerable people need the comfort of a supportive environment in which to grow older and maintain good health."

Vicky Smallman, Advocacy Committee Chairperson with Somerset West Community Health Centre, says, "The Provincial Government has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by working with the Federal Government, the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission (NCC) to invest in the development of **affordable housing in the LeBreton Flats neighbourhood - the lack of affordable housing is a critical issue for a high number of low**

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income clients who reside in the Somerset West CHC catchment,” says Smallman. According to Smallman, all levels of government have promised affordable housing in LeBreton Flats since the 1960's and none has been built.

In the lead up to the consultation, Ottawa area housing and homelessness advocates have been working with *The Housing Network of Ontario* (HNO). **“Ontario has the worst record among Canadian provinces when it comes to affordable housing investments,”** says Michael Shapcott of the Wellesley Institute, co-chair of the HNO. **“In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, Ontario spent \$64 per capita on affordable housing, about half of Canada’s provincial average.** To make matters worse, Ontario, more than any other Canadian province, has downloaded the cost of affordable housing to local government. The latest Ontario budget contains the latest in a series of short-term housing initiatives, when what the people of Ottawa – and the people of Ontario – really need is a province that makes **substantial, long-term investments in a comprehensive affordable housing plan.”**

Local Ottawa advocates, such as *The Alliance to End Homelessness, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Ottawa Child and Youth Housing Advocacy Initiative (OCHAI), Seniors Network of the Centretown Citizens Community Association, Barrhaven Non-Profit Housing, Centretown Community Health Centre, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation* and *People For A Better Ottawa* are members and supporters of *The Housing Network of Ontario* (HNO), and have endorsed its housing Declaration. The Ontario network is a group of advocacy organizations and individuals with lived experience of housing insecurity who support an integrated and fully-funded affordable housing strategy. To date, the Housing Network of Ontario Declaration has been endorsed by over 375 organizations and individuals.

AVAILABLE AT 6:00 PM JULY 27TH FOR INTERVIEWS AND COMMENTS

Ottawa members of the Housing Network of Ontario at the entrance to 153 Woodroffe Ave

PERRY ROWE **Chair, Alliance to End Homelessness**

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SEVERAL OTTAWA TENANTS on low incomes
Available on site at 6 pm

ANDREW AITKENS **Director, Seniors Network of the Centretown Citizens Community Association**

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VICKY SMALLMAN **Board Member, Somerset West Community Health Centre** and Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee

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AND CO-CHAIRS OF THE HOUSING NETWORK OF ONTARIO by phone/email **for province-wide comments**

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