

For Immediate Release

**A Successful 2-Part Planning Meeting on Homelessness in Duncan:
Everyone Should Have a Home**

March 15, 2017 Duncan, BC – On Monday March 6th, 2017 the United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island, in collaboration with Cowichan Housing Association, Our Cowichan, Cowichan Mental Health, Social Planning Cowichan, The Division of Family Practice, and the Substance Use Collective Impact Team hosted and facilitated a 2-part planning forum, ‘Everyone Should Have a Home’ at the Ramada Silver Bridge in Duncan, BC.

More than 70 diverse community partners and organizations representing youth, women, families, adults, First Nations, and seniors came together to address homelessness and housing in the Cowichan region. Participants engaged in dialogue relating to our history, the challenges and barriers that are faced today, the increasing pressures leading to homelessness and the many resources that already exist within our region. Moving forward, the next steps are to create a regional homeless plan and develop a structure to organize multiple stakeholders in order to collaboratively seek solutions that provide a home for everyone.

Homelessness is not just what we see on the streets but is hidden throughout the region. It is a complex challenge that will require multiple partners to collectively address these challenges proactively. As we move forward on this journey, consultant Cam Keller of Kaleidoscope Consulting introduced the concept of Housing First as one of the options to address homelessness. More strategies and recommendations will be developed over the coming year, as a Cowichan community plan to address homelessness is developed.

The federal government, through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), is funding a 12-month planning project to bring local agencies together to develop a multi-year plan to address homelessness in the Cowichan Valley.

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