

You Count in Renfrew-Collingwood

On October 14, 2009 volunteers in Vancouver's Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood will carry out a homeless count.

A number of concerned individuals, representing various groups and organizations in Renfrew-Collingwood, first met last May to discuss holding a homeless count in the neighbourhood. While Renfrew-Collingwood has a number of services that reach out to the homeless, resources for such services are always very limited. For example, since 2003 Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) has offered a weekly shower-and-breakfast program for those who are homeless or living in poverty. At least 75 individuals visit the program each week and while most have roots in Renfrew-Collingwood --they were born here or have friends or family living here-- many find themselves existing in the Downtown Eastside. The program survives on volunteer efforts and donations of food, comfort kits (with personal hygiene materials such as toothbrushes and shampoo), clothing, towels and socks.

The committee felt that a count would provide baseline information, to help with planning for efficient and effective neighbourhood services and to strengthen local outreach. The committee also felt that the count could serve as a way to raise awareness about homelessness in the neighbourhood and to educate residents about homelessness prevention, supports and resource referral. It could also help to teach people how to engage appropriately with individuals who are homeless. Further, the committee hopes to create a map showing where there is potential housing stock locally, in order to improve the neighbourhood's ability to house those who are homeless or tentatively housed in Renfrew-Collingwood.

The long-term vision is to make the count an annual one. This initial count will take place on October 14, 2009 from 6-8 am in the area bordered by Broadway, Boundary Road, East 45th Avenue and Nanaimo Street. It will include those who are found living on the street and, where possible, those who spent the night with friends because they do not have anywhere to live. Fifty teams of at least two people per team will receive training during the previous week and then carry out a count and brief interviews with the homeless they encounter in their assigned section of Renfrew-Collingwood. After the count has been completed, the committee will produce a report, with recommendations, to share.

If you would like to participate in the count, please fill out the Volunteer Recruitment Form on the back of this page and return it as directed. For further information, please contact Jennifer Gray-Grant jgg1@shaw.ca or 604-451-9855.

Thanks for your interest.

You Count in Renfrew-Collingwood – October 14, 2009

Volunteer Recruitment Form

(Please print legibly)

Full Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home Address: _____ Local public school: _____

Agency or group (if applicable): _____

What kind of work do you do? _____

What kind of experience do you have with street people (if any)? _____

What other relevant experience do you have (if any): _____

Is there someone you want to partner with? (One of you must be at least 19 years old.)

Yes No

If yes, what is their name? (They must also fill out a Volunteer Recruitment Form.):

Please note that all volunteers will be expected to attend a two-hour training session at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH), 5288 Joyce Street, Vancouver.

Select the training session you can attend:

Wednesday, October 7 from 7-9 pm

Thursday, October 8 from 3:30-5:30 pm

Completed form can be faxed to CNH at 604-451-1191, dropped off at CNH reception or e-mailed to rosanne.so@gmail.com by **October 5, 2009**.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Gray-Grant at 604-451-9855. We will confirm your details by e-mail.

Thank you for your interest!