



coldest
***night**
OF THE YEAR

Calgary's Coldest Night of the Year Raises \$112,000

Over 480 Calgarians turned out on February 25, 2017 to participate in the fourth annual Coldest Night of the Year walk, which raises awareness and funds for the homeless and those living in poverty in Calgary.

The Calgary walk raised \$112,157 that will be split between:

KAIROS Calgary - funds will help pay down the mortgage on Bankview Apartments, through the "A Place to Call Home Campaign" in partnership with the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

Feed the Hungry - a program of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary serving Sunday dinner to over 400 people each week at St. Mary's Cathedral Hall in Mission.

The Mustard Seed - where adults experiencing poverty and homelessness have their basic needs met and are supported toward sustainable life change and integration into the broader community.

One of the key themes this year was "why we walk." People walked for loved ones who were or still are homeless. Participants celebrated their birthdays by giving back to the community. Some walkers joined in memory of loved ones lost. For others, it was simply a tangible way to do something for the cause of homelessness in our city. Regardless of the reason, everyone walking was also something else – a good neighbour, showing love, caring and solidarity with our homeless brothers and sisters.



HOMELESSNESS IS A COMPLEX SOCIAL ISSUE THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO 3 MAIN FACTORS:

- Economy (unemployment)
- Government policies (affordable housing, income supports, social supports)
- System response (health, justice, social services)

For individuals and families, homelessness can be experienced as a one-time event, an episodic infrequently recurring event, or as a long-term debilitating life-event that continues to impact their lives over months and years. Its presence is influenced by many variables.

You can help end homelessness by becoming better informed, donating, volunteering, and hosting an event. For more information, visit calgaryhomeless.com or cupscalgary.com.



Calgary Homeless FOUNDATION
Calgary - 2016
Point-in-Time Homeless Count
Individuals Experiencing Homelessness in Calgary: **3222**

Claire Resident Profile

MELISSA



Melissa's story is, unfortunately, a common one for too many women in Canada. After fleeing a broken relationship, Melissa, who was nine months pregnant at the time, and her six year old daughter found themselves confronted by the effects of poverty and desperately looking for a home. Unable to provide the necessities for her family, she ended up in shelter in 2015. Then began the long, almost two-year wait for affordable housing.

Fortunately for Melissa, her story has a happy ending. Since being accepted into the CUPS Housing: Community Development Program, Melissa has made great progress in getting her life on the right path and addressing the issues that have held her back. She has been very busy these past few months providing her two beautiful children with the tools they need to live a happy life. She recently completed a program at McBride called Bridges to Success and has gone on to a program that offers training in cabinet making and installation.

Over the years, Melissa has encountered various obstacles in her life and has had to work very hard to overcome her adversities. A single mother's job is no easy task. There are no days off; however, Melissa always remains patient, calm and empathetic under every circumstance she faces. Melissa holds all the qualities that make up a great mother and, with the support of CUPS and the Calgary Homeless Foundation, she can move forward with her family to a bright future.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME:

CLAIRE

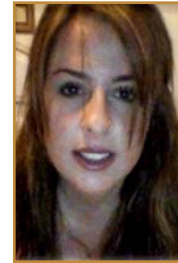
If you arrive at Claire just prior to 10 a.m. on a Wednesday morning, you'll find the Resource Centre a lively mix of activity, conversation and delicious aromas. Resident volunteers move busily between the kitchen and tables set up for 30 people. The result is a buffet breakfast any restaurant would be proud of: eggs, bacon, sausages, toast, croissants, muffins, fruit, juice and coffee.

This morning breakfast is just one example of the programs held in the Resource Centre to help residents connect and build social networks. Volunteers from the community are invited to attend and residents are encouraged to stay and chat for as long as they can. Often, a game of cards will break out before the morning is over.

Claire is a 40-unit apartment building that was purchased by the Calgary Homeless Foundation in 2010 with help from the Government of Alberta and private donations. It has a mixture of market and subsidized tenants, as well as older individuals and young families. The number one priority for the CUPS Community Development program is to ensure that all the tenants interact well with each other. One of the easiest ways to do this is to share a meal together.

Community Development Worker Profile

Anna



Anna is relatively new to the field of Social Work, having started her journey in 2013 when she enrolled in the two-year Social Work Diploma program at Mount Royal University. It was a natural fit for Anna who, as a child, was very sensitive to the adversities faced by other and loved to make a difference, big or small. Social Workers do so much, such as assisting individuals and families to find solutions, advancing social policy, promoting social justice, and pulling communities together. In Anna's view, "Who wouldn't want to do that?"

Anna has been a Community Development Worker with CUPS for over three years. CUPS was one of the first agencies she interviewed with for her practicum placement and she was hired on full-time when she completed her studies. Anna says that Community Development wasn't something that she had thought about as a student; however, when she sat down with Amanda St. Laurent, the Community Development and Engagement Manager at CUPS, she was completely captivated by the program.

The goal of the Community Development Program is to engage and empower participants to develop life skills and increase their social networks, both in their building and their community. The program strives to create the sense of belonging and safety that comes from breaking down social isolation, improving housing stability, and providing affordable housing. This in turn decreases the negative health impacts and trauma that results from extended homelessness.

Anna says that the best way for the KAIROS churches to contribute is through volunteering at the resource centres. Individuals experiencing homelessness can often feel ashamed or embarrassed by their adversities due to stigmatization and the misconceptions of society. By working directly with the residents, volunteers are able to learn about homelessness and housing issues, creating awareness not only for the volunteers but for their communities as well, further reducing the stigma.

Anna says that her time as a Community Development Worker has convinced her of the benefits of empowering participants to develop life skills and support networks, and the need for stable and affordable housing. Anna is returning to University in the fall to complete her Social Work Degree and is excited to see what the future holds for her. Whatever comes next, she knows that she has received a solid grounding from her work with CUPS.



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A Place to Call Home