

NEWS RELEASE



To: Parksville/Qualicum Media
From: Oceanside Taskforce on Homelessness

Subject: March 22 - Community Forums to Explore Homelessness in Oceanside

The subject will be homelessness at two community forums on March 22, 2012 that are sponsored by the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness.

A recent survey on homelessness counted 68 homeless people in this region with 38 adults and 5 children considered to be “absolute homeless” and another 25 at risk of homelessness. The task force is organizing the forums so that the public can learn more about homelessness in this community and become involved in efforts to address homelessness.

The public is invited to attend one of the community forums on March 22. The daytime session will run from 11 am to 2:30 pm at the Christian Fellowship Centre on Village Way, Qualicum Beach. The evening session goes from 5 pm to 8:30 pm at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre on Jensen Avenue East in Parksville. Each session will start with a “soup kitchen” meal at no charge to the participants.

Major Martin Ketteringham of the Salvation Army will be the moderator of the forums and will explain how the information was collected, with the help of 40 community volunteers, and the results of the homeless count. He will also talk about the Extreme Weather Shelter which is operated at the Salvation Army on designated nights. This is the second year for the Extreme Weather Shelter that is sponsored by the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, with funding from the BC Housing.

There will also be a city planner, an outreach worker, a police officer and person who has experienced homelessness to answer questions about their experiences with homeless people, the causes of homelessness and how it affects both the homeless and the community. The forums will conclude with a community engagement session in which the participants can discuss possible solutions to homelessness.

The Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness was established in May 2010 with the primary goal to eliminate absolute homelessness and to improve conditions for people who are at immediate risk of becoming homeless in this region. Funding for the task force has been provided by the City of Parksville and the Regional District of Nanaimo (through funds from the Vancouver Island Health Authority). The scope of the Task Force is School District 69 which includes Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Errington, Coombs, Whiskey Creek, Deep Bay, Bowser and Nanoose Bay.

For more information or to register for the community forums call the SOS office at 250-248-2093 ext. 227 or register by email: admin@sosd69.com. Space is limited.

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For more information:

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