

## ***Sleep Outside Challenge on October 15***

At the September 3 Council meeting, Councillor Sue Powell challenged her fellow councillors to sleep outside for one night on October 15 to help raise awareness to the issues of the homeless in our community. This is the first year the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness will participate in Homelessness Action Week recognized from October 12-18 in British Columbia.

Councillor Powell stated, "By sleeping outside for one night, participants in this challenge will have a much more personal understanding of the conditions which some of our residents face every night. Homeless who are sleeping rough have little protection from the elements and are susceptible to health issues."

In May 2013, 67 individuals were identified as being homeless or at-risk of homelessness in the Oceanside region. 40% were 45 years or older with 70% indicating they have a physical or mental health disability.

Mayor Burger agreed to join Councillor Powell on October 15. Those wishing to participate in Parksville or Qualicum Beach should RSVP by email to [homelessness@sosd69.com](mailto:homelessness@sosd69.com) by September 20. Breakfast will be provided the next morning.

As a guideline, participants should bring only what can fit in a garbage bag or backpack and no tents. Items suggested include a warm sleeping bag, sleeping mat and layers of warm waterproof clothing.

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**For more information:**

Mayor Chris Burger	250 954-4661
Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness	250 248-2093 Ext 234



## The Sleep Outside Challenge

The Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness challenges you to sleep outside for one night on Wednesday, October 15, 2014.

This challenge is designed to be a media event to raise awareness around homelessness during the Homeless Action Week in BC. By sleeping outside for one night you will have a much more personal understanding of the conditions that some of our residents face every night. And you will have helped to bring the knowledge of homelessness to many other residents who are unaware of the extent of its existence here in the Oceanside Area.

In May of 2013, Oceanside had 67 individuals who identified as being homeless or at-risk of homelessness. 40% are over the age of 45 years of age, with 75% indicating a physical or mental health disability. In addition, an average of 400 clients access the food bank every month. Homelessness can look very different from couch surfing to living out of a car to sleeping rough. Sleeping rough means having little to no protection from the elements and leaves individuals highly susceptible to health issues.

As a guideline, bring only what you can fit in a garbage bag or backpack (and no tents!) We suggest a warm sleeping bag and something for a sleeping mat and layers of warm and waterproof clothing. We will meet up at 6pm (there will be two locations, one in Parksville and one in Qualicum Beach). Breakfast will be provided the next morning.

Please RSVP by email to [homelessness@sosd69.com](mailto:homelessness@sosd69.com) by September 20, 2014.

Thanks and see you all there!