

REPORT FROM THE
NORTHUMBERLAND POVERTY REDUCTION
ACTION COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY ACTION DAY
APRIL 4, 2008

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DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



**Northumberland
United Way**

NORTHUMBERLAND POVERTY REDUCTION ACTION COMMITTEE

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HISTORY

On October 25, 2007, the Northumberland Community Legal Centre and the Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty organized a Justice Forum on the topic of Developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy. Out of that Forum, agencies, groups and individuals came forward who were interested in working towards developing a strategy to reduce poverty in Northumberland County. These became the Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee:

Committee Members

Northumberland Community Legal Centre – provides service through legal advice and representation to low-income residents of Northumberland County in the area of poverty law, mainly regarding income maintenance, employment, worker’s compensation and housing.

The Help Centre – helps the unemployed and disadvantaged residents of Northumberland County through programs in Income Security, Housing and Health security.

Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty – as a coalition of low-income persons, organizes and advocates on issues affecting the low-income community.

Northumberland United Way improves lives and builds community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. Its funding priorities are: community capacity building; low-income families and individuals; youth; seniors; and crisis intervention and prevention. The United Way funds 15 agencies, provides grants and runs several programs including the Northumberland Food 4 All, which is a centralized food distribution warehouse that supports food security programs within Northumberland County.

Northumberland County Community & Social Services (NCCSS) – delivers Ontario Works to eligible residents of Northumberland County; also provides Housing Services for subsidized housing and Homelessness Services, to move people from the streets to emergency accommodation and from emergency to permanent accommodation as well as to prevent homelessness by supporting the retention of permanent accommodations.

Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation - The mandate of the NCFDC is threefold: to provide access to capital, business counselling and mentoring, and community economic development. Their approach to building socio-economic capacity within our communities finds strength in social, environmental, cultural and economic strategies with partnerships and alliances across all sectors. Through their Nbiz program, the organization also provides clients in their technology learning centre with an experiential learning process, to allow them to develop skills and work experience that will facilitate entry or re-entry into the workforce.

Northumberland Youth Advisory Council – The NYAC is committee to improving social economic opportunities for young people in Northumberland with their goals being: To empower and connect young people through the creation of a Youth Council as an advisory voice to municipal government... To engage and retain youth as part of a sustainable youth strategy for Northumberland, and... To create an information forum that actively communicates and promotes opportunities for youth in business, politics, and culture.

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Northumberland Labour Council – an association of union locals within the County, which has as its goal the advancement of workers and of labour causes.

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board – has 82 elementary schools, 16 secondary schools and four adult learning centres to serve its urban and rural communities. A range of special services provided to assist schools and teachers in meeting the needs of our students, including special education, behavioural, psychological, social work and attendance and counselling services.

Fleming College, Cobourg Campus, Academic Upgrading – provides free, flexible, customized educational programs designed to meet the adult student’s needs and educational goals, including preparing for college, apprenticeship, or work.

Northumberland Child Development Centre – provides support to children from birth to full time school whose development is considered to be at risk due to special needs or socio-economic factors affecting the family. Pregnancy and Parenting support programs and the Milk for Moms program assist families living in poverty.

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (HKPR) District Health Unit- works with residents of Northumberland and Haliburton counties and City of Kawartha Lakes to prevent illness, protect against disease and promote healthy lifestyles, by providing programs, services and resources designed to create healthier communities. Health Unit Staff chair community partnerships involved in Food Security such as the Northumberland Food Access Committee as well as the Northumberland Food for Thought Committee (which supports and assists with school nutrition programs). Staffs also work with early childhood growth and development and are active members in local affordable housing and transportation coalitions. The Health Unit is mandated to monitor the affordability of food using the provincial standardized tool known as the Nutritious Food Basket.

Habitat for Humanity Northumberland – envisions a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live; mobilizing volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting homeownership as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Doug Bates – community member who has had to restructure his family life in dealing with the costs of care associated with having an autistic son.

The Committee met many times from the fall of 2007 onwards, but from the outset, it was decided that a Community Action Day would be needed, rather than just another “study” on poverty. The Committee strongly believed that the community must be involved in developing poverty solutions that would work locally in the short-, medium- and long-term.

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Poverty is not a new phenomenon here. The Northumberland community has been addressing poverty for many years:

- 1969 First United Appeal/United Way campaign locally
- 1973 Horizons of Friendship formed
- 1983 Cobourg and District Unemployed Help Centre opens
- 1986 First food-bank opens in Cobourg (Fare Share)
- 1988/89 Poverty Forum held in Victoria Hall, Cobourg
Social Planning Council 4-part series “Poverty Trap”
Social Planning Council sponsors “Hungry Kids Survey” with Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
Northumberland Access to Permanent Housing Committee formed
- 1992 Northumberland Community Coalition (NCC) formed by Horizons of Friendship
- 1993/94 Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty formed
- 1995-98 Food Action Committee begins (NCC and Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit)
Community Transportation Committee formed by NCC
- 1998 Northumberland Habitat for Humanity granted affiliate status (formed from work by the Access to Permanent Housing Committee)
- 2003 “Fulton Report” released (commissioned by Northumberland Children’s Aid Society)
- 2004 Northumberland United Way conducts Community Matters consultation
HKPR Health Unit begins producing annual Cost of Healthy Eating report
Food for All warehouse opened (United Way project)
- 2006 Northumberland County Ontario Works conducts Caseload Study to Barriers to Employment
Rural Transportation Initiative begins
- 2006/07 Make Poverty History project by NCAP
Ontario Needs a Raise campaign conducted by NCAP
- 2007 Affordable Housing Action Committee formation
- 2008 HKPR Health Unit releases its Child Poverty Report
Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee formed

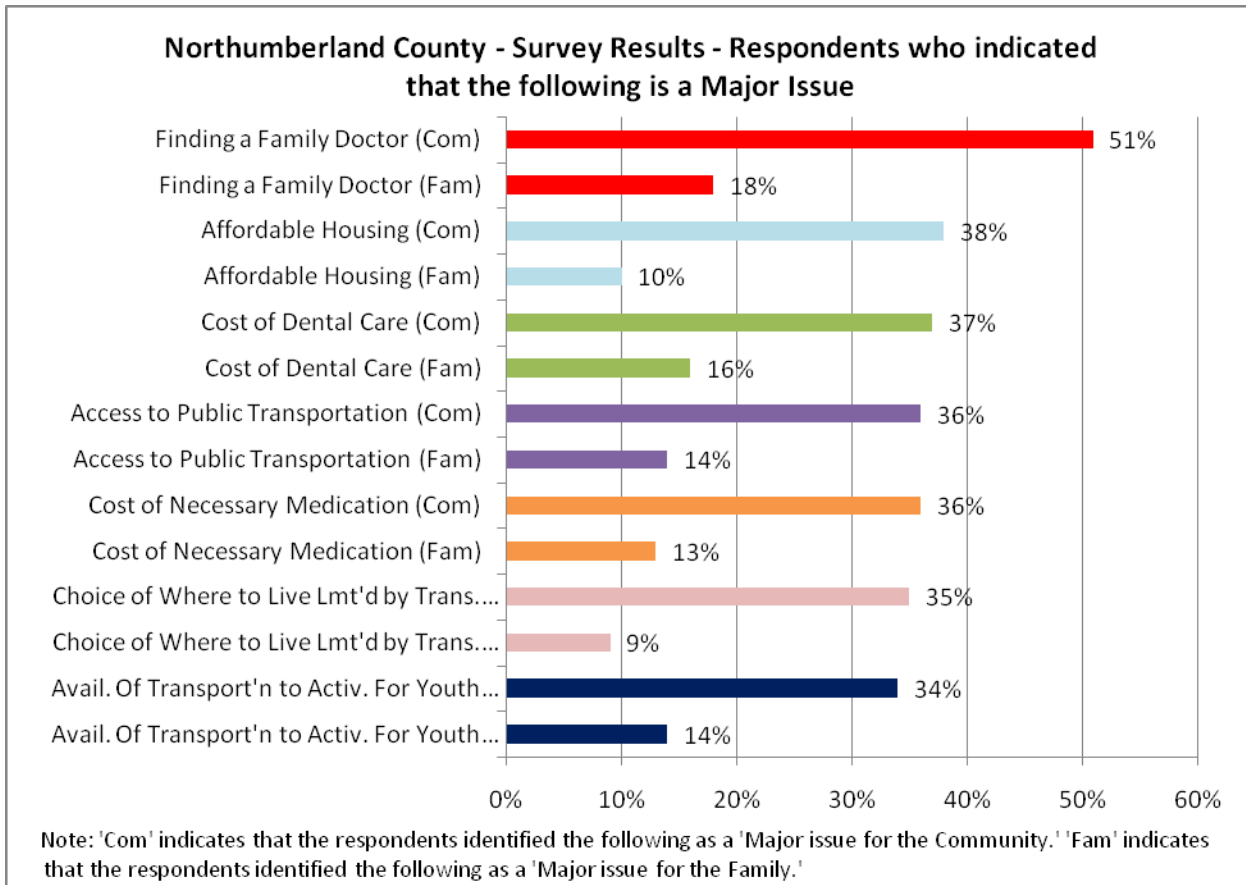
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There is a wealth of data and statistics already in existence that demonstrates the extent and depth of poverty in Northumberland County. The committee members were quickly able to produce information regarding the extent of the problem of poverty from the perspective of their respective agencies. That data is summarized below. The committee was also keenly aware that other groups have taken action on three specific issues that feed directly into poverty: transportation, affordable housing, and food security.

What follows is a summary of information compiled by various agencies working to counter the effects of, and reduce poverty in, Northumberland County, that was produced for use as background materials at Community Action Day.

Identifying Need and Working to Solutions

The following chart is taken from the United Way's *Community Matters Report*, indicating the prominent issues facing our community and many of the same issues identified by the Poverty Reduction Action Committee that directly relate to those living in poverty in Northumberland County.



(Northumberland United Way, 2006, p. 14)

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Poverty is not a new phenomenon in Northumberland County. The working poor is a segment of our population that is growing. We know that 1 in 5 families live in poverty, that the list of those waiting for County housing is more than 250 with an expected wait time of 3-4 years, and each year 300 people move into area emergency shelters. (Bill Pyatt, CAO, Northumberland County 2008)

Some local individuals and families with children who rely on fixed incomes or minimum-wage jobs have no money left at month's end to pay for basics such as transportation costs, house insurance, gas, clothing, and more. Some may choose to go hungry or avoid buying healthy food in order to pay for other necessities. Families may also be forced to move to remote rural areas where rent is cheaper. This can reduce their access to jobs, childcare, public transportation, and grocery stores with lower food prices. (Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2008)

Affordable Housing

Residents of the two largest towns, Cobourg and Port Hope, indicated that affordable housing is their top priority (49% and 47.4% respectively). "This may reflect the relative higher price of housing and possibly the higher level of taxation." (Northumberland United Way, 2006)

"Northumberland County faces an acute affordable housing shortage. Low and moderate income families are being squeezed by rising rents, rapid increases in housing costs, greater demand for existing rental units and stagnating incomes as some manufacturing plants downsize or close. Most working poor households cannot afford anything other than poorly built rental units which are expensive to heat and maintain." (Affordable Housing Steering Committee , 2008)

Quick Facts on Housing in Northumberland County:

- Development charges for building have more than doubled in the past few years;
- No additional rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units have been built since 1995;
- Building activity is high but most new units are expensive and there is no new rental housing being developed;
- No new construction houses are priced below \$150,000, yet half of the households in Northumberland County cannot afford to pay \$150,000 for housing; those with the greatest need are shut out of the housing market;
- In the poorest areas of the County, 25-37% of houses pre-date World War II
- 2,285 dwellings in the County require major repair.

A full range of housing types is a source of strength and vitality for the community. The entire community suffers if people remain in dire need, if rents are too high, if housing is inadequate or in short supply, if workers have to leave, if poverty increases and, as a result, children's health, education and welfare are compromised. (Affordable Housing Steering Committee , 2008)

Most people on OW or ODSP are at risk of becoming homeless. In 2006 an estimated 3,300 individuals received homelessness services:

- 300 in emergency shelters
- 400 families retained housing
- 55 securing new permanent housing

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Northumberland County runs 14 properties with 344 units, inherited aged units then 30-50 years old. Work being done is to implement the recommendations made in the energy management audit. Northumberland County, as the upper tier government, is responsible for the local delivery of the Canada- Ontario Affordable Housing Program, providing funding at levels:

- \$470,000 Housing Allowance Program
- \$180,000 Homeownership Program
- \$1,700,000 Rental & Supportive Capital Project

(Bill Pyatt, CAO, 2008)

Within the Infant and Child Development Program, in which 420 children are enrolled, 20% live in below-standard housing. (Northumberland Child Development Centre, 2008)

There is a critical link between housing and health and performance at work and in school. 25 % of Habitat for Humanity homeowners felt the best thing of the partnership with Habitat was that they now owned an asset giving them financial security that they could pass on to their children. Families feel that they have control over their lives. Other Habitat homeowner responses include:

- 40% said their children's grades had changed with 20% reporting improvement due to better health and better ability to concentrate.
- 53% reported change in children's behaviour with 60% of those responses saying that children were happier, more outgoing and more confident. 30% said the improvement was because the children had some space of their own and more room in general in the home.
- 24% responded that one or both partners had returned to school to learn a new trade or upgrade job skills. 30% of these enrolled in a college or university program citing the predictability of their housing costs allowing them the freedom to attend school.

(Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2004)

Transportation

Transportation was ranked among the top three issues for Alnwick/Haldimand, Cramahe, Brighton and Trent Hills. Clearly "transportation issues affect the choice of where to live and accessibility to recreational activities. Transportation issues directly affect Northumberland families." "Youth are also directly affected by access to public transportation." (Northumberland United Way, 2006)

Community Care Northumberland currently oversees the development of a county-wide transportation service. Among other initiatives, the group is working to obtain the Gas Tax Revenue from the Provincial government through the lower tier municipalities. Transportation routes are being determined and would include coordination of efforts in neighbouring communities, private taxi operators, centralized dispatch and training programs to find, adapt and maintain suitable vehicles for use. (Community Care Northumberland, 2008)

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From the Northumberland Child Development Centre:

- Infant and Child Development program (of 420 children) – 22% do not own a vehicle; 47% live in rural communities
- Bright Place to Start program (of 146 families) – 77% do not own a vehicle.
(Northumberland Child Development Centre, 2008)

Children and Youth

Locally, more than 4,000 families with children live in poverty (derived from national average).
(Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2008)

Northumberland County Social Services provides subsidies to allow parents to have access to quality child care to remain in the workforce. There is also assistance for parents who are working, job searching, attending school and those with children who have special needs. The Community Outreach program provides in-home supports to working families and children in crisis. Outreach also provides financial support, community referrals, service collaboration, family reintegration, work with poverty, hunger, social and emotional isolation and illness. Most recent statistics available list 778 families with 1,573 children had been served through the outreach program. Other programs supported by the County are school nutritional programs that feed 2,000 children daily, the Food 4 All Warehouse, Milk for Moms and Good Food Box programs.

(Bill Pyatt, CAO, 2008)

Kawartha Pine Ridge School Board has a number of programs and initiatives to address child poverty including advocacy to link family income to student achievement and create community partnerships to support the creation of programs and fund programs. These programs include tutoring, mentoring, breakfast and lunch meals, inclusionary field/school trips, to name a few.

(Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (2001)

Food Security

Accessing food is a concern for 15% of local families with children 17 years of age and under and 11.5% of households experience food insecurity due to lack of money.

(HKPR District Health Unit, Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2005)

Food insecurity was determined if respondents stated that they worried that there would not be enough to eat, or did not have enough food to eat, or did not eat the quality or variety of foods they wanted to eat.

(Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2008)

Among the 150 groups who regularly use the Food 4 All Warehouse there are:

- 11 food banks accounting for 40% of product delivered
- 16 churches accounting for 15% of product delivered
- 51 school programs accounting for 20% of product delivered
- Various community groups accounting for 25 % of product delivered

(Food 4 All Warehouse, 2008)

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Of 420 children under the age of 6 for whom Northumberland Child Development Centre provides developmental services, 25% run out of food regularly and 15% use food banks on a regular basis. There are 146 families who struggle to support themselves and their young children in the *Bright Place to Start Program* and 39% run out of food regularly.

The *Milk for Moms* program distributed 11,227 coupons to agency partners in 2007, helping 10,089 children in 4,977 families. (Northumberland Child Development Centre, 2008)

Nutritious Food Basket

Every June, HKPR District Health Unit collects data from eleven stores using a provincially standardized tool known as the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) to determine the average cost of 66 food items commonly purchased and recommended by Canada's Food Guide. The NFB does not include cleaning products, diapers, toilet paper, and personal care items such as soap, toothpaste, and feminine hygiene products. Weekly cost of food for 23 different age groups and the corresponding *Child Poverty: A Problem We Cannot Afford* report can be found at www.hkpr.on.ca.

The NFB Cost for a family of four in 2007 for HKPR	\$135.96
The NFB Cost for a family of four in 2006 for HKPR	\$132.80
The NFB Cost for a family of four in 2005 for HKPR	\$129.37
The NFB Cost for a family of four in 2004 for HKPR	\$126.05
The NFB Cost for a family of four in 2003 for HKPR	\$126.26

Income

In Northumberland County:

- County funds for ODSP Program delivered by the province - \$4.7M, 1369 cases
- OW caseload – 630 cases, 1213 recipients: 42% children
- 70% of recipients receive assistance for less than 12 months

(Bill Pyatt, CAO, 2008)

Additionally:

- Median family income is \$52,354, which is significantly less than both the provincial and national medians
- The number of local residents seeking social assistance has increased since 2003, with approximately 46% of the caseload being families with children

(Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2008)

Northumberland Child Development Centre's 420 children under the age of 6 have:

- 41% living below the poverty level with incomes less than \$26,000
- 13% live above the poverty level but still lack adequate resources to live healthy lives
- 33% have only one household income

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Bright Place to Start Program, with their 146 families, has:

- 94% surviving on total household income below \$26,000
- 49% with only one household income
- 66% supported by Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program

(Northumberland Child Development Centre, 2008)

Support is vital to families working on restricted incomes. Salvation Army provided assistance to low-income members of our community to a total of \$100,000 in 2005. This assistance was done through rent supplements, homelessness aid and other emergency assistance programs.

(The Salvation Army Cobourg, 2005)

Works Cited

Affordable Housing Steering Committee (2008); *Housing is a Fundamental Need*; Northumberland County

Bill Pyatt, CAO (Jan 25, 2008); *Northumberland County compiled information*; presentation to Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2004); *Assessment of the Outcomes for Habitat for Humanity Homebuyers*

Community Care Northumberland (2008); *Progress Chart for Northumberland Transportation Initiative*

Food 4 All Warehouse (2008)

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (2008); *Child Poverty- A Problem We Cannot Afford*

Northumberland Child Development Centre (2008); *Client Demographics on Poverty*

Northumberland United Way (2006); *Community Matters*

The Salvation Army Cobourg (2005); *Family & Community Services*

HKPR District Health Unit(2003); *Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System*

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (2001); *A Compendium of Strategies to Support Students Living in Poverty*

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PUBLIC FORUM, APRIL 4, 2008, OPENING REMARKS

By the Honourable Christine Stewart, P.C.

Welcome & Introduction

My role today is as a facilitator only. I attended a few planning meetings of the Poverty Reduction Action Committee, but I am not an expert on the issue of poverty in Northumberland. One of the organizers today, Deb O'Connor, worked tirelessly in a number of capacities in her attempt to reduce poverty. Twenty years ago, we held another 'poverty forum.' What has happened in the interval?

Positive – for a number of individuals, some situations have improved

Negative – in so far as the statistics have not really improved

POVERTY in our community affects us all whether we recognize it or not. Poverty influences health and social service costs, represents lost opportunities which we cannot afford in our community, and importantly, for individuals, causes despair, anger, and hopelessness. Improvements through effective programs to reduce and eliminate poverty enhance the lives of everyone in our community. Reducing and eventually eliminating poverty helps us all to prosper. Poor children in Northumberland are our children. Poor families in Northumberland are our families. We must work together to find ways to eliminate their poverty, remembering that their poverty is our poverty.

The Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee has evolved from a justice forum sponsored by the Northumberland Community Legal Centre and the Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty which took place last October. It currently comprises a loose association of members, some of whose names were appended to your invitation here today.

This Committee has had several planning meetings leading up to today and has set a very demanding agenda for the day, which will involve us all working together respectively, to achieve a Community Action Plan at the end of the day. Before I describe this agenda in any detail, the committee has put together a PowerPoint presentation which will hopefully inform you of the background of poverty realities and research as they exist to date in Northumberland.

To repeat an important point made earlier. **PRAC sees the poor in our communities as having insufficient resources to meet basic needs.**

I want to relate a personal story:

In the late 1980's and early 1990's Canada led the world in its laws and policies which aimed to provide equality of opportunity to disabled persons in our society. The rest of the world looked to our programs and their successes for their own direction. I was a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of the Disabled in the late 80's and early 90's. One of our tasks was to travel to Washington to meet with our counterparts there to discuss disability issues, rights, laws and policies. The outcome was the Americans with Disability Act, or ADA. It is now regarded as one of the best anywhere.

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Why were the Americans so interested? Simple. They had a shortage of skilled persons in important job areas and they realized that they had an important underutilized resource to meet their needs. The resource was their disabled. They recognized that their disabled were costing their society a lot of money, physical & mental health costs, housing costs, care costs of all kinds – but most importantly, lost opportunity costs. Their new law provided access of all kinds for the disabled and consequently they have become important contributors to the health of the American economy. Some costs of doing so seemed extravagant at the time (housing, transportation, parking, care provision); programs we take for granted today. The costs of these targeted services were much cheaper than warehousing the disabled in inappropriate, undignified, stultifying circumstances.

My belief is that by providing for the needs of those living in poverty (Northumberland's people living in poverty, people of all ages, including far too many children), we will reap the same rewards as was achieved for the disabled. I want to see previously poor people experiencing opportunity; opportunity to access housing, food, appropriate training and education, transportation, fair wages, and most importantly, the opportunity to have dignity, pride and hope for themselves, their children and grandchildren.

In conclusion, we have a very demanding agenda, the object of which is to devise a way forward, to implement a POVERTY REDUCTION ACTION PLAN for Northumberland. We want to make poverty reduction and elimination a 'top of mind' issue for everyone in Northumberland believing that only thereby can we, together, bring about the change we seek.

Now is the time to start work on our agenda for today. All of us must work together, respectfully, recognizing limitations to what we can achieve in one day, but also recognizing that all of us here are experts with something to contribute to the day's proceedings."

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Invitations to attend the Community Action Day were sent out to a wide range of community agencies, service clubs, institutions, government agencies, First Nations, businesses, labour, educational institutions, elected officials, and the community at large.

Nearly 100 people attended the Community Action Day on April 4, 2008, facilitated by Honourable Christine Stewart, P.C. Attendees were randomly assigned to eight working groups. Each group had a facilitator and a note-taker. At the end of each working session, each group reported back to the plenary on the main points of discussion within that group.

What follows is a compilation of the responses from each of the groups. The comments are taken directly from the notes made at each group on each topic, and reflect the main points of discussion reported back to the plenary session by each group. While these comments reflect the “highlights” of the discussions of the day, the reader must recognize that these notes are, in themselves, a step away from the full authenticity of the day.

The content of this report is just a starting point. Clear, measurable goals and objectives will be established by the Committee over the next few months, as the work progresses to implement the action items identified on the Community Action Day (see below). More work will take place to document the extent of poverty using local resources, information and data and to highlight the impact that poverty has on the local economy and on local residents.

The Community Action Day was divided into three sessions, each building upon the work done in the prior session. The first session asked the participants to consider what elements needed to be in a poverty reduction strategy, what players needed to be involved and what the strategy would be. It became clear very early on in this session that many of the discussion groups reached very similar conclusions about what elements needed to be in a Northumberland-built Poverty Reduction Strategy.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF OUR POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY?

BASIC INCOME SECURITY

Basic income security is perhaps the most important and most fundamental element in any Poverty Reduction Strategy. There are multiple sub-elements to this piece:

- More affordable day care: problems remain for families to be able to get their children to centralized programs, and in obtaining day care for shift workers.
- The requirement for more access to “transitional” needs for clothing, transportation, housing, when moving into the community and/or into employment.

ELEMENTS:
Basic Income Security
Transportation
Affordable Housing
Awareness Campaign
Skill Development,
Training & Education
Economic Development
Coordination of
Agencies & Programs
Advocacy

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- More and better access to basic health care:
 - being able to have a family doctor,
 - dental coverage for low-income families, including denture services,
 - coverage for the working poor for prescriptions, co-payment deductibles, dispensing fees, etc.
 - transportation to drug counselling, methadone clinics and other treatment
- Better access to food banks and other services (more accessible transportation, better management, longer hours)
- More access to higher quality food of higher nutritional value, at a reasonable cost
- Increasing the rates for WSIB, Employment Insurance, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability
- Making energy conservation available to low-income persons
- Raise the minimum wage
- Supporting seniors at risk, utilizing the health care support system to monitor and refer for services if concerned, with information being made available at the senior centres about services and how to get help or approach someone to offer assistance.

TRANSPORTATION

Any effective Poverty Strategy here needs to address **transportation**. Lack of a county-wide public transportation system is directly linked to poverty. Without reliable low-cost transportation, low-income residents face barriers to accessing jobs, medical treatment (including transportation to addictions counselling and other clinics), and other supports and services.

In order to create a county-wide system of transportation, municipalities need to partner with one another to make a county-wide system a reality. While the Rural Transportation Initiative has been working on this issue for some time now, there is a lack of awareness of what progress has been made towards a county-wide public transportation system.

In the meantime, other transportation initiatives could take place. For instance, a program could be developed to help low-income residents keep their existing vehicles on the road. Being low-income likely means that there is poor quality transportation/vehicles (i.e. needing repairs, maintenance, or with high gas consumption), or older vehicles (needing to meet emissions and safety standards or with poor reliability). A program that would help with the payment/support/ subsidy of repairs and maintenance for such vehicles (i.e. the “Greenwood” group who supports a person with a van, who in turn helps others) could serve as an interim measure to lessen the impact of transportation difficulties, funded perhaps through Ontario Disability Support Program Employment or from other sources.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Another large element of a Poverty Reduction Strategy is the need for low-income and/or **affordable housing**. The Affordable Housing Action Committee’s study showed that a person would need to earn \$13.90/hour minimum, in order to be able to afford a bachelor apartment at the current rental costs here in this County.

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Even if housed, low-income persons are often in precarious housing, with many living in sub-standard units with large maintenance/repairs issues. Many others are inadequately housed with poor cooking facilities, which can lead to poor health. Many low-income persons live in situations with no protection from arbitrary evictions. Many are restricted from advancement into better affordable housing due to lack of income.

Licensing of secondary suites by municipalities could address the affordable housing shortage, as an alternative to room and board situations. Along with producing more affordable, better quality housing for low-income residents, there should be monitoring of low-income accommodation maintenance and standards. For those places with no Residential Tenancy Act protection, there must be a mechanism to act on inadequacies of housing without jeopardizing the tenancy.

**AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN**

Another important element of a Poverty Reduction Strategy is an **awareness campaign** and community education regarding poverty. The first element of such a campaign needs to be a given: poverty is an issue here. There are three prongs to an awareness campaign:

1. There must be an awareness of the need to change the stigma and the understanding of the consequences of poverty, who is affected, etc., as “poor is what I am; not who I am”. People get treated horribly by the system (i.e. being treated badly by cashier when trying to redeem coupons for milk at the grocery store), and such treatment is widespread. An awareness campaign needs to be developed to address attitudes towards people in poverty, as none of us should accept that treatment. Low-income people internalize and are ashamed that they can’t give their children what they deserve. Yet low-income residents would be more engaged and raised up in the community if practical solutions were made (i.e. transportation) and if they were involved in creating those solutions.

Poverty goes beyond housing: poverty is also when you don’t have access to culture, music, arts; lack of access to things that enrich life (those things seem like a luxury when living in poverty). There must be an elimination of the middle class bias by getting to the underlying issues, otherwise people are being penalized for being poor. A political attitude/global shift is required. Poverty is not the result of the Harris government’s cut-backs. Poverty is not “their” problem and “their” fault. Services must be delivered with respect.

2. There is a need to raise awareness in the general community of the importance of poverty reduction and its effects. One of the main obstacles to poverty reduction is the community’s attitude towards it. This must change to be one where poverty is seen as *our* problem, affecting *our* children, and directly impacting all of us. Poverty reduction could be marketed as reducing the cost of delivering services. The “branding” of such a program is important. This education must also emphasize the difference between helping people and eliminating poverty, and involve a view to the causal factors. There must be increased awareness of the different types of poverty: those on long-term disability; families with challenges (i.e. learning disability leaving them on Ontario Works); lay-offs; injured and unable to get other employment; people who are unable to take care of themselves. The public must be educated to see beyond the initial presentation of the problem to the underlying causes of poverty (i.e. a child needing a coat as the initial presentation but the underlying problem is the fact that his parents have learning disabilities and are under-employed). The individuals who are helping should be showcased. A poverty reduction strategy must include an awareness campaign to build up hope, dignity, and inspire people.

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3. The other parts of an awareness campaign focus on the need to make people living in poverty aware of programs/services available to them and information-sharing among agencies. A lot of people are incredibly resourceful but many people are stuck. This is where a list of contact names, numbers for whole community (i.e. a paper version of the phone-in 211 service through info Northumberland) would be a valuable tool. Contacts are important, as is the quality of the information and the accessibility of the place where it is stored. There needs to be a repository for informal information (i.e. crisis fund of church). Such help and resources will empower, and lessen the isolation that many low-income persons feel.

**SKILL
DEVELOPMENT,
TRAINING &
EDUCATION**

Skill development, training and educational resources form another element in a Poverty Reduction Strategy. Literacy is also an important part of this element. Moreover, people need essential skills. There is a lack of education resources in this county to meet the current needs of employers and the local economy. There often is no sustainable work at the end of retraining because the training does not directly relate to work available here. Students often leave the educational system “owing the national debt” and being unable to repay. There must be community support to stay in school, and equal access to employment, training, and education for all residents. There must be sustainable jobs for those less-skilled, and an active skill development program to develop skills and engage people with challenges such as mental health or physical issues.

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Coupled with that is a need for **economic development**, as an integral part of any poverty reduction strategy. This must override the current lack of sustainable employment that provides benefits, in order to maintain the necessary tax base needed to provide resources. There must be direction from the County in order to counteract the job losses in the manufacturing sector which have so adversely affected many Northumberland residents. There must be ways of creating employment for people with mental illnesses. Without viable businesses locally and without companies having to be accountable for fair wage, there will be direct correlation to an increasing depth of poverty here. Without local well-paying sustainable jobs, parents have a decreased ability to support their families, to make child support payments, and to spend in the local economy. There must be a reversal of the trend to go out of province, to find a job here. Unemployment or underemployment by either parent has a direct effect on children.

There is a need for better **coordination** of agencies and programs available in order to reduce poverty here. The County needs a group like a Social Planning Council, but we must create an

**COORDINATION
OF AGENCIES AND
PROGRAMS**

opportunity for people to say what will work in their community. We must connect people with agencies that can help. Between agencies, and between service users and service providers, it is important to establish support networks. For the community at large, we must make it easy to take advantage of any poverty reduction strategies, through coordination of effort.

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**COORDINATION
OF AGENCIES AND
PROGRAMS**

Lastly, any poverty reduction strategy must have an **advocacy** component. People need to make a choice. Empowerment of low income individuals to advocate for themselves will help reduce poverty. If empowerment is included in advocacy, it will help build skills and respect. Moreover, there must be advocacy for political leadership and cooperation between all levels of government working together. Advocacy must be done as a community-based activity to build trust and confidence. Advocacy will need accountability to be credible, and one way to build that accountability would be to have low-income individuals on committees.

WHO NEEDS TO PLAY A ROLE IN REDUCING POVERTY, AND HOW DO WE GET THEM INVOLVED?

The Community Action Day participants said that there should be a broad range of players engaged in poverty reduction:

- The **business community** in general, including bankers, economists, developers, builders/manufacturers' associations, and Chambers of Commerce, must become educated as to the costs of poverty and the effects on business. The small business sector, in particular,
 - must understand that raising the minimum wage will help them through increased purchasing power of their employees
 - could be provided with subsidies to support small businesses' ability to offer jobs and continue to pay staff.
- All levels of **government** – provincial, municipal, federal – must be involved in developing an economic strategy, and in building relationships among all stakeholders. Governments must put a higher priority on poverty because it is costing us as a society.
- The **community as a whole**, including seniors, youth
- **Social service agencies**, who must
 - coordinate and share actions/information among all community agencies and businesses
 - expand the awareness of Poverty Reduction Committee
 - make referrals to appropriate resources through a community information strategy and networking
 - focus on the “hope” of resource availability and services rather than just money-focussed issues
 - deliver services in an atmosphere of respect, understanding and sensitivity to their clients and their issues

PLAYERS:
Businesses
Government
Community as a Whole
Social Services Agencies
Low-Income Individuals
Faith Community
Service Clubs
Community Services
Media

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- **Low-income individuals** as users of the services must be encouraged to attend without feeling intimidated, to express their thoughts/needs
- The **faith community** needs to reaffiliate with the issue, to get back to being the fabric of the community
- **Service clubs** need to continue their good (charitable) work with a long-term view to get people out of poverty
- **Services** such as police, the medical professions, educational institutions and school boards must take a broader view of their mandates to see how poverty plays a role in their sectors
- **Media** and the press must be involved to carry the message of the need for poverty reduction.

WITH THOSE ELEMENTS AND THOSE PLAYERS, WHAT WILL OUR STRATEGY BE?

Poverty reduction must be on everyone's agenda. To that end, the strategy identified is multi-faceted:

- There is a need for some **basic research** specific to this County on the nature of poverty here, as without the facts, it is very difficult to advocate to engage those players listed above. The research must address root causes of poverty here and the needs of the local economy/market, so that programs can be based on need.
- We need to **make poverty media friendly** and give concrete examples of costs, to focus on the benefits of reducing poverty.
- We need **grass-roots programs** to reduce poverty, with direct involvement of the low-income community at a committee level and in community forums and surveys. We need "champions" to take issues forward and raise awareness, and to mobilize the community.
- We must reframe the issue of poverty through an **awareness campaign** for the general public so that they are aware of the issues, and so that we dispel myths and decrease stigma.
- We must implement a **communication strategy**, to better ensure community sharing of resources, and to ensure that access to information and programs is readily available to the low-income community.
- We must institute a **Social Planning Council**, pulling from all sectors, with a mandate of reducing poverty, to ensure more coordination between services and agencies and better use of existing resources.
- We should work towards "**wrap-around**" service delivery, and begin a model of mobile units delivering services outside of Cobourg perhaps through service hubs in various areas for one-stop shopping. We need to develop support networks for people that deliver hope to low-income residents.

STRATEGY:
Basic Research
Media Friendly
Grass-Roots Programs
Awareness Campaign
Communication
Social Planning Council
Wrap-Around Service
Advocate
Empower
Action-Oriented
Accountability

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- We need to **advocate** for raising the rates for adequate incomes, for the removal of disincentives and for the universality of programs to work towards a systemic change, rather than a charitable model, for long-term success.
- We must **empower the organizations** that we already have on the ground, to strengthen local players, agencies and community groups that are often under-resourced, under-funded and in need for more volunteers and support.
- The strategy must **be action-oriented**, with short, medium and long term remedies, but there must be immediate assistance for those in immediate need.
- Our strategy must have built-in **accountability**.

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The second session of the Community Action Day focussed on Developing our Targets and Measures.

WHAT IS OUR TARGET?

Most of the groups on the Community Action Day agreed that our Poverty Reduction Strategy should work towards attaining a 25% reduction in poverty locally within the next 5 years. One group took a more conservative approach, feeling that it would be more realistic to achieve a 10% reduction over 5 years based on the following facts:

- level of unemployment in Ontario,
- high cost of food,
- high cost of gas/transportation,
- aging population, demands
- jobs of future: less full-time jobs, no benefits

Two of the groups felt that there should be no specific number associated with poverty reduction as a target, as ultimately the target is to eliminate poverty entirely. "No one left behind" and "poverty is totally unacceptable" were strong sentiments expressed.

REDUCTION IN POVERTY

HOW WILL WE KNOW THAT POVERTY HAS BEEN REDUCED?

The Community Action Day groups all agreed that tangible, practical, attainable benchmarks were a way of showing progress. The groups came up with ways to measure improvement in the level of poverty locally, but felt strongly that an effort be made to make sure different groups are measured accurately, and that no groups were left out in measurements (i.e. singles) since there seems to be so much focus on reducing child poverty. It was agreed that statistics need to be benchmarked and accurate and above all, reflective of Northumberland County residents when doing measurements.

Various indicators and measures could be used to charge progress towards reducing poverty:

- Use the same measurement that was used to come up with 1 in 6 families in poverty
- Measure a reduction or increase in how much **need/usage of systems** that are there to support poverty,
 - Fewer people applying for OW,
 - Fewer users of food banks,
 - ODSP low caseloads decline,

MEASURES & INDICATORS: Need/Usage of Systems Adequate Housing Stats Canada Health Measurements Economic Development Quality of Life Education

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- Less demand on social services,
- Less homelessness or in shelters,
- Social Housing Waiting List reduced,
- Less need for breakfast program,
- Fewer people going into shelter
- Social assistance services and case loads decline
- Decreased workload for services such as legal clinic, welfare workers
- Less draw on utility fund, rent bank, Help Centre
- Reduced demand for family problem services (i.e. Children's Aid Society)
- More children and families can afford dental care
- Fewer persons unable to afford medications
- Less need for crisis counsellors in shelters
- More access to childcare

- Increase in **adequate housing**
 - Less transient housing/more housing stability
 - Fewer evictions for non-payment of rent arrears
 - Fewer utility cut-offs/late payments
 - Reduced wait time for affordable housing units
 - Fewer homes in need of major repair
 - Reduced need for “utility trust fund” interventions
 - Unit size, bathroom, water, heat – are up to municipal standards
 - Vacancy rate increase
 - Legislation introduced for Boarders' Rights

- **Stats Canada** salary information for this county (note: LICO will always move/be indexed to inflation, as such can not look only at average income as that is only relevant to cost of living).
 - More households in the county above LICO
 - Fewer households below the poverty line as per Stats Canada

- Increased **health measurements** (Income is a determinant of health)
 - Increase in number of healthier individuals
 - Cost savings in healthcare
 - Increase access to healthcare services resulting in healthier residents (medical, dental, mental health)
 - Less demand on health system
 - Reduction in access to emergency services
 - Decrease in number of households waiting for a doctor or medical practitioner

- Increased **economic development**
 - Employment rates high
 - Decrease in unemployment rate
 - Increase in jobs coming to area
 - Increased job opportunities for working poor
 - Increased workforce training
 - Increased tax base with more people paying in, more income going in

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- Retailing, community retail industry, and sales increase
- Market rate for hiring increases
- Minimum wage raised
- Demand for municipal services up, done faster
- Increase in County tax revenue

- **Higher indicators of quality of life** and continued costs and benefits
 - More membership in organizations
 - More use of programs
 - More people voting
 - Quality of life for community improved
 - Availability of public transportation increased
 - Reduction of crime/theft, drug use
 - Everybody has all of their basic needs met
 - More political goodwill and funding for programs
 - Less “battling” for money
 - Better utilization of services
 - More personalized individualized services available
 - Less isolation of low income persons
 - Increased accessibility for kids to recreational programs (sports, recreation, arts)
 - Affordability of Food Basket within reach of more residents
 - Lower debt loads

- **More educational needs being met**
 - School performance indicators will increase
 - Fewer children unable to participate in outings such as field trips
 - Fewer children with needs at school
 - Increase in number of high school, post-secondary graduates
 - More persons with a higher level of education
 - Literacy increased
 - More school libraries utilized
 - Continue to use Kawartha Pine Ridge statistics (i.e. reduction of children repeating a grade, need for tutoring of students)

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HOW DO WE GET THERE IN THE SHORT, MEDIUM, AND LONG TERM?

SHORT TERM

Ideas for **short-term** (less than 1 year to implement) reductions, as a quick fix/band-aid approach, included:

- More access to affordable housing and public transportation
- Decreased medical costs
- Increased access to food, through the food warehouse and use of refrigerated truck
- Seek provincial funding for food banks
- More beds in shelters
- Sessions dealing with learning coping skills
- Reduction in price of transit passes for low-income residents
- Free garbage tags for low-income residents
- Increased local employment
- Better access to skills development programs
- Co-op ventures for local produce
- Encourage volunteering to develop a skill at something
- Breakfast program in schools expanded to include lunches
- Public school, libraries have wireless internet connection
- Community gardens program expanded
- After hour programs in schools expanded

MEDIUM TERM

Medium Term:

- Encourage more local involvement as individuals to join groups
 - Challenge local service clubs and empower as a local theme (faith clubs, educational services)
- Mentoring
 - Education in schools in changing attitudes, building on VIP and DARE programs (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education)
 - Begin a local employment/co-op (organic movement) in agriculture
 - Create educational opportunities at reasonable cost, geared to income,
 - Create sustainable housing (low energy)

LONG TERM

Long Term:

- Create a grassroots, county-based initiative around poverty reduction and build momentum.
- Develop a centralized approach to organize/drive/coordinate the volunteer efforts and create accountability in this position

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- Focus on key strategies, with one or two themes for the “5 year plan”, as the themes will lead to funding for a coordinator who can then seek political support
- Develop an advocacy program
 - To explain poverty, homelessness, working poor
 - To make poverty reduction an election issue/priority
 - To ask for more flexibility in government programs, such as
 - review of earnings deductions
 - efficacy and effectiveness of employment services
 - pay for education with full funding for skills training where there are shortages
- Conduct research into statistics from local sources; track people and success, and use that to support further action
- Establish linkages among services and eliminate duplication of services; look at ways for people to better help themselves and each other by creating connections
- Increase awareness, as people not in poverty need to believe that addressing poverty is important (only 2% of Ontarians are behind poverty reduction province wide)
 - focus on the effects of poverty using a cost/benefit analysis, with reference to untapped resources and skills of the low-income community
 - create educational materials about the realities of living in poverty:
 - lack of housing.
 - issue of homelessness
 - lack of community support, networks for people
 - lack of safety net
- Stimulate employment with more jobs, and better paid jobs
 - Job training must be specific to local jobs, with local job training
 - Target “employable” people to return to work, and focus on the economic aspects
 - Anticipate/capitalize on local strengths (i.e. agriculture is a strength)
 - Develop workforce training program which anticipate shortages; capitalize on strengths; develop supports (i.e. transportation)
 - Ensure skills development in schools for those who are not going on to post-secondary education
 - Invest in retraining for laid off workers (who could be used to act as mentors to high school students)
- Focus on better conditions for learning to increase self-esteem and create stronger adults.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC ISSUES...

For specific issues, some of the short, medium and long-term suggestions were:

HOUSING

- Secure more free land for affordable housing
- When developers put in plan for a subdivision, require that they allow for one affordable housing unit
- Develop program of subsidized rent to landlords to increase the number of affordable housing units
- Relax by-laws for affordable housing units
- Relax by-laws for opening homes to rental units (i.e. by tax incentives to homeowners, or the elderly)
- Support the building of new units through programs like Habitat for Humanity
- Build support systems for obtaining, maintaining and keeping
- Create apprenticeships or student training to work on building seniors/low income homes
- Enact vital services by-law enacted to provide secured services to tenants
- Land use planning – use advisory council to “make it easy” by providing “turn-key initiatives,” for example, and draft a plan for implementation to incorporate poverty reduction initiatives

TRANSPORTATION

Increase bus hours for retail workers on evening and weekend shifts (smaller bus could be used if services are lower)

- Support Transportation Committee on their initiatives currently in place
- Make the link between housing and transportation: getting people from where they are to where they need to be and home again

FOOD

- Fix the problem of distribution by increasing food bank hours, accessibility
- Ensure more respectful and accessible distribution
- Support education programs such as school breakfast, lunches, education about food, healthy living
- Create more community gardens
- Support program to buy locally, with incentives for farmers to provide locally
- Create agricultural apprenticeship for youth

***DAY CARE
ACCESSIBILITY***

- Make it affordable
- Advocate for universal daycare
- Create incentives for home daycare
- Lobby for more subsidized spaces

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DEVELOPING OUR ACTION PLAN

The final session of the Community Action Day centred on **Developing Our Action Plan:**

1. What actions do we need to take to implement our strategy?
 - What can be done immediately on a practical level to relieve poverty?
 - How can service providers better co-ordinate services between them?
2. How is the work going to be carried forward and by whom?
3. Who is accountable for the Action Plan?

ACTION PLAN:
Awareness
Education
Housing
Coordinated Services
Economic Development
Transportation
Basic Income Security

Action plans were developed around common themes that had been identified out of the earlier sessions that day:

1. CREATE AN AWARENESS/ COMMUNICATIONS/ ADVOCACY STRATEGY.

- We must make poverty reduction a “top of mind” issue for all sectors.
- To do this, we need an attitude shift: poverty is not just a poor person’s issue but it is everyone’s issue.
- Youth should be involved and brought on-side, so information about poverty should be introduced in the earliest school years. A Poverty Action Day in high schools could highlight this as a local issue.
- All levels of government must be involved in poverty reduction work. We must advocate that governments keep this on every agenda, and to think of ways to reduce poverty through innovative means, for example:
 - Allowing surpluses to cross over budget lines: surpluses moved to local governments unrestricted for local application “infrastructure model”
 - Reinforce with federal/provincial governments that they could give to local initiatives like infrastructure programs
 - an “EASY” button: ease of regulation on things like affordable housing
 - Pass objective-based legislation, where the object is to reduce poverty
- In order to achieve an attitude shift, the issue needs to be prominent in the media. As such, we need media-friendly information:
 - Human interest stories; personal stories with statistics of other similar stories
 - Public stories to raise awareness to reach the middle and upper income residents in the county
 - Weekly news story/human interest on poverty and its effects

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- Ask the local papers to run a “what’s your poverty IQ quiz” as an educational tool
- We must reframe the issue to be the cost of poverty versus the costs of ending poverty, for example:
 - The costs of investment in employment and training versus the costs of Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support
 - The costs of services versus the taxes in (i.e. subsidized daycare costs versus taxes paid by those working parents)
- Low-income residents must have information on how to access services and how to become self-sufficient.

Responsibility for this action item should rest with:

- Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty
- Poverty Reduction Action Committee
- Civics classes in high schools

***2. CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PLAN WITH A VIEW TO
REDUCING POVERTY***

- Ensure child engagement in the learning process through tutoring and mentoring after school
- Create an inventory of education support programs available here and make the public aware of these opportunities
- Make skilled trades programs affordable for all
- Increase literacy levels for youth and adults
- Promote apprenticeships and life-long learning
- Develop appropriate skills training for this market

Responsibility for this action item should rest with:

- Local school board superintendents
- Students (both youth and adults)
- School board councils
- School boards
- Provincial government

3. GENERATE MORE AFFORDABLE AND BETTER QUALITY HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME RESIDENTS

- Create more subsidized housing
- Create more affordable housing (both rental and owned) by having a municipal by-law with a specified percentage of units over total designated as affordable
- Update existing housing stock
- Address barriers to affordable housing
- Educate the community on affordable versus social housing; individual versus community needs
- Grass roots must be made aware of need and what individuals in the community can do to assist
- Allowing boarders would address immediate needs
- Boarding rooms should be licensed to legitimize; offer tax benefits, incentives for landlords to create such spaces
- Proper placement on waiting list for subsidized housing reduces cost
- Have municipal licensing of motel/hotels to ensure some standard of quality
- Ensure a mixed income level in housing developments

Responsibility for this action item should rest with:

- Social Planning Council/Community Council
- Governments (for regulations/bylaws; objective-based building code)

4. DEVELOP COORDINATED SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY BETWEEN AGENCIES, SECTORS, AND PROVIDERS/SERVICE USERS

- Expand coordination of what is already happening (i.e. Health Unit Food Action Committee)
- Publicize the availability of the 211 service once it arrives
- Set up an umbrella group within the year, like a Community Development Council with sectoral & regional representation with staff to support
- Ensure convergent not divergent paths

5. STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support sustainable industries/business
- Increase job creation
- Encourage sustainable employment
- Raise minimum wage

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- Remove the following blocks to employment and/or reduce their effects:
 - Lack of transportation and costs
 - Lack of job experience
 - Lack of access to opportunities because of socio-economic conditions
 - Age, disability, health issues
 - Lack of stability in transition to employment/job security
- Create hiring incentives/apprenticeship opportunities
 - Seek subsidies to get started in industry to gain on-the-job experience
 - Hire from home first
 - Training incentives
 - Mentoring
- Identify programs that are achieving both economic development and poverty reduction aims:
 - Skills development
 - Trades programs, mentorship
 - Self-employment benefits
- Create an adaptable economy locally
 - Work with strengths
 - Shop locally for sustainability
 - Turn tourism into bigger industry long-term
 - Investigate alternative industry (i.e. bio-fuel)
- Retraining and skills transfer
 - Retraining of unemployed, unskilled workers
 - Expand service by community colleges in some areas of the county (i.e. a hub model)
 - Eliminate barriers to retraining, such as lack of transportation
 - Assess retraining programs to ensure that it meets local needs
 - Develop service to match employment needs and employee skill
- Technology
 - High speed internet is required throughout the County
 - Technology to help retrain
 - Use of existing schools, transportation
 - In Economic Development, shut downs mean skilled workers who need retraining

6. CREATE A COUNTY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTION

- Until there is a public transit system in the County, we could develop a vehicle adequacy/maintenance/cost program for low-income rural residents
- The goal is a community route for an accessible vehicle for general public as well
- Support the rural transportation initiative: needs more publicity and community awareness to be successful at the local government level
- Public transit one day a week in each area (like the community route one day a week around Campbellford, where 1/3 of system is funded by riders)
- Encourage more rural offices so that people don't have to go to Cobourg, and/or encourage service providers to go to clients

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7. BASIC INCOME SECURITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL NEED FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

- Advocate for adequate income, including a raise of the social assistance rates, minimum wage, and WSIB rates
- Ensure food security
 - Food bank of day-olds/expired
 - More community gardens needed
 - Need more community kitchens
 - Cooperative food programs to be started
 - Volunteer coordination of food programs
 - Donate surplus veggies
 - Health unit to give group meals/instruction, transfer food knowledge
 - Enlist grocery stores as food partners
- Advocate for more subsidized child care
 - More subsidies
 - More spaces
 - More access for shift workers
- Improve access to health care
 - Double the capacity to access healthcare through hiring nurse practitioners
 - Eliminate dispensing fees, drug costs for low-income and the working poor
 - Improve dental access
 - pro bono work as part of professional training
 - find willing dentists to be involved/educate clients on tooth/dental care
- Basic legal needs should be met:
 - Push pro bono as professional requirement
 - Legal needs for Wills, Power of Attorney for low-income residents

Responsibility for this action item rests with:

- Poverty Reduction Action Committee
- The (to-be-created) co-ordinating body
- A “blue ribbon” group of community-based champions

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Northumberland United Way

Northumberland Community Legal Centre (Legal Aid Ontario)

Northumberland County

Northumberland Child Development Centre



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