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MEDIA RELEASE

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The Timiskaming Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB), with support from District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board (DTSSAB) and Northeastern Public Health (NEPH), has launched a campaign to bring awareness to the homelessness crisis that is happening both provincially and locally. The campaign aims to debunk common myths associated with experiencing homelessness, including its causes and what is being done locally to help prevent becoming homeless and support individuals experiencing homelessness.

While we are a small community, we are not immune from the homelessness crisis that is spreading across the province. There is often shame and stigma associated with being homeless that hinders recovery. Homelessness is not a choice, and it is not the result of personal failure.

There is no single cause for homelessness, and the experience arises from systemic issues such as poverty and economic changes, combined with personal circumstances.

Within the District of Timiskaming, we average around 30 individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time. Homelessness is an experience that can happen to anyone, and it can mean “sleeping rough,” couch-surfing, and living in shelters to having a home but being at risk of losing it.

“There are an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness locally,” says Robbie Donaldson, retired lieutenant from the Salvation Army and former co-chair of the Housing & Homelessness workgroup of the CSWB. “These people may be down on their luck but still deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.” Experiencing homelessness can bring on a loss of self-worth associated with the stress of losing a home, income, and other supports one may normally have access to.

People who are experiencing homelessness are often painted in a negative light – as being criminals and having substance use problems; however, most homeless people do not use substances, and while they may have more frequent interactions with police, it is because their ways of survival have been criminalized such as trespassing, loitering, etc.



Timiskaming
COMMUNITY SAFETY
& WELL-BEING
SÉCURITÉ ET
BIEN-ÊTRE
COMMUNAUTAIRE
du Timiskaming



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There is a shortage of affordable housing that meets the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Rental availability is scarce and the wait list for housing can be up to 8 years. Local agencies, including DTSSAB, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and the Pavilion Women's Centre have temporary/transitional opportunities available to help those in immediate need.

There is more to being homeless than living without a home. We invite you to stop the stigma and learn the facts. Learn more by visiting www.timiskaminghu.com

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