

Good afternoon, Mayor Chopp and Norfolk Councillors;

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the ‘plight of the homeless’ and the need for a warming station, shelter. I prefer to refer to ‘homeless’ as ‘neighbours’, the word is more inclusive!!

I am a retired PHN with 40 years’ experience working with the vulnerable in H-N communities.

I recently had the honour of assisting a young man who was homeless. He has given me permission to speak to his situation as a homeless person. I know him from my former PHN position at Health and Social Services when I worked in the Social Determinants of Health program.

He was reticent at first to contact Ontario Works because he said ‘they were **not** willing to listen to what I need; they offered me a stay at a shelter in the city...I want to live in Norfolk...my mom is here in geared-to-income housing and her health is failing...I want to be near her’’

That day he had time, I had time so we teamed up together and used my phone (because he didn't have one) to start the referral process again.

I bumped into him about 2 weeks later; he was a changed person - rested, nourished, smile on his masked face (you could tell just by his eyes!). He thanked me for helping out and said it was just enough 'nudge' that he needed to move forward with the H&SS process.

This young man was able to secure affordable housing - \$600.00 – on ODSP funding – in a rooming house.

He/they were housed before, they can be housed again.

I feel that's all we need to do to help; be willing to 'walk alongside our neighbour', to establish what they see as their needs. In my former position we called it client-centred care.

In a shelter they can access what they need such as medical intervention, MH counselling, Addiction counselling, basic needs etc.

A network of community services including BIA, Salvation Army, BHNCLC, RISE are willing to partner with you to provide a shelter.

We need your moral and financial support. Are you willing to partner, work with us?

I respectfully submit this deputation,

Marilyn Antkiw RISE member