



THE GATEWAY OF HOPE

Help. Hope. Home.

Homelessness concerns us all for a variety of reasons. It takes a human toll and it's both a troubling social and economic issue. In our attempt to deal with it there's risk we can lose sight of the fact the homeless are people too; someone's mother or child or grandfather.

Some find themselves homeless but once in life...

Often due to a traumatic event, economic circumstances, or deterioration in social or family relationships. With a little help and support they rebound quickly.

Others are episodically homeless...

These folks do well for awhile, hold a job, and maintain a residence until lifestyle issues, lack of proper, ongoing support, or vulnerabilities of various kinds contribute to their return to the streets.

Some have been chronically homeless for a very long time...

Often dealing with significant mental health or substance abuse issues. Many in this group have experienced severe trauma, including spiritual, emotional and physical abuse. They are often the most visible of the homeless.

We can't over simplify the causes

"Just get a job."

This suggests the problem is one of laziness and the solution one of economics. Certainly, poverty can be a contributing factor to homelessness, but there are numerous others; a variety of root causes that push people into places of profound hopelessness. How can someone living in poverty with a serious brain injury gain and hold a job? Coping and survival become a way of life. Positive steps forward can seem impossible.

We can't over simplify the solution

"Just build enough housing."

Though for some this would be all that is needed, for so many others, it's not enough. They have held housing, on numerous occasions. Keeping their home has been problematic. To exit homelessness and avoid the experience again requires a considerable amount of ongoing support, which, in the long term, requires community commitment and comes with a cost. It also requires the individual's willingness and ability to contribute to their move forward plan. Though not impossible, for many this is tremendously difficult.

We shouldn't assign blame

"It's their fault; they should have made better choices."

"It's society or the government's fault for letting things get this way." The world is a broken place. Whose fault is mental illness? Some have good upbringings and great opportunities. Some have experienced unspeakable mistreatment and loss. Blame helps no one. In our community there are many great agencies and programs helping disadvantaged people every day. And help is available to those who wish to access it.

We can't paint all homeless with the same brush

"They're lazy, they're bothersome, they commit crimes."

These are traits that reach across all socio-economic lines. Generally the homeless are some of the most honest, sincere and gentle people one could ever meet. They are people with a story, a past, dreams, regrets, loved ones. And they are a part of our community.

So what do we do?

As a society we need to find ways of stemming the flow into homelessness. As our population grows, homelessness grows. We need to find ways to prevent our youth, seniors, and others who are vulnerable from falling into its clutches.

We can better link our services and work more effectively together. More affordable housing does need to be built. But for people to overcome homelessness for good, the necessary ongoing supports need to be in place.

Keep doing what works

At the Gateway of Hope, our emergency shelter, family services, and community feeding programs act as an initial point of access to critical services for those in need. We bring a dignified, person-centered, and holistic approach to our work, meeting every individual with respect and without judgement or discrimination.

We are proud of the fact that since we've opened, we have assisted many men and women to move out of homelessness and into healthy living.

Come to our door for help and we will help. What we are doing is making a positive impact on our community of Langley.

Help. Hope. Home. What we do works!

Please consider how you can help us continue in the fight against homelessness through volunteering and supporting us financially. Monthly donation options are available. Please contact us directly to set up via debit or credit.

General donation and volunteer application information can be found on our website www.gatewayofhope.ca.



THE GATEWAY
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The Salvation Army Gateway of Hope



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