

At Home in  
Medicine Hat  
Our Plan to End  
Homelessness

YEAR 5

PROGRESS REPORT

home



Journey Home

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *relationships built within community* are directly responsible for the **602 individuals** and their **283 children** that were housed between **April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2015**.

The **local leadership and support** provided by the **Community Council on Homelessness** has been vital in the implementation of our local plan. These efforts are furthered by the unique partnership and leadership of the **7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness** that work to drive change provincially and nationally. Additionally, The **Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS)** would like to extend a sincere thank-you to Mayor Ted Clugston and all of participants and supporters of **At Home in Medicine Hat Our Plan to End Homelessness**.

All images in this publication were provided thanks to

# home

WHAT DOES 'HOME' MEAN TO YOU?  
ART EXHIBITION & PROJECT BY **ELM STREET SCHOOL**

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS MEMBERSHIP

Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta  
Salvation Army  
Alberta Works  
Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services  
Alberta Health Services – Mental Health and Addictions  
City of Medicine Hat  
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)  
United Way of South Eastern Alberta  
Saamis Immigration Services Association  
Lifelong Education and Resource Network (LEARN)  
Persons with Developmental Disabilities South Region  
Local Landlord Representation  
Medicine Hat Remand Centre  
Medicine Hat & District Food Bank  
Medicine Hat Police Service  
Service Canada  
Alberta Human Services  
Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society  
McMan Youth, Family & Community Services  
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)  
Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS)

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS MATTERS

## WE ARE ALMOST HOME...

Our community has been working tirelessly for 5 years with the goal of ending homelessness in Medicine Hat and **We Are Almost Home...**

Strong community partnerships remain a constant force in the Journey Home. Our community continues to deliver results; making good on its promises.

This past year has been one of reflection and growth, challenges, perseverance, and community achievement. Moving forward we will continue to invest in the programs and services that make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. We will actively seek out opportunities to invest in new and innovative approaches for the prevention of homelessness in Medicine Hat, so we can enhance our homeless serving system of care.

Someone who I admire greatly once said “Kindness is what exceeds basic expectations. Exceeding expectations can’t always be easy. In fact, those that



“I made a house because the flood helped us stick together. We worked to fix it. Some people came to help us.”

**Jaxon, Grade 1**

can unfailingly give kindness could be considered heroes.” This community continues to exceed expectations, and has many unnamed heroes.

Ending homelessness is not easy – but it is possible. It is not something that can be accomplished by any one agency, individual, team, or sector. It truly takes a community to foster a sense of belonging for all of its citizens. We celebrate the dedication and continued commitment of everyone that has supported 885 people in their Journey Home.

**We Are Almost Home...** We will end homelessness in Medicine Hat. We will make good on our promise.

*Jaime Rogers*

## OUR COMMUNITY COMMITTED TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN MEDICINE HAT IN 2015.

In 2009, **Medicine Hat** became one of the first Canadian cities to commit to ending homelessness using the housing first approach. In *At Home in Medicine Hat Our Plan to End Homelessness*, the community laid out its vision, key principles and core strategies to realize this vision.

**Ending Homelessness** in Medicine Hat means that no one in our community will have to live in emergency shelter or sleep rough for more than 10 days before they have access to stable housing and the supports they need to maintain it.

## STRATEGIES AND GOALS OF AT HOME IN MEDICINE HAT

- 1. SYSTEM PLANNING**  
The full-scale implementation of the system planning approach in the Medicine Hat Homeless-Serving System.
- 2. HOUSING AND SUPPORTS**  
Ensuring adequate and appropriate programs and housing opportunities are in place to meet priority population needs to end homelessness in Medicine Hat by March 2015.
- 3. SYSTEMS INTEGRATION AND PREVENTION**  
Introducing system integration and targeted prevention measures to stop the flow into homelessness and maintain an end to homelessness beyond 2015.
- 4. DATA AND RESEARCH**  
Using data and research to improve and refine our approach.
- 5. LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY**  
Stepping up as a leader to support the ending homelessness movement in Alberta, Canada and internationally.

# WE ARE MAKING GOOD ON OUR PROMISE

## ABORIGINAL CONSULTATION

In the summer of 2014, MHCHS facilitated two community consultations with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the needs of the Aboriginal population in the context of housing and homelessness.



39 Individuals participated in the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness workshops offered in the community

Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services provided Cultural Sensitivity Training to the community as well as a Counseling Program that was designed to provide advocacy, case management and counseling for individuals who are at imminent risk of homelessness.



"I made a teepee because everyone lives in a different kind of home. This represents one kind of home."

**Kaileah, Grade 6**

## GRADUATE RENTAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE (GRAI)

Since its inception in April 2012, GRAI has provided ongoing rental support to 105 individuals that have successfully completed a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing program. For these individuals, this rental support is necessary in order to maintain housing stability.

**\$13,496**

The average monthly GRAI amount provided to landlords in 2014-2015

## ADVANCING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

This past year we focused on continuing to advance the efforts of our research agenda. The research agenda has expanded to include Housing First for Women Fleeing Family Violence. Preliminary work has been initiated on this project, with research set to commence in Fall 2015.

*Ending Homelessness in Medicine Hat: A case study in innovative social change* authored by Dr. Alina Turner, examines the evolution of housing first in Medicine Hat through a system planning approach. The report is set to be released in June 2015.

## PROGRAM DIVERSION

Program diversion, offered through Housing Assessment and Triage, is the provision of services targeted to those individuals that are homeless (or at imminent risk of homelessness), but are not requiring the level of support provided by a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing Program.



In 2014-2015, 36 unique individuals were diverted from housing first

## LANDLORD RELATIONS

*At Home in Medicine Hat Our Plan to End Homelessness* could not be successful without the support of our local landlords and property management companies.

Since April 2009, over 175 different landlords and property management companies have provided homes to 602 formerly homeless adults and their 283 children.

## YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The past year had a strong focus on youth homelessness both provincially and locally. The Province released *Supporting Healthy and Successful Transitions to Adulthood: A plan to prevent and reduce youth homelessness*.

On March 24, 2015 the MHCHS partnered with the South Region Child and Family Services to host a youth forum. This forum brought together community members and service providers to help plan a broader community response to build a better future for youth in our community.

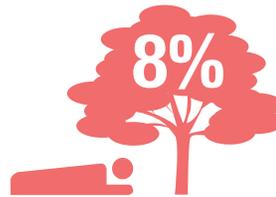
The Community Council on Homelessness increased investments to address youth homelessness in the community. These investments were based on recommendations from the research conducted by Dr. Yale Belanger, and included additional youth outreach workers and the development of a Youth Hub.

## POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

On October 16, 2014 the MHCHS worked with community partners to conduct the first ever provincial Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count. Over 80 volunteers from the community participated in the local count.

This effort was part of a broader initiative led by the 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness to develop a harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. Alberta is the first jurisdiction to implement measures towards a more standardized methodology, leading the way in Canada.

### **A total of 64 people were enumerated in Medicine Hat on the night of the count.**



8% (5 ppl) were on the street



92% (59 ppl) were in an emergency shelter or short-term supportive housing

N=64

# EMERGENCY SHELTER USAGE



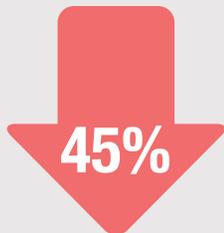
## EMERGENCY SHELTER PROVIDERS

The McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association's Inn Between provides one emergency bed for community-based youth.

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society's Phoenix Safe House operates a 30 bed emergency shelter for women and children fleeing family violence.

The Salvation Army operates a 30 bed emergency intoxic shelter for adult men and women.

The Champion's Centre operated the Winter Response Program in 2014-2015 for the second consecutive year. Winter Response provided individuals with a safe and warm place to stay during the day over the winter months.

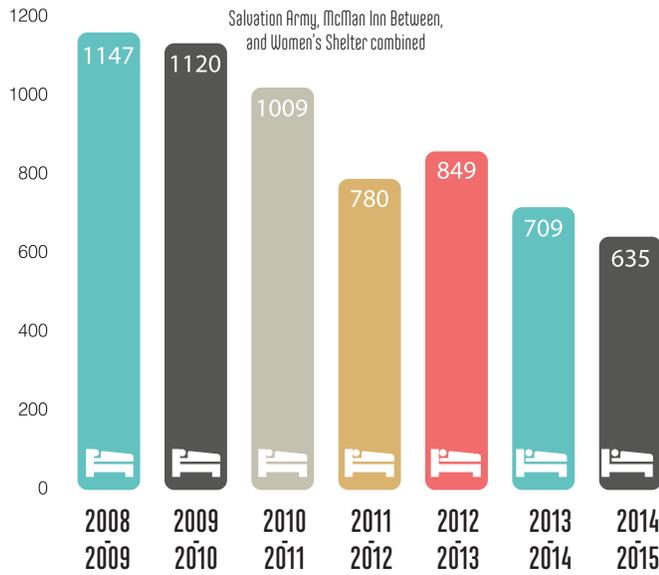


Medicine Hat has seen a 45% reduction in Shelter usage since 2009

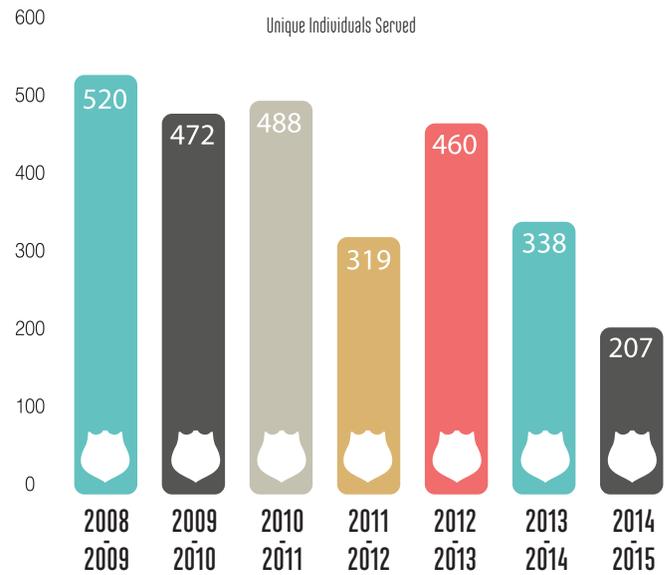
"I made the word SAFE to represent what HOME means to my grade 8 buddy, because he feels comfortable and safe there."

Jayna, Grade 4

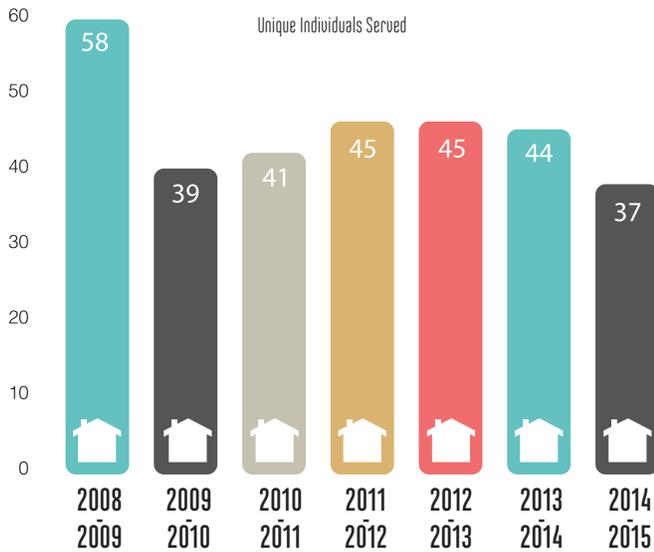
## TOTAL COMMUNITY BASED SHELTER USAGE



## MEDICINE HAT SALVATION ARMY SHELTER



## MCMAN INN BETWEEN



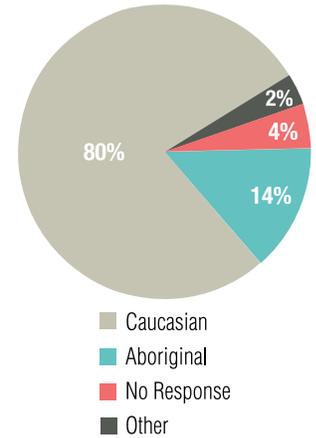
## MEDICINE HAT WOMEN'S SHELTER



# 2014 - 2015 YEAR 5 HIGHLIGHTS

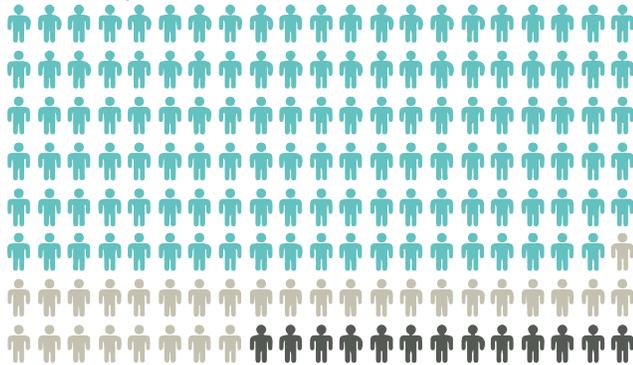


## ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS



## HOUSING ASSESSMENT AND TRIAGE

312 unique individuals assisted



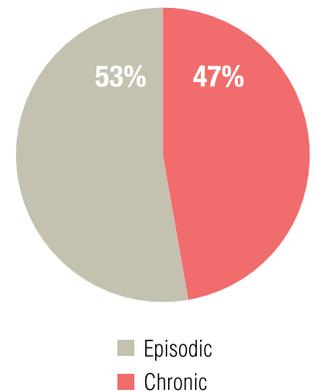
**304** Assessments completed in office (75%)

**72** Assessments completed at shelter (18%)

**32** Assessments completed in community (8%)

**408** SPDAT assessments completed with individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to determine level of support needed

## TYPE OF HOMELESSNESS EXPERIENCED



## HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION AT INTAKE



## INCOME AT INTAKE



Since 2009, 42% of service participants who entered a housing first program were employed

# 2014 - 2015 YEAR 5 HIGHLIGHTS



## FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR PROGRAM

CMHA facilitated **16** Budgeting for Beginners Workshops in 2014-2015. **118** unique individuals participated in these workshops.



## GRADUATE RENTAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

At the end of March 2015, only **54** individuals were still requiring ongoing Graduate Rental Assistance Initiative (GRAI) supports. The average monthly GRAI amount provided to landlords in 2014-2015 was **\$13,496**.



## YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER

In 2014-2015 the McMan Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) served **42** youth with the primary focus on prevention and early intervention of homelessness.

**78%** of the youth served remained housed as a result of the YOW program delivery.

**64%** of the youth served either remained with or returned to their families.



## MUSASA HOUSE

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society runs the 2nd Stage Shelter residential program that offers intensive support to women with children that have been impacted by or are experiencing family violence. This program is available to provide supports for up to one year. In 2014-2015, **12** women and their **32** children moved into Musasa House.



## MIYWASIN SOCIETY

**39** participants attended Aboriginal Cultural Awareness workshops.



## HOUSING STABILITY PROGRAM

**55** unique Social Housing tenants that were experiencing tenancy issues were supported to increase their housing stability in 2014-2015.

## THE IMPACT OF HOUSING FIRST IN MEDICINE HAT

# 885 Housed

Since the onset of the housing first initiatives on April 1, 2009, 885 formerly homeless citizens have been housed and provided appropriate supports in Medicine Hat.



**602** of them were adults



**283** of them were children



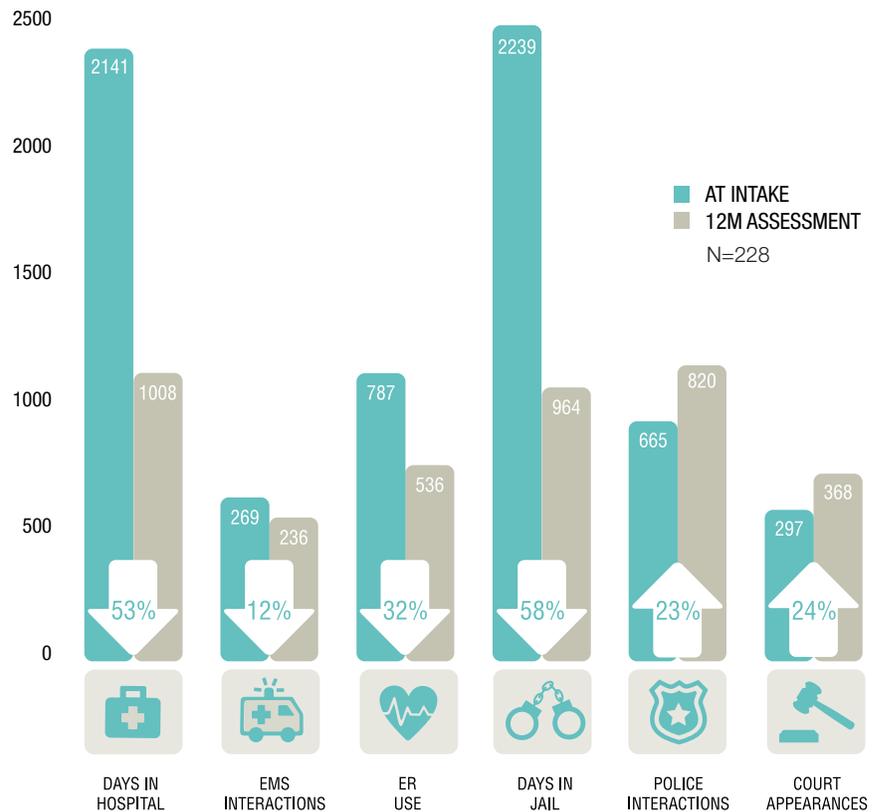
**73%** of housing first participants successfully completed the program

**63%** of those successfully completing the program live in market housing



**28%** live in subsidized housing

# UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC SYSTEMS IN HOUSING FIRST 2014-2015



## PUBLIC SYSTEMS

The approximate cost of homelessness on public systems is estimated to be between \$66,000-\$120,000 annually. The cost of providing housing with supports is estimated to be between \$13,000-\$34,000 annually.

NOTE: The intake and 12 Month Assessment data are not directly comparable. The intake data comprises of 228 adult service participant records reporting on system utilization over a 12 month period. The 12 Month Assessment reports systems use in the last 3 months by the same 228 individuals, thus the total is estimated base on this figure for 12 months.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### SALVATION ARMY FAMILY SERVICES



In 2014, the Salvation Army Bridge & Loan Program provided 26 no-interest loans to individuals requiring support with rental arrears or security deposits for a total of \$15,816.00

The Community Warmth Program provided over \$23,000 to support 54 households with utility arrears



The Hot Meal Program provided 15,360 meals in 2014

### UNITED WAY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

In 2014, United Way invested \$88,497.00 in local programs and collaborative initiatives to help individuals and families become financially stable



### MEDICINE HAT AND DISTRICT FOOD BANK



Each month, the Food Bank provides between 480-600 emergency food hampers to households in need in our community (based on data from January – June 2015)

The Food Bank provides fresh healthy snacks to 18 schools in our community



"I made a homeless person because this is the vision that I thought of when my teacher said the word homeless. I actually met this person in the train park. This was a learning opportunity for me because I would feel sad, scared, abandoned, lonely, terrified and confused. I'm happy to know that our city is doing something about it."

**Caelan, Grade 6**

**“None of us are  
home until all of  
us are home.”**

**H.O.M.E.**



“I sculpted Jake’s mom and Jake standing by each other, I sculpted this because Jake told us that’s what home meant to him was family supporting him, also having a roof over his head. So, that’s why I made what I made. It represents his mom helping him out when he is having trouble and supporting him. I interviewed Jake, he is 12 years old, he was in a homeless shelter for 11 months.”

**Kayden M., Grade 5**



"I made a house, so that if it's freezing cold out you can stay warm.  
You can also have somewhere to keep food. That's Important."

**Ava S. Kindergarten**

