

Presentation on Homelessness
for City Council Meeting of
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by Evelyn Tischer

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A child dies of a curable disease because his parents don't take him to the doctor. Who is guilty ? The child because he caught the disease or the parents ?

According to a study by the Homeless Hub and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, "homelessness (...) refers to the failure of society to ensure that adequate systems, funding and support are in place so that all people (..) have access to housing".

According to the Canadian Observatory, mass homelessness in Canada emerged (...) as a result of governments cutbacks to social housing and related programs starting in 1984.

In the early 2000's, the Federal Government restarted affordable housing. However, whereas 20 000 new units a year were built in the early 1980's, only over 4000 units a year were built by 2006.

Yet, housing the homeless may actually save money.

Jino Distasio for CBC News stated in 2017 that in Canada, the annual cost for people struggling with homelessness and mental illness is \$53 000 per year. People without a home and lacking supports for mental illness and addiction may need shelters and hospitals as well as police, fire, and paramedic services. To these costs, Distasio compared the costs of the housing-first model: \$ 22 000 a year for the highest-need users and \$ 14 000 a year for the moderate needs users.

In 2019, the Guardian published an article about homelessness in Finland : Finland's "Housing First" policy was devised in 2008. Since then, the number of long-term homeless people in Finland has fallen by more than 35%. Rough sleeping has all but disappeared in Helsinki.

The City of Regina should make, during 5 years, a contribution towards eradicating homelessness. It could for instance, give \$ 5 million a year. This contribution would be equal to the one to pay for the Mosaic Stadium.

Also, the city promised that Taylor Field would be redeveloped to have 700 new affordable housing units. If these units cannot be built, how about tiny homes ? Or at least using the money to house some people ?

And remember : Housing the homeless can actually save money !

Evelyn Tischer