

Media Release



greater victoria
coalition to end
homelessness
hope has found a home

For Immediate Release:

Aboriginal Coalition to end homelessness created

VICTORIA, BC, April 15, 2015 – The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (Coalition) celebrated the creation of an Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) today. Chiefs and band representatives from across the Island gathered at the Esquimalt Big House to demonstrate collective support for ACEH. In attendance at the event were representatives from the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples.

A drum was signed as a symbolic gesture of support and willingness to engage in a dialogue about solutions and common goals.

Drum Text: Our way is to care for all of our people, from the youngest to the oldest. We are all one. Some of our people living away from home are suffering, isolated, and experiencing homelessness. We stand together to end homelessness.

“I cannot emphasize enough the need for us as aboriginal people to form a Coalition to tackle the issues of our homeless,” said James D Wilson, Chairman of the Kwakiutl District Council. “We need to reach out and re-connect with our family members that are separated from us for whatever the reason. We must create opportunities for our People to rekindle their spirit in their own traditional teachings, cultural values and beliefs. An Aboriginal Coalition can work to create those opportunities and more, through collaborative approaches and ideas.”

“Aboriginal people on the street have felt so abandoned and alone. This is a historic first step to bring us back where we belong,” said Bernice Kamano, Aboriginal Outreach for the ACEH. “I weep when I think how much this step means for those of us on the street.”

A disproportionate number of the individuals facing homelessness in Greater Victoria come from an aboriginal background. This new Coalition is needed to focus on the specific drivers of this challenge and to bring culturally relevant solutions.

“We need to engage the collective wisdom of the aboriginal communities from the entire island in order to address the unique challenges that are causing aboriginal homelessness,” said Andrew Wynn-Williams, Executive Director of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. “We are delighted to have played a role in bringing this about.”

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a partnership of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the business, post-secondary and faith communities. The Coalition’s vision is to end homelessness in the Capital Region by 2018.

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