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April 14, 2020

REGION OF PEEL

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

From: William Graham [REDACTED]
Sent: April 14, 2020 4:49 PM
To: William Graham [REDACTED]
Subject: YOUR HELP - Homelessness

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DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED

CAUTION: EXTERNAL MAIL. DO NOT CLICK ON LINKS OR OPEN ATTACHMENTS YOU DO NOT TRUST.

This e-mail is going to many individuals in government and other organizations. To those office assistants that censure the mail, **I ask that you pass this on with attachments to the person to whom it is addressed.** Some MP and councillors tell me this doesn't always happen. Thank you.

I am reaching out in many direction to find people who understand homelessness and are willing to do actual things to help alleviate it, here in Peel Region and everywhere.

HOMELESSNESS is the subject and I am looking for suggestions, support and action.

The first attachment (1) a copy and also the u-tube link of a presentation to Peel Regional Council, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjh4FEJEfCM&list=PLQ7Ujo--TZOQoC7PjOhov5WZynhTfJJ-J&index=6&t=0s> * about 32 minutes in.

1. Cut off due to more important items than homelessness on the agenda. I apologize for my speech but it has worsened in the last two years.
2. This attachment is a reply to council and the councillor in particular.
3. What Is Homelessness? Some questions and answers - Please add comments to these.
4. Building Buddy Program – one suggested solution

THE OBJECTIVE: I am trying to **change people's perception** of the homeless person. I am looking for people that people see and recognize such as those announcers doing the news or weather who would devote a few minutes a day to interviewing a homeless person.

Ask them questions, such as:

Who are you?, what do I call you?, Where are you from?, What did you do in the past?, What jobs did you do?, What are your skills?, Have you any family?, Do you see them?, How did you

become homeless?, What do you need to get back on your feet, to get a job and be on your own again?, How can people help?

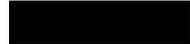
Who can you suggest to help with this? Please pass this on to your e-mail list. Maybe you have a contact that can help.

Please contact me with your feedback on [what you can do](#).

Thank you

William Graham

William H. Graham, M.S.Ed, CFOS/I



Master instructor, Director, The Fiber Optic Association,

www.thefoa.org

President, *Grounded* Connections

Bill and Shirley Graham,

March 6th., 2020

RE: Deposition to Peel Council February 27th., 2020 – HOMELESS

Thank you for allowing me the time to give you my thoughts on Homelessness and some suggested solutions.

I was puzzled by Councillor Seto's comments questioning whether people were aware of what Peel Region does. Not sure if she meant my being aware, or the public being aware. Does Councillor Seto really think the general public should be aware that people are sleeping outside in the winter and the older lady with one leg who is in a wheelchair living outside trying to get around through the snow when one night the end of December it was -14 deg. I supplied 14 sleeping bags to people, mostly in Brampton, who were sleeping outside. A CBC article says that Brampton officials say that when the shelters are full, they put people in a hotel. I cannot get my head around the fact that Councillors and civic officials seem to be able to sleep well knowing this is happening to citizens to whom they do owe some responsibility.

That being said: I know of a lot of good Peel programs and good people in the Peel system. However, Peel, I feel has the resources, ability and heart to do better.

While I am a member of St. Vincent DePaul, The Knights of Columbus and the Royal Canadian Legion, what we do is entirely on our own, with other resources. Through the year we regularly receive a ton of Pasta at a time, Canned goods, often in large quantities and other items as well as gift cards and whatever else we need for those we serve. Religion has no relation to what we do. I neither know the religion of those we serve or of our generous benefactors.

For example: Between early December and the first week of January we served the following groups:

- **Our Place Peel** in Mississauga - A shelter for early teen youths (20) for up to 2 wks.
- **Peel Youth Village** - 99 Acorn Place in Mississauga - a Shelter for 48 older teens shelter for up to two years
- **Angela's Place**, Glen Hawthorne in Mississauga. - Transition apts for 21 mothers for up to 12 months
- **The Open Door** - Square 1 - food, meals for homeless
- **First Baptist Church** in Brampton - Serve a meal on Tuesdays to homeless persons - about 40 - 60 each time. Also give food and clothes
- **St Paul's United Church**, Brampton - Gives food and clothes every second Tuesday afternoon
- **Hope Place** – Trafalgar Rd., - Addiction Ctr. for men up to 45 days
- **St Peters Anglican** (Deacon's Cupboard) - Dundas St., Mississauga serve a lunch and give food and clothing every Wed from 9 - 1:00
- **Scott Mission**, Spadina Ave. - Serve daily meal (140 at a sitting) give food and clothing

- **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**, Commissioner Rd., London - Serve families with food and food cards.
- **Mary Star of The Sea Catholic Church** - Mississauga - They serve a meal and give out food.
- **The Compass** on Dundas St. They serve an evening meal on Friday and give out food and necessities.

We serve groups further away such as Chatham and Sudbury through the year.

We also served individual families for Christmas with food and gifts up to the morning of December 25th. These families (mostly single moms) were in Mississauga and Brampton. Got some Gingerbread House Kits after Church Christmas morning and went back to two moms with them.

We are so grateful to the donors who make this possible. We are just the delivery people. Without the help of generous donors we could do nothing.

While we do this, I realize we are just putting band aids on the situation. I don't understand why People are homeless and on the street. Is homelessness and poverty a big business providing employment for others? I'm not the one to answer that.

My suggestion is simple:

I Look at homeless people as being in two groups:

- a) Those with mental health issues (probably about 20%) who will probably not progress from where they are now. I feel we have an obligation to have this group live securely with adequate housing, food, resources and care.
- b) The second group (probably about 80%) have the potential. For these individuals the goal should be to get them flying again. Get them working, supporting themselves and families and paying taxes. I fail to see how councils cannot support this concept.

How do we do this?

- 1) Put the person in a safe secure spot where they can lock the door and sleep in comfort. Shelters do not provide this. They can be beaten, Robbed, Raped and bullied and not allowed to take in their pets. *(Pets have been allowed in Vancouver shelters since 1998)
- 2) Give the person adequate resources for food, Clothes and necessities.
- 3) Provide a councillor to work with the person, have and agreed plan, at their pace and on their terms in a patient and compassionate manner.

I believe that people in Peel believe in this system but just can't get it working.

And the person must be patient, have the resources and the support from their superiors if this is to work as it is intended. * People on contract work are not always the most effective workers.

I know this will work because we have done this on our own with individuals who are now working, raising their families and paying taxes. Should this not be the most economical and humane situation?

I suggest the next **“Point in Time Survey”** should give the number of people who are off the street and leading normal lives.

That should be the goal of every Council. I also propose another program for consideration called **“ The Building Buddy Program”**. **It can work if we want it to.**

(1) Isn't it true that some people choose to be homeless? It is their choice.

(1) People don't choose or want to be Homeless. Many factors cause this: LACK OF EMPLOYMENT, EVICTION, NO AFFORDABLE HOUSING, MENTAL ILLNESS, ADDICTION.

(2) People Experiencing homelessness are LAZY - They must be or they would be working.

(2) Homeless people constantly search for ways to survive such as FOOD, SHELTER, EMPLOYMENT. Being lazy isn't an option. The challenge increases when you don't have a PHONE, COMPUTOR, FIXED ADDRESS.

(3) I am told that most people who are homeless are also ADDICTS.

(3) Homeless people have no higher percentage of ADDICTION than the General Population. Only a small percentage are addicts and the addictions are often caused by homelessness and the loneliness that comes with it.

(4) People experiencing Homelessness should just find a job. We hear there is lots of work.

(4) Finding a job for the homeless has additional challenges such as; NO PERMANENT ADDRESS, NO REGULAR ACCESS TO SHOWERS, NO TRANSPORTATION, MENTAL ILLNESS, ADDICTIONS, SOMEONE TO CARE FOR THEIR PET.

(5) We are lucky to have so many services supporting people who are Homeless.

(5) Many solutions focus on EMERGENCY SERVICES such as SHELTERS, FOOD BANKS, FREE DINNERS.

The Larger Systemic factors, including LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING - CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS prevent people from getting permanent and suitable & secure shelter.

(6) Our property values will go down if we allow shelters and food banks in our neighbourhoods.

(6) This is a total myth. Downtown Toronto has many places supporting homeless people and there is no evidence of any decrease in housing values.

This myth and misconception is a result of our (PERCEPTION) of the homeless. This is called : "NOT IN MY BACKYARD" (NIMBY)

(7) A high percentage of homeless people have pets. They can't afford to feed themselves so it doesn't make sense to have to feed a pet also.

(7) The Reality is that 12.8% of homeless youth in Toronto have a pet.

As one youth said "She is all I have in the world. I'm here for her - she is here for me, Sleeping under the bridge in the winter, when I wake up at 4:00 AM it is nice to have her next to me, keeping each other warm and warning me of danger.

(8) I heard that Young people are homeless because they leave home because they don't want to follow the rules.

(8) More often, these young people are escaping mental or physical abusive situations that are dangerous or unsafe.

Youth only account for 19% of shelter users. Adults over 55 account for 24%

(9) Homeless people are homeless because of poor choices - and have only themselves to blame for their poor choices.

(9) About 1/3 of homeless people have mental health or addiction issues that have never been addressed. Homeless affects seniors, precariously employed, newcomers and families that can't afford high rent and low vacancy rates. These are hardly choices!

(10) There is no excuse for people living on the streets. We have lots of shelters.

(10) SHELTERS ARE NOT HOMES!

Some communities don't have them or are over-capacity. Dangerous for people with special needs and health issues. Other issues include: No pets allowed, Theft of belongings, Bullying, Rape, no privacy, etc. Living on the street can be a more viable, safer option.

(11) Housing for homelessness is expensive. How can the public be expected to afford this?

(11) Housing can cost \$20,000.00 a year for a homeless person, Emergency medical, police costs etc., can cost the city or town \$100,000.00 a year - every year.

(12) What can we do to help homelessness?

(12) Advocate for the homeless. Try to change the perception of homelessness. Go to a shelter, share a meal with a homeless person, talk to them. Listen to their story. You will be surprised.

Talk to your friends, your children, your pastor, your teachers. Change their perception of the homeless.

- (13) I have a hard time giving to the homeless person because I don't know if they are telling the truth.**
- (13) As Christians we were all confirmed and received the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. Trust that you are not making decisions on your own. The Holy Spirit will guide you - if you have faith and are serving for the right reasons.**
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(14) If a homeless person wants my tel number or e-mail is it safe to give it to them?

(14) Many homeless people have my number and some my e-mail - for 15 or more years. This has never been a problem. I have their information and often will call them to ask how they are doing - especially at Christmas.

(15) Homeless people often look scary. Should I be afraid of them?

(15) Yes, just as afraid as Frederick Ozanam was going to the Paris streets after the French Revolution. We are doing the Lord's work and we are well protected. Do not fear.

(16) If the homeless person can afford a cell phone do they really need my help?

(16) Studied show that 94% of homeless people have a cell phone.
55% Have a smart phone
85% use the phone daily
76% use Text Messaging THE PHONE IS A NECESSARY LIFELINE for Shelter, Food, Safety and Work Information.

(17) People complain that homeless people are often beligerant and leave a mess.

(17) If homeless people are treated with respect and asked to clean up their mess they generally will.
They are used to being abused and bullied. Your treating them with respect will get their respect in return.

The “*BUILDING BUDDY*” Program

The intent of this proposal is to buddy a person up with a building that has space and also can use some part time help in exchange of the room.

Fact:

Most high rise buildings have rooms as single bedrooms to rent to owners that have company and don't have enough room. Most hotels & Motels rarely have 100% occupancy. They are all potential places for this to work.

 Many people are homeless on the street or in a room which is taking all their funds with little left. Most of these persons have good skills that could be utilized.

Proposal:

To connect them with a building with a spare room would make sense. This could be a Condo building, a motel, seniors home, college, or any building with a spare room and people that need some help.

A deal only works on the long term if it is good for both sides.

The Condo, motel or whatever building would agree than in exchange for a room with a bed, bathroom, TV, dresser, Microwave, small fridge and table and two chairs as well as any building amenities. The Condo address would allow the person to apply for financial assistance should they still qualify for programs.

The individual would commit to an agreed number of daily or weekly hours doing tasks as defined by building management. The person would also agree to adhere to all building rules and to keep himself or herself in a presentable manner. The person would be expected to maintain their premises in a neat manner and not to make any alterations without management approval. The building would have a support contact should issues arise.

A **social worker** would keep in close contact with the individual, encouraging the person to sort their needs and better their lives. * The Outcome Star program or similar might be ideal in this situation.

The Ultimate Goal: would be to help the individual become stable and secure, eventually being able to maintain their own salary and apartment and contributing to their community as a tax paying citizen.