

Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN)
Wednesday, May 29, 2019 9am-11:30am, MacBain Community Centre, Niagara Falls

Present: Glen Walker (Chair), Melenie Neamtz (Vice-Chair), Natalie Chaumont, Erin Walters, Ashley Snow, Lori Kleinsmith, Debbie Oglivie, Tara Wincott, Ashley Chiarello, Walt Hollander, Ryan Hilimoniuk, Emily Kovacs, Jon Braithwaite, Greg Shupe, Glen Walker, Brandon Agnew, Lianne Wyatt, Eden Ewert, Olivia Siebert, Catherine Mindorff-Facca, Anne Watters, Jennifer Gauthier, Melanie Wessel, Leslie Bellingham, Diane Corkum, Ron Walker, David Wyllie, Wendy Medeiros, Krista Butters, Tamara Coleman-Lawrie

Regrets: Candice Stewart, Mary Wiley, Julie Gregory

Item	Discussion
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting minutes for March 27, 2019, were approved as written • The agenda was approved as written • Introductions around the table
Coordinating Committee Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current bank account holds \$5,4983.14 • Reminder to complete membership renewal if you haven't already – NPRN has no membership fee, but donations to NPRN and the work of the Network are welcome • Succession planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Melenie to move into Chair position, looking to recruit for Vice-Chair for January 2020 ○ If interested, email info@wipeoutpoverty.com with name and CV; a vote will be held in September • Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are looking for Leads for the following Priority Tables: Income & Financial Security, Government Relations & Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You do not need to participate in the larger table, if you wanted to participate in a particular Priority Table instead ○ Members at Large roles are being added to the Coordinating Committee – Members at Large are not required to take lead of a Priority Table (as other Coordinating Committee members are), but to help support the work of NPRN and connect back to what is happening in the community • Teleconferencing for Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is a way you can participate in any NPRN events wherever it is available. We are hoping to ensure more meeting spaces are equipped with this option. ○ If you have a meeting space available, that includes parking, please let Rachel know
Presentation	An Introduction to Legal Aid: Aidan Johnson, Executive Director, Niagara Community Legal Clinic
Burning Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues relating to OW, and people experiencing having not enough money available to pay for rent in a safe space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This issue relates to work of Affordable Housing Priority Table, working on issues relating to tenants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable Housing Priority Table is looking to address how we can support people living in poor housing or in housing precarity, but also make informed decisions related to housing crisis so that it helps ensure the success of the community's next developments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When a person doesn't have access to emergency housing, it is suggested that we encourage them and support them in contacting the MPP's office so that cases become documented/stories share ○ Suggestion that we can communicate the stories of people we are seeing that are being left out of services – as part of NPRN work, we can help to gather people and stories behind issues related to anti-poverty work so that we can help encourage politicians ○ Storytelling as a best practice can help show the impacts of poverty – helps to reinforce statistics and the impacts of living in poverty ○ Work of Marketing Committee to do some thinking about how to promote the stories/voices of people living in poverty – possibility that we develop a form that is shared with network to capture stories • Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regarding Region – we have sent delegations to Councils regarding what NPRN does, and key aspects of our work ○ Provincially and federally – NPRN has been linked to larger tables/forums, have shared position papers and recommendations ○ Possibility for more community organizing in Niagara, so that we can raise the profile of people that are experiencing poverty ○ World Homeless Day, October 10th, can we do something to organize a Niagara wide event (letter writing campaign, etc.)? • Network Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandates of Priority Tables are developed by conversation among groups – begin by discussing an issue, how it relates to poverty, and how it relates to Niagara ○ Room to develop specific asks relating to poverty in Niagara and specific policy needs
<p>Task Group Updates</p>	<p>Business Engagement (Melenie Neamtz, Lead):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting is on June 13th <p>Health Equity (Erin Walters, Lead):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting is on June 14th • HEART pilot project is working to support people experience homelessness in Emergency Departments through peer support workers with lived experience moving forward – anticipating that workers will be in placed this summer in Welland and Niagara Falls Hospitals • The HEART Steering Committee has been formed, and work of Health Equity table will transfer to them • Table looking at what topics/projects to prioritize next <p>Affordable Housing (Ashley Chiarello, Lead):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting is on June 7th <p>Wages & Work (Lori Kleinsmith, Lead):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPRN members are asked to amplify the work of the living wage within their networks • We have now reached 20 employers (see here for the full list) • Have developed 2-pager that highlights quotes from employers that have chosen to pay a living wage • Are connecting with local municipalities interested in paying a living wage

- Haven't been regularly meeting, but will be meeting over the summer to begin process of new report of what the Living Wage is – aim for the report to be released November

SARNN (Social Assistance Reform Network of Niagara) & NPRN Spring Forum (Melenie Neamtz for Marc Todd, Lead):

- The group has decided to postpone the forum until the fall.
- The main speaker had an unexpected family emergency and was unable to present, as such a new speaker is being sought to talk about the changes proposed for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. It is anticipated that further details of changes proposed will be coming out in the next few months.
- The topic of the forum will be about advocacy once the changes are made public.

Income & Financial Security (Melenie Neamtz for Marc Todd; currently no Lead of Table):

- Income and Financial Security table has not yet been established.
- This priority group will be looking at changes within OW and ODSP as well as other government income / financial programs and developing strategies to advocate for better solutions in the development and administration of these programs.
- Any persons interested in becoming a member can forward their names to Rachel.

Government Relations & Advocacy (Ashley Chiarello; currently no Lead of Table):

- Focus on the Federal election, but also have interest in developing continuing presence and advocacy with government figures
- If you are interested, please look to some of the past information that has been produced by NPRN (see documents under Government Action [here](#)) so that we can begin developing material for the Federal Election
- Also looking to echo the federal *Get Out And Vote* campaign

Marketing & Communications (Tamara Coleman-Lawrie, Lead):

- As part of the new structure of the network, we are proceeding with the new marketing and communications operations group
- We are hopeful that the previous members of the Anti-Stigma and Marketing task groups will come on board and support this very important work of the network
- We are also looking for others that are interested in being part of this group or those that have specific marketing and communications skills (not necessary) will join – please refer to the opportunities available sheet and send an email to Rachel if you are interested
- To get us started, we have identified some key priorities that the operations group may work on, these include:
 - General public awareness campaign
 - Supporting social media
 - Website redesign/redevelopment
 - Membership drives
 - Advocacy efforts
 - Annual network community event
 - Network newsletter
 - Local stories
 - Building community partnership

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting the development or updating of network materials ○ Integrating the work of other priority table information with our network messaging ● This is a general overview of some of the work that this table may undertake, however will be prioritized when the marketing and communications operations group has their first couple of meetings <p><i>If you have someone in your organization that could contribute to the Tables, please feel free to link them to Rachel, even if they do not regularly attend the larger NPRN Roundtable meeting</i></p>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rainforest Café has been on strike for two months, relating to harassment at work and tip offs (no consistent rule or policies relating to how tips are divided by employers/employees) ● Injured Workers Day (June 1st) – will see a rally in Queens Park, Toronto ● United Way releasing community report regarding food security in Niagara this week – if you know someone that works with a program relating to food security progress in Niagara (at any level – formal, informal, etc.), please connect to Tamara at United Way ● Overdose Prevention Education Network busy addressing the opioid crisis in Niagara – if you work in this area, please connect with Glen and he will add you to the newsletter list ● Low Income Seniors Dental Program – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholder meetings held this week, Public Health involved in province-wide introductory meeting regarding parameters – based on income cut off (individual earning \$19,300 or less; couple earning \$32,300 or less - same as Ontario Drug Benefit) ○ Service will not be provided in private dental centers but in community health centers (not sure where yet) ○ Hoping that things will begin being rolled out in the fall ○ No fee for service, meaning some of the money that is coming from province will be earmarked for buildings/clinic space ○ More information coming in future ● Opportunity for NPRN to engage with different Equity Advisory Council’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Niagara Police Chief’s Community and Equity Advisory Council – stakeholder advisory group that speaks to issues of equity – opportunity to share and exchange information ○ St. Catharines Equity Advisory Committee being established in the next months
Reminders	<p>Please mark your calendar for the next meetings: 9:00-11:30 a.m. @NCDSB Offices 427 Rice Rd. Welland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2019 ● Wednesday, November 27, 2019 <p>Transportation assistance available: Contact Rachel Gillmore for more information: info@wipeoutpoverty.ca</p>