

Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN)
Wednesday, November 27, 2019
9am-11:30am, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Father Burns Room

Present: Glen Walker (Chair), Aidan Johnson (Incoming Chair), Marnie Lambie, Greg Shupe, Ryan Hilimoniuk, Ron Walker, Brandon Agnew, David Wyllie, Chris Walsh, Gillian Aitkin, Natalie Chaumont, Marc Todd, Kim O'Rourke, Krista Butters, Shideh Houshmandi, Melanie Wessel, Holly Anderson, Valerie Leech, Jennifer Sauve, Pam Swick Janjac, Michael Mondloch, Laura Martin, Becky McFaydan, Cassie Ogguniyi, Lori Kleinsmith, Barb Vanzante

Item	Discussion
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting minutes for September 25, 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 \$4,545.96 • 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 • Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are looking for a Lead for the Social Assistance Table <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 • As part of our work, we need further engagement on our Priority Tables from our Roundtable members, if you have questions or are interested in an issue, please talk to Rachel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there is an area of interest that you think you would be able to help with, we are happy to have conversations with your organization/community leaders whenever there is a good fit • New Coordinating Committee Roles, 2020-2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All roles acclaimed, as there was no competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aidan Johnson - Chair ▪ Still looking for somebody to come on as Vice-Chair
Presentation	<p>Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction: Tom Cooper, Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton Roundtable came together as diverse group of people wanted to act together to tackle root causes of poverty • Looking for innovative ideas for long term change, with a “no blame” approach, and work with all levels of government around poverty reduction • Quickly realized that need to ensure we include people with lived experience – wanted to provide opportunities for participation • Create a Social Inclusion Policy – ensuring that people experiencing poverty can participate in meetings, and continue to develop leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask people with lived experience to talk at meetings and policy forums, or to media – need to ensure done in respectful way, with dignity and privacy protected, and ensure compensation is given • Speakers Bureau – Speak Now Hamilton

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brought together people with various experiences, helped to refine their stories and train (media training) on how to tell their stories in a compelling way ○ Have spoken at 250+ events, including schools and city council meetings ● Worked with public health department and both boards of education to develop teaching resource for grades 9 and 10 students ○ Used this as a way for students to delve into systemic causes of poverty, and shift perspective of students away from charity-based thinking ● Peer to Peer mentoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tax campaign – helping people living on low income finish their taxes through peer support with help of United Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have seen great success with having members with lived experience encouraging others to file taxes ▪ In 18 months through this program, \$4.5 million has been returned to families and only \$70,000 has needed to be paid in ● Have worked with lived experience members in developing policy leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have done policy advocacy work, including creating licensing rules for predatory payday lending ○ Have worked advocating for a Basic Income and to build a living wage community ● Ontario Basic Income Pilot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wanted to tell stories of those participants to share globally what the potential of basic income is – had 1,000 participants in Hamilton ○ Post-cancellation, have worked to continue to tell stories of what the impact of basic income was, and have worked to continue advocacy of basic income ○ Have continued to gather stories after cancellation of program, and have worked with Mohawk College and McMaster University regarding this – currently working to pull together an update that will go out this year ● Affordable housing is key and critical issue, planning to launch new approach towards affordable housing advocacy in the new year ● ACORN – seeing great work with issues regarding tenant rights and affordable housing ● Cathy Crowe, street nurse in Toronto, highlighting inequity in access to health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have worked with Cathy regarding access to cool down spaces in extreme heat, which is becoming more of an issue with climate change ○ Haven't been as active regarding wider health inequities – public health Hamilton has functioned as an advocate, including some interesting initiatives, and participating as part of a larger dialogue linking poverty to public health ● Engaging people with lived experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developed process to bring people with lived experience to the table, have worked to build relationships, ensure safe space, and build equity into discussion so that power imbalances are managed – this takes time, people need to become comfortable with one another ○ Social Inclusion Policy has helped to create the safe space, but it's the relationship building that has taken time to develop the leadership that exists now for the Table
<p>Discussion</p>	<p><i>How can we work to meaningfully include those with lived experience in our work at NPRN?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there a way of compensating people's time for participating in NPRN? For their time and expertise (hours it takes) – possibly through an honorarium? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acknowledgment that there is stigma and guilt to ask for the honorarium or transportation credit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to include a group of people at our current meetings • Could members identify potential leaders/interested people within their own organizations to engage in the NPRN? • Is there a way we could offer training more similar to Hamilton Roundtable regarding the training that was provided for people speaking with lived experience? • Worth thinking about talking to people about recording videos so that people can share their stories without the commitment to continue speaking at events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could we leverage people that have participated in United Way from Tales of the City? • Worth thinking about having a more specific ask as Hamilton did – for instance the project working with grade 9/10 students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can we gather people in new ways/with new processes ○ Worth reviewing Tamarack Resource, “10 – Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience” • Should we think about reworking Speakers Bureau to be able to speak to specific issues? • Lived Experience Engagement Table – could take the lead on Speakers Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrating people with lived experience into decision making – could develop process to guide some changes around how we can better include people with LE across the network • Could look at accessing funding to help facilitate some of these changes
<p>Priority Table Updates</p>	<p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library info sessions have been scheduled from January –March 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name: RENTING IN NIAGARA- Housing Supports and Tenant Rights ○ Description: 2 hour session led by Niagara Poverty Reduction Network and Niagara Community Legal Clinic ○ Objectives: 1.Learn about housing programs in Niagara and how to access them; 2. Know your rights as a tenant. ○ Topics will include: maintenance and repair issues; common grounds for eviction, the process and amount of notice required; when can a landlord enter a tenant's unit • The sessions support the goals of Niagara’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, A Home for All by increasing access to education about landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities for those who rent property in Ontario. • The library locations include: Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Smithville, St. Catharines, Port Colborne, Welland • Promotional materials for the sessions are being reviewed for approval by the libraries and will be circulated to NPRN membership and broader community once they are complete • Please watch for the materials, post and share with colleagues, clients, partners in your community. • Next meeting: Friday December 6, 2019 The Hope Centre, Welland <p>Business Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 7th, had Living Wage event to celebrate and recognize LW employers (incl. 9-10 employers) • Melenie has stepped down, changeover in leadership occurring <p>Government Relations & Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now looking to follow up with government officials post-election • Are working on developing more robust work plan, with a municipal and provincial focus, and including stakeholder interest

Health Equity

- Peer Support Project
 - All protocols and procedures are in place to provide peer support in the hospital.
 - Staff at the ED are all aware and supportive of the project.
 - A project coordinator has been hired and a peer support worker has been hired and trained. Additional peer support workers will be hired as needed.
 - We are waiting for finalization of a MOU between organizations involved, then the project will be up and running (latest in January).
- Screen for Life Advocacy
 - The group is advocating against the cancellation of the Screen for Life Coach which is a mobile coach that provides routine cancer screening to underserved populations, including individuals living in poverty.
 - The group will be putting out a media release and a legislative petition in January.
 - We will be bringing the signed petitions to a MPP to champion the issue and bring forward at Queen's Park.
 - We will be reaching out to other Screen for Life sites/partners across Niagara, Hamilton and Brantford to expand our reach and impact.

Marketing & Communications

- Working on some social media posts relating to special days (e.g. international housing day, etc.) – highlight poverty impact on those days and events – have 1-2 per month
- Have discussed Speakers Bureau, looking to come up with core presentation that can be adapted to specific talk – looking to revamp whole process
- Working to develop brochure for NPRN, as network has never had one, rather than updating infographic rack card

SARNN Fall Forum/Social Assistance

- Group of people interested in group, and anticipating meeting start in January
- Social Assistance changes that were being anticipated, were cancelled immediately before their release – however, anticipating that there will still be changes coming in 2020
- This group can help understand and explain those changes over the next while
- Suggestion that some of the money that is not claimed, as Tom suggested, comes from particular caseworkers denying rights – this group could include someone from ODSP that can help answer and advocate around this
- Can also be participating in some work around the pilot project from provincial government that will be changing how programming is delivered
- Suggestion that this work is something we could have a specific ask for people with lived experience to participate in

Wages & Work

- Launched 2019 Cost of Living and Living Wage Reports, as part of annual update
 - [Calculating the Living Wage in Niagara Region](#)
 - [Calculating the Cost of Living in Niagara Region](#)
- New rate for 2019 is \$18.12, up 13 cents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are now 28 communities across province who have participated in this – click HERE to view different communities on Ontario Living Wage website • Are now at 30 employers at Champion level, some of which have been working to bump rates up and positions from part-time to full-time • Niagara one of fastest growing communities for this work – please continue to spread word, have noticed most of new employers are coming from word of mouth • Suggestion that we have a side page on our website with a list of all employer, and by category <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"> • January meeting will be focusing on a presentation from Chris Walsh (Brock University) regarding the Niagara Prosperity Initiative Evaluation, where it is and some potential impacts on the overall community, as well as how NPRN may be included in the overall process • Last Wednesday, provincial government officially launched low income senior dental program - online application, but can call Niagara Region public health and can be directed as to where they can access paper copy – when more information is available it will be shared with the network • Saturday, Better Cities Film Festival downtown St. Catharines – free, and can register online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Also Start Me Up Niagara Creative Corner is having an open house holiday market earlier on Saturday • Dec .6th, Walk against gendered violence • Service Ontario has fully integrated GIS with OA benefit, but still need to have taxes completed – if you there is an agency interested in hosting tax clinic, Jennifer Sauve from Service Ontario can provide an informational presentation – please reach out to Jennifer if you are interested in hosting some kind of tax related presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Also looking to promote Canada Learning Bond ○ To access volunteer tax clinics available, please see Canada Volunteer Income Tax Clinics
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, January 22, 2020 – LOCATION CHANGE – <i>Niagara Falls Public Library, 4848 Victoria Ave, Niagara Falls</i> • Wednesday, March 25, 2020 • Wednesday, May 27, 2020 • Wednesday, September 23, 2020 • Wednesday, November 25, 2020 <p>Transportation assistance available upon request: Contact Rachel Gillmore for more information, info@wipeoutpoverty.ca</p>