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Recognizing the face of poverty in Dufferin County

Most of us could describe what poverty looks like in a third world country, but would we recognize it in Dufferin County? The Dufferin County Poverty and Housing Forum, set to take place in Orangeville this month, seeks to put a face to the poverty on our doorstep and work toward solutions with action.

The forum is presented by the County of Dufferin, in partnership with Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (Headwaters Communities in Action) and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Headwaters Communities in Action project consultant Shirley Boxem says, ?The forum will strive to utilize the process of collective impact to identify and agree on what poverty looks like in Dufferin, and then engage multiple sectors to garner commitment and identify action items.?

The project lead, Kathryn MacDonald says there are three key objectives for the forum. ?The first objective is to share local data and personal experiences with poverty in Dufferin County to give poverty a face in our area and illustrate its impacts.?

The second objective is to learn how other communities successfully took action on poverty elimination. Randalin Ellery coordinator with the Guelph Poverty Task Force and Laura Catarri of the Hamilton Round Table on Poverty will share their community's journey towards poverty elimination.

The third object of the forum is to ?gage interest and commitment at a multi sector level? says Kathryn MacDonald, ?to move forward and begin to identity actions in areas such as employment, housing, food and transportation and otherwise determined as priorities for our community.?

MacDonald says the desired goal of the forum is ?the formation of a steering committee that will go about identifying and inviting key decision makers to a Poverty Table in Dufferin that will be supported by a coordinator. The Poverty Table will go about the work of identifying priority actions and develop and implement a work plan to accomplish the actions.?

The keynote speaker at the forum addressing poverty and housing in Dufferin County will be Karen Glass, Executive Director of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy. Organizers of the forum invite community agencies, local businesses, municipal leaders, landlords and concerned citizens, who are interested in learning about poverty and housing issues in Dufferin County and taking action on solution focused strategies to attend.

The forum takes place Tuesday, November 24th from 9 a.m. ? 3:30 p.m. at The Salvation Army Church, 690 Riddell Rd. in Orangeville. The no cost event includes lunch, but seating is limited. To reserve your seat please register at: http://headwaterscommunities.org/2015/09/events/social-housing-homelessness-and-poverty-forum

By Marni Walsh