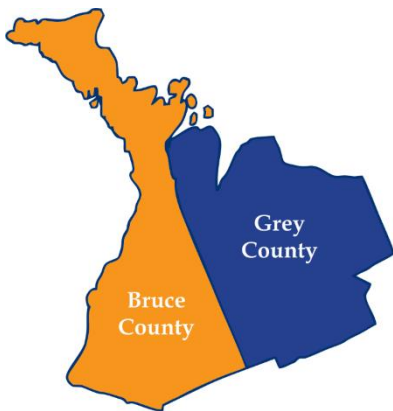




POVERTY TASK FORCE

2018 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

JILL UMBACH





WHAT IS THE POVERTY TASK FORCE?

INTRODUCTION

The Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force works in partnership with 52 community-based agencies, planning tables, community groups; universities, institutes and policy-makers. The Poverty Task Force is led by the United Way of Bruce Grey along with leadership from Bruce and Grey Counties.

We have created a platform that allows for meaningful dialogue, education and purposeful partnerships that address the root causes of poverty in our community.

BUDGET

Our budget revenue from Grey County, Bruce County and the United Way in 2018 was \$50,000. Many additional contributions were made by different partners to cover joint project activities.

OUTPUTS: ACTIVITIES

- 6 Action Groups meet on a monthly basis: Income Security, Food Security, Housing, Health Equity, Bridges Out of Poverty and Community Voices.
- Two Bridges Out of Poverty workshops were carried out in 2018.
- Four Getting Ahead sessions were completed in 2018 for a total of 19 graduates.
- Staying Ahead program in Port Elgin and Owen Sound from January to June 2018.
- A Building Your Emotional Resources program was in January 2018 with 11 graduates.
- Six lower tier municipalities, 1 county and 8 organizations have endorsed the Bruce Grey Food Charter.
- A Health Equity Screening Tool and Best Practices/Resources website page was designed by the Health Equity Action Group and featured a presented at Provincial conference in 2018.
- For 2019, 3 education videos are under production on how to use the Health Equity Screening Tool.

FOUR KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- From Band-Aids to Bridges: moving forward with Community Food Centers
- Enough to Thrive On: seeking income security solutions for strong communities
- From Housing to Homes: prioritizing safe and affordable homes to create safe and healthy neighborhoods.
- We All Live Here: ensuring diversity, inclusion and engagement in Municipal decision-making.



INCOME SECURITY

TRENDS

- Almost 1 in 5 children across Grey County and Bruce County live in a low-income household.
- On average, 1,949 households per month accessed Ontario Works in Grey and Bruce County in 2018.
- 60% of people who are low income are working.
- 20% of employees in Grey County have multiple jobs.
- From 2013-2017, the minimum wage was frozen at \$10.25/hour. It is now frozen at \$14/hour.

GOALS

- Improving consumer financial protection.
- Developing educational materials to increase income in households.
- The Income Security Action Group created the 2018 Community Income Tax Clinics List detailing 19 clinics in Grey Bruce.

HOUSING

IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING

Housing plays a complex role in shaping our well-being. Access, condition, proximity to environmental hazards, and connectedness with the rest of the community are all factors that determine whether housing contributes to or detracts from human health.

TRENDS

- Almost 1 in 5 households spend more than half of income on rent and utilities.
- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative served 3,002 clients in 2017.
- The average number of individuals/families on a waitlist for subsidized housing in Grey and Bruce Counties is 873.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- The homelessness enumeration was the first of its kind to be conducted in Bruce County and Grey County – the result of a mandate set by the provincial government with the commitment to end chronic homelessness by 2025.
- Over the course of the enumeration week, a total of 17 individuals experiencing homelessness were counted in Bruce County and 33 individuals in Grey County. Read more on the County's Housing webpage.
- The Housing Action Group and Community Voices are key partners in the Rentsafe.ca project and the Giiwe Housing Project. Recommendations, videos and next steps for these Housing initiatives are on our website.



Bruce Grey
**POVERTY
TASK FORCE**

FOOD SECURITY

TRENDS

- 1 in 8 Canadians experience food insecurity.
- 1 in 5 children across Grey County and Bruce County live in a low income household, while 6.5% of households sometimes or often run out of food before they can afford to buy more.
- In 2018, it cost \$884/month to feed a family of 4 in Grey County or Bruce County.
- 22 Food Banks exist in Grey County and Bruce County.

FROM BAND-AIDS TO BRIDGES STRATEGY

Traditional food charity model cannot address the root cause of household food insecurity: poverty. There is a need for change. The solution lies in an income response.

The Bruce Grey Food Charter is a commitment to work together to build a vibrant, sustainable, food secure community. With community participation, a sustainable local food system will prioritize health, social justice, education, economic development, the environment, and culture.

Efforts in 2018 to transform food banks to community food centers saw Food Security Action Group members supporting community kitchens, gardens, and a new partnership with FoodRescue.ca - an online platform connecting businesses with surplus food products to non-for-profit agencies with food programs.

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Bridges Out of Poverty brings people from all sectors and economic classes together to improve job retention rates, build resources, improve outcomes, and support those who are moving out of poverty.

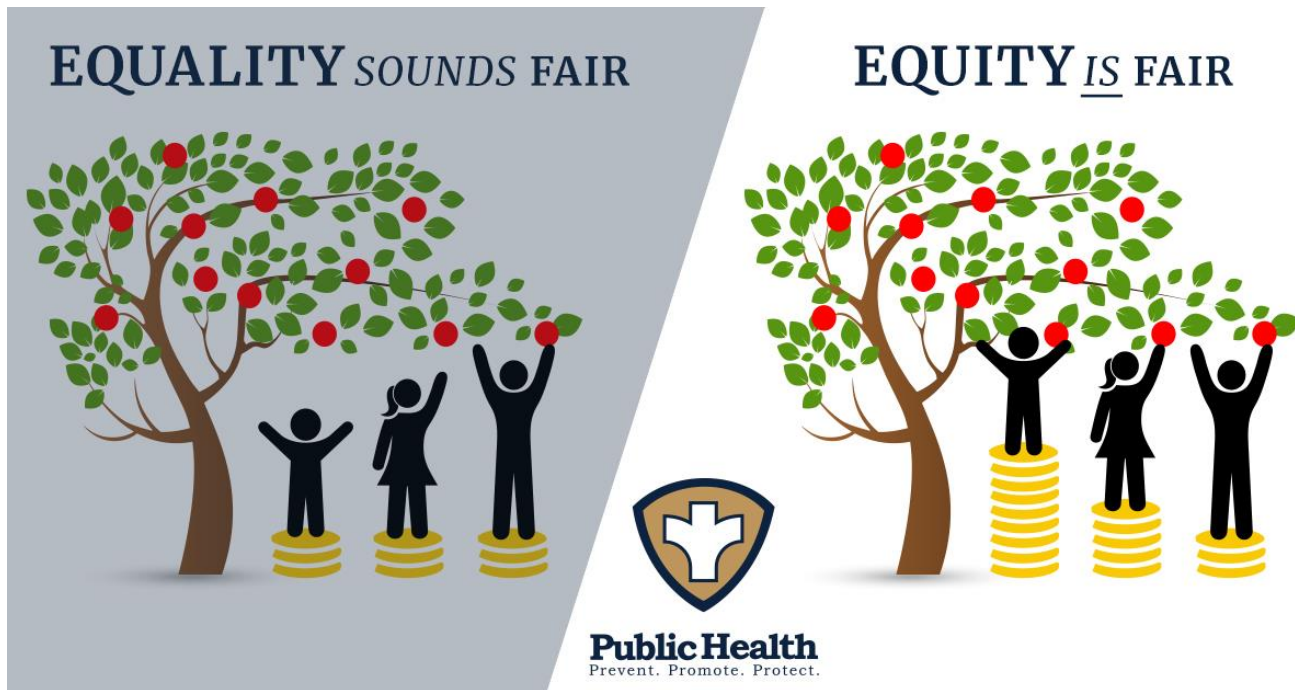
- In 2018, we completed 4 Getting Ahead sessions in Hanover, Kincardine, Owen Sound and Walkerton with a program total of 222 graduates. Getting Ahead is designed to help people create a stable, secure life for themselves and their family.
- A new Building Emotional Resources course for Getting Ahead graduates was piloted. The Pilot was picked up to run for 12 weeks in Hanover in March 2019.
- The next component of the Bridges Out of Poverty program is the formation of Circles™. Circles™ is a supportive, intentional, reciprocal, befriending relationship comprised of a Getting Ahead graduate, their family, and community-based middle class people.

COMMUNITY VOICES

The inclusion of diverse voices across sectors, including those of people with “grounded expertise”, is an integral part of reducing and eliminating poverty. People with grounded expertise deeply understand the realities of poverty. Their stories, experiences and expertise serve as powerful tools in disrupting communities’ current understanding, and offer a clearer perspective that raises awareness, builds compassion, and challenges stigma and stereotypes.

In 2018, Community Voices members Renee Schlonies and Sandra Holyer presented their journey from Ontario Works to Getting Ahead graduates to Getting Ahead Facilitators and eventually employees to Grey County Council.

Community Voices members engaged with the City of Owen Sound regarding the targeting of payday loans (signage) on bus shelters and at the transit station. They were successful in having the City follow up with Patterson Signs to remove these payday loan signs.



HEALTH EQUITY

Health Equity means that ALL members of the community have opportunities to be healthy and receive quality care.

TRENDS

- Almost 1 in 5 children across Grey & Bruce live in a low-income household.
- 29.5% of Indigenous children in Ontario live in poverty.
- Ontario women experience a wage gap of 30% relative to men. This increases to 57% for Indigenous women and recent immigrants; 46% for women living with disabilities, and 37-39% for racialized and immigrant women.

HEALTH EQUITY TOOLS IN 2018

- We have expanded the Health Equity website page with additional tools, best practices and other resources.
- The Health Equity Group members have focused on the production of 3 videos about health equity funded by Health Links in partnership with CTRE Productions. Three videos are expected to be completed and released in 2019.

TRANSPORTATION

SHORT-TERM OUTCOME INDICATOR

Transportation coordination project is initiated with support from action group. Action plan developed.

The Grey County Coordinated Transportation Project was continued in 2018.

- HWY 26 corridor MOVIN'GB coordination between OS-Collingwood-OS was expanded in 2017 in partnership with Meaford Handivan and Beaver Valley Outreach and continued into 2018.
- HWY 10 shuttle extension for MOVINGB commute from OS-Dundalk-OS ran in 2018.

YOUTH VITAL SIGNS REPORT

The Poverty Task Force is a member of the Community Foundation Grey Bruce's Vital Signs Advisory Committee that began work in 2015 and produced the first Vital Signs Report in October 2016.

The Advisory Committee has analyzed the results of Vital Conversations Youth Forums in Warton and Hanover. Priorities for youth are: public transportation, youth voice, youth friendly spaces, culture/identity/belonging and substance abuse.

A new Vital Signs Youth Report and a series of videos will be released in 2019.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Poverty Task Force developed its first online Municipal Election Education campaign in 2018. Fifty-seven people completed the Community Survey (45 were candidates) and engaged in an exchange of ideas, solutions, and information.

- Poverty Task Force WordPress website with blogposts and an e-newsletter (672 followers)
- Poverty Task Force Facebook page (543 followers)
- Poverty Task Force twitter account (539 followers) (2,517 tweets)
- Community Voices closed Facebook page (7 members)
- Getting Ahead to Stay Ahead closed Facebook page (52 members)

WEBSITE: [HTTP://POVERTYTASKFORCE.COM](http://povertytaskforce.com)

TWITTER: @BGTASKFORCE

FACEBOOK: BRUCEGREYPOVERTYTASKFORCE

