

Summary of Responses from the Child Poverty Symposium, 13 March 2013

CHILDCARE

Issues:

- accessibility, affordability, and quality of care
- flexibility of hours to suit night shifts or part time work
- a need for public understanding of the value of childcare and early learning
- adequate wages for workers
- the marginalization, isolation and fear felt by young mothers
- finding suitable facilities

Working together:

- this is not just a women's issue so lobby and educate men's groups
- increase public awareness
- lobby for \$10/day daycare
- find inter-generational strategies
- make this a priority for the up-coming election
- be an informed, responsible voter
- combine efforts and services with other groups
- bring in experts
- expand existing programs such as Parent-Tot drop-ins

Involvement:

- talk to the unconverted
- recruit providers with skills
- join the Early Childhood Development planning table
- employ public advocacy
- question and pressure the politicians
- car-pooling and partnering
- co-ordinate services
- promote an Early Childhood Development course at Capilano University

Actions:

- advocacy, dispel the myths, spread the word
- provide a tax benefit
- encourage businesses to provide on-site daycare
- create family-friendly workplaces with flexible hours, job-sharing,
and work at home plans
- develop a scaled users fee
- set up a daycare school bus
- provide a tax benefit to employers who support childcare
- vote

FOOD

Issues:

- the cost of food
- access to affordable and nutritious food
- transportation on the coast
- resistance to change of attitudes
- food requirements for various age groups
- lack of skills in food preparation
- lack of facilities for food preparation
- disconnect between the growers and the public

Working together:

- hold a food forum for public education to change social attitudes and remove stigmas
- develop community kitchens and school gardens: “hoe a row”
- employ networking to disseminate information
- lobby levels of government to change policy
- publicize existing programs.

Involvement:

- volunteer skills for community kitchens and gardens
- provide a bursary for farming education
- join garden clubs
- use communal buying and large batch sharing
- coordinate and share skills.

Actions:

- support local agencies and businesses
- set up good food boxes
- adopt a family
- donate time and land
- set up community workshops
- shop locally
- form a canning club.

HOUSING

Issues:

- affordable rents
- transportation on the coast
- subsidized government funding
- upkeep
- discrimination against renters
- low cost housing for purchase
- government enforced ceiling on rents

Working together:

- lobby for government assisted housing
- support Habitat for Humanity
- increase welfare rates
- use community resources
- use an interdisciplinary approach

Involvement:

- attend all-candidates meetings
- ask questions, vote wisely
- attend council meetings
- demonstrate
- donate

Actions:

- lobby BC Housing
- lobby government
- get municipalities and developers to work together
- look at what Nordic countries do
- set up a coast website for sharing information
- encourage municipalities to set aside land for low income housing
- create a permanent homeless shelter
- push for rent control

A LIVING WAGE

Issues:

- part-time versus full time employment
- convincing employers to adopt a living wage policy
- scarcity of good jobs on the coast
- pressure government to make changes to policy
- find a local champion
- minimum wage should have an annual cost of living adjustment
- do higher salaries mean fewer jobs?
- would it put small businesses out of business?

Working together:

- increase awareness through education and seminars
- set up worker coops for job-sharing
- eradicate skepticism
- change the government
- support local businesses
- institute a co-op bank for start-ups
- use community futures
- certify “living wage” employers

Involvement:

- bring issues forward to educate people
- spend disposable income locally
- lobby government
- educate companies

Actions:

- put pressure on local government
- campaign for a living wage
- write letters to the editor and your MLA
- hold forums
- honour a living wage employer