

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Sean Krausert (403) 609-1762
seankrausert@gmail.com

St. Michael's Takes Lead on Poverty Discussion in Canmore

On May 14, 2012, St. Michael's Anglican Church will be hosting a full day discussion amongst interested stakeholders in Canmore with respect to poverty in the community.

Like every community, Canmore has poverty. There are those with disabilities that scrape by on AISH while facing isolation and transportation issues. There are those who are hungry that rely on the food bank or school lunch programs for sustenance. There are those that have fallen on difficult times with limited or no income and are trying to cope in a home town that caters especially well to the affluent. However, before anyone can properly address these and other poverty issues in a compassionate and dignified manner, we must first assess the extent of the problem. Only then can we determine how best to use the many willing and varied resources within the community.

Influenced by the poverty advocacy of its deacon, the Rev. Sean Krausert, St. Michael's has recently committed to take a leadership role in the community with respect to facilitating the discussion on poverty in Canmore. **"St. Michael's has always been committed to helping those in need in Canmore, and many of our parishioners are extremely active in the community,"** reflects St. Michael's priest, the Rev. Betty Piwowar. **"However, we felt that to better meet the needs of people, there should be a community discussion as to how we can work together to do so more effectively."**

All interested stakeholders in the community will be personally invited to attend the full day gathering on May 14th from 10 AM until 4 PM. These stakeholders include the Town of Canmore Council, FCSS and other town departments, the Bow Valley Food Bank, the RCMP, the Thrift Store, the Hostel Bear, schools, grocery stores, people with disabilities, local churches, and many others. Of course, any interested members of the general public are welcome to attend and may RSVP to seankrausert@gmail.com or by calling St. Michael's at 403.678.5191. Lunch will be provided.

The discussion on May 14th will be kicked off with a presentation from former City of Calgary Councillor, Joe Ceci, Coordinator of Action to End Poverty in Alberta. Vibrant Communities Calgary and Action to End Poverty in Alberta have recently released a "Poverty Costs" report, which shows the indirect costs of poverty to Albertans being between \$7.1 - \$9.5 Billion every year. As noted by Krausert, who will be the facilitator of the Canmore gathering, **"Based upon various reports done across Canada, it's abundantly clear that poverty costs more to service than it does to eliminate it. We don't need to spend more, we need to spend better."**

It's hoped that as a result of Canmore's discussion on poverty, there will be (i) a better sense of the state of poverty in Canmore; (ii) better communication about who is doing what; and (iii) opportunities for collaboration to better meet the needs of people. Tony Teare, Chair of St. Michael's Outreach Committee, states, **"Canmore is full of generous creative people and organizations. By talking and working together, we can ensure our community better meets the needs of people regardless of their economic circumstances."**