

OCTOBER 2011

## Message from the Executive Director

This year has proven to be an extremely difficult one for vulnerable families in Calgary. In fact, it has been the busiest year Inn from the Cold has experienced since being founded in the bitterly cold winter of 1997. For close to 15 years we have served thousands of homeless families during their time of greatest need providing the friendship, shelter and support they require to rebuild their lives and find hope for the future.

While many things in our city have changed throughout the years, this unwavering commitment to reach out to those in need of our support has been steadfast. Together we built Calgary's first and largest full-service Emergency Family Shelter and strengthened our network of community Inns to ensure that no family was without a safe place to stay while we addressed the issues that contributed to their homelessness.

Our network has always been on the front-line in the fight against family homelessness, and this year that need has been overwhelming. Since August 17th, Calgary's family emergency shelters have been over capacity with no available space to handle increased demand. It is during these times that our faith-based partners and community Inns have once again stepped up responding with emergency inns, providing extra beds and an abundance of compassion.

This unconditional concern is deeply appreciated and ensures that families experiencing the crisis of homelessness are not turned away or placed in taxi cabs with their children to spend the night alone in a strange hotel. It is our belief that families, and especially children, need to be immediately connected to services, schooling and the supports they require to end their homelessness, while still offering the stability of a routine where possible.

We continue to work towards our vision of a community where no family is homeless and we are making great strides. This year we have secured housing placements for 106 families and prevented over 230 from entering homelessness by retaining their housing. Yet in spite of our greatest efforts, a tightening housing market and growing poverty has seen an increase in families in jeopardy. We are experiencing double digit increases in the number of families experiencing homelessness with a 30% increase in September alone. Family homelessness is complex and requires many unique supports to address the issues of each individual family member. Appropriate and sustainable housing is challenging to secure with a reduction in the availability of two- and three-bedroom affordable units.

It is at these times I am most humbled and so exceptionally proud to be a part of a network that cares deeply for the less fortunate members of our community. It is through our unwavering faith and commitment to creating a community where no family is homeless that we are making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

## The "Do Crew" Doing Great Things

The Inn's Emergency Family Shelter is one hard-working building. Since purchasing it in 2008, it has been a place of refuge where countless families have come for shelter, nourishment, programs and hope. With more families than ever before seeking our help in 2011, we have seen extra demands on our building, and this humble and hard working 110-year old facility is desperately in need of both structural and cosmetic attention. We are thankful for the many organizations and volunteers who provide much needed support. For November we would like to thank the CBC "Do Crew" team, lead by Angela Knight, for choosing the Inn for some essential nip and tucks before the busyness of Christmas sets in. The "Do Crew" will be at the Inn working on our public family washrooms and stairwell areas so watch for this amazing group of staff and volunteers on upcoming CBC news broadcasts.

With permitting for our kitchen and front entrance renovations on the way to the city for approval, check back for upcoming announcements recognizing the generous organizations who have supported these efforts, as well as calls for volunteer opportunities. We couldn't do it without you Calgary! Thank you for being INN to ending family homelessness.

## INNspiration House – A Success!

On Tuesday, October 11th, Innspiration House wrapped up its two-week tour at W. Brett Wilson's home. The whimsical foam house had been traveling around Calgary collecting donations and raising awareness to support homeless families. In total, the initiative raised \$104,287 – an incredible accomplishment for its inaugural year!



The Inn would like to thank Resolve by RPM Software for bringing this vision to life. From concept to creation, this initiative would not have been possible without their support – or the support of everyone who hosted Innspiration House. Through the enthusiasm and generosity of the community, we were able to raise significant awareness about the recent increase in family homelessness.



## The Littlest Things are Making a Big Difference

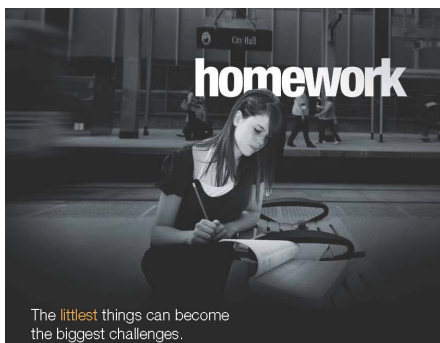
It's the littlest things that can be the biggest challenges for homeless families. Reading a bedtime story, caring for a sick child, finding a quiet place to do homework - all of these daily tasks can become almost insurmountable without a safe place to call home.

For only the second time in our almost 15-year history, Inn from the Cold has launched an awareness and fundraising campaign, called The Littlest Things, to help Calgarians understand the complexities of family homelessness and the urgent need to support this vulnerable population. The campaign, which kicked off in September, has been instrumental in increasing awareness of family homelessness.

"There are many unique factors and challenges facing homeless families. Every family member has specific needs and requires critical support. Overall, families require longer term resources to successfully secure and maintain appropriate housing, and break the cycle of homelessness," says Yvette Rasmussen, Executive Director, Inn from the Cold.

The timing of the campaign is particularly critical as the Inn's Emergency Family Shelter has been at or over capacity since spring with the community shelter program at, or over, capacity on several occasions in the past several months. The money raised through the Littlest Things campaign will go towards Inn from the Cold's programs and supports dedicated to helping families successfully find and maintain housing, while offering the resources they require to rebuild their lives.

Rasmussen says, "Our campaign goal is to raise \$1 million, and the initial response from the community has been amazing. If every Calgarian gave just one loonie, we would exceed our goal. The smallest donation will make a big impact on our community. With Inn from the Cold experiencing a decrease in donations this year and seeing an increase in families seeking help, it is essential that we have the human and financial resources to meet the need."



## Adopt a Family 2011

Inn from the Cold would like to invite you to get INN to the holiday spirit by adopting a family in need this Christmas. Many of our community families are facing difficult financial challenges and often find the holiday season overwhelming. Through your generosity, families will experience the joy of the holiday season, and all the little things that will make a big difference!

Register online for our Adopt a Family program:

<http://www.innfromthecold.org/give/adopt-a-family-2011.html>

For more information, contact Adopt a Family Coordinator, Elizabeth Jeanson at [elizabeth@innfromthecold.org](mailto:elizabeth@innfromthecold.org)

## Calling All Schools! Littlest Things Change Campaign Launches November 7th!

Inn from the Cold is once again pleased to partner with Calgary and Area schools and youth groups as we launch this exciting grassroots movement that will bring positive change for homeless families in our community!

This school campaign will run from November 7 to November 23. During this time, students are invited to collect and donate their spare change in the coin receptacles provided to their school and receive an awareness presentation on family homelessness. After the campaign, Inn volunteers will pick up the change boxes from the schools to include in our final count, which will be announced on November 30.

Please join us in this positive community movement that will show our children how they can play a role in ending family homelessness. Every contribution is invaluable and is as simple as the gift of time or a pocketful of loose change.

For information on how your school can be INNvolved, please contact Joy Park at [joy@innfromthecold.org](mailto:joy@innfromthecold.org).

## Look What's Coming INN November!

Southcentre Facebook "Share the Love"

Delectable's Art and Craft Show

Harmonious Transitions Art Show

Domain Design INN-Style Fashion Show

Mur-Mur Inn Shopping event

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