



*Reach Out. Change Lives.*

**In this issue:**

[About NPRAC—  
Members, Guiding  
Principles](#) 4

[Act to Reduce  
Poverty—Sub-  
Committee  
Updates](#) 2-3

[Contact NPRAC](#) 4

[Do the Math!](#) 2

[The Link Between  
Literacy and  
Poverty](#) 1

[NPRAC  
Supporters](#) 2

[Poverty Discussion  
Paper](#) 4

**YOU CAN HELP!**

- Treat people living in poverty with respect and dignity.
- Donate towards staffing programs and providing literacy materials.
- Volunteer in a local literacy program— it may help even more.

**The Link Between Literacy and Poverty**

As you read this newsletter, consider that of 10 people around you now, chances are that only 3 others can comprehend the text written on these pages. That is true in Ontario and that is true in Northumberland. Every day you read and process thousands of words that help in all of the situations and issues you are facing in your life. You read to learn, to help others, and to help yourself. The words you encounter every day have an effect on you and how you live your life. You also probably grew up in a household with books and with people in your family who read. What if you hadn't?

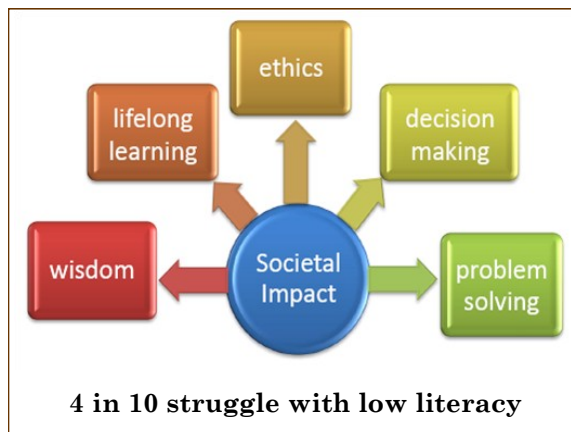
Literacy is more than reading and writing – those are tools and without them it is difficult to participate equally in the world. Policy written to improve literacy will work most effectively in conjunction within a well devised poverty reduction strategy. A better standard of living will come with improved literacy, job creation, a living wage, acceptance and tolerance.

Low literacy may be more prevalent among older Canadians, but is there risk in the literacy of the generations to come? Nearly 1/3 of 6 year olds entering grade 1 are reported to have challenges which if not managed could impair their ability to learn and do well in school. Pre

-school preparation and support provided by parents – reading to children, telling stories, teaching letters, words and numbers and visiting a library – is a social experience. Interaction with

others is how we learn language and develop our self-confidence. Parents, schools and the whole community must partner to teach young children. None can do it alone.

Literacy is one way to have social power. People become part of a culture by learning to understand and use information from many sources. Language is used in social relations to increase knowledge and improve opportunities. Literacy barriers can exclude people from the most powerful social groups. (*Literacy Skills of Canadian Youth, 1997, Statistics Canada.*)





**NORTHUMBERLAND  
POVERTY REDUCTION  
ACTION COMMITTEE**

*Reach Out. Change Lives.*

## NPRAC Supporters

Northumberland Community Legal Centre



## Act to Reduce Poverty—Summary Reports from the Sub-Committees

### Advocacy—Share the Message!

A resolution was made by Northumberland County Council to support in principle the NPRAC Discussion Paper titled “Making a Difference to Poverty in Northumberland County” and to develop a five-year plan to use savings from Ontario Disability Support Program costs (which the province is covering) for poverty reduction efforts as the county budget is reviewed in annual deliberations.

NPRAC Chair Lois Cromarty has been busy presenting the message to:

- a Provincial Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, Nov 18 in Toronto
- the provincial consultation on affordable housing;
- HUMA standing committee as it works to determine the federal government’s role in poverty reduction.

To give more people access community services, working together the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation and the County of Northumberland have established a series of Community Service Hubs. Hub locations are now in Brighton, Port Hope, Campbellford, and Alderville with another planned for Colborne in the future. As the project moves ahead there are also plans to expand the e-learn Centre’s services to these locations.

### [Do the Math!](http://dothemath.thestop.org)

Would you have to move? How much for rent and groceries? Is telephone or internet necessary? Coffee? Want to invite a friend over for dinner? See if you could balance your budget as a single person receiving social assistance.

<http://dothemath.thestop.org>

### Basic Income Security (BIS)

The BIS Sub-Committee focuses on issues such as an adequate income, adequate and nutritious food, affordable and accessible childcare and better access to basic health care services. BIS organized an East Northumberland Information Fair on October 16, 2009 in Brighton; 38 agencies provided information about services for low-income individuals and families. Next Information Fair will be held at the Town Park Recreation Centre in Port Hope on April 29<sup>th</sup>. BIS is supporting a provincial initiative to help put more food in the budget by asking elected officials if a single person on social assistance receives enough income to live with health and dignity?

### Economic Development

Key issues identified as elements of an overall poverty reduction strategy are:

- ongoing skills development
- greater access to community services
- high speed internet across the county.

In partnership with the County of Northumberland and the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation (NCFDC) an e-learn Centre in Port Hope was set up, providing online access to over 7000 college and university courses. Also, the NCFDC has been successful, in partnership with Durham College, in launching the Equi-Pass program allowing any resident of Northumberland County access to over 130 online courses to upgrade their skills. These courses range from computer literacy to a number of soft skills (managing change, managing stress, leadership skills, interview skills, time management, etc.) and the cost for one year is only \$25.

In terms of greater access to broadband services, the County obtained funding support and recently

awarded a contract to have high speed Internet services available all across the Northumberland area, including the most rural communities.

### **Affordable Housing**

The Affordable Housing Steering Committee in cooperation with MPP Lou Rinaldi arranged local consultations to gather input for the provincial Affordable Housing Strategy. Members been visiting other successful models of affordable and supportive housing searching for solutions and housing initiatives that might work well in this area.

Success has been reached with approvals of Phase 1 of the Dr. Powers project in Port Hope—home soon to 24 affordable units.

### **Helping Everyone Access**

**Recreation Together (H.E.A.R.T)** is a project developed to ensure all people in Northumberland have the opportunity to participate in recreation activities without barriers. Partners working together are The Municipality of Port Hope Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, HKPR District Health Unit, Port Hope Community Health Centre, YMCA Northumberland, Alderville First Nations Health and Social Services and Northumberland United Way. To see upcoming activities, visit [www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca) You'll also find information about available subsidies and an online sports equipment swap program.

### **The Northumberland Transportation Initiative (NTI)**

aims to provide affordable, accessible and sustainable rural transportation in Northumberland County. The first route is through Cramahe Township and Haldimand Ward running to and from Colborne, Dundonald, Castleton, Morganston, Salem, Grafton, Centreton and Cobourg. One-way fare is \$5. Van service is available 2 days a week now and expanding to 4 days in 2010. It is open to anyone who lives in the service areas. The van is wheelchair and scooter accessible. Service can be used for appointments, meetings, work, school, social events, shopping, and recreation. Riders must pre-register and pre-book by calling 1-866-768-7778. For more information visit [www.commcare.ca](http://www.commcare.ca) and follow the NTI link.

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### **Food Access Northumberland (FAN)**

Through a community partnership, FAN coordinates programs and services to help people get the food they need. It assists community meals or lunches, bulk food-buying programs including the Salvation Army's Good Food Box, and emergency food providers such as food banks and Northumberland Child Development Centre's Milk for Moms program. FAN also promotes cooking classes and food demonstrations that highlight nutritious, quick and low-cost meals, raises awareness of locally grown food through its support of community gardens in the area and the Proudly Northumberland Farmgate Guide. FAN recently conducted research to understand the needs and issues related to using food programs for food insecure individuals. The following are some new projects starting:

- Three Cooking-For-One sessions at Port Hope Community Health starting January 19<sup>th</sup>;
- Lunch monthly at Brighton Community Care beginning in February;

- 6 skill building sessions related to food preparation for TEAM participants at the East High School;
- The Community Food Cupboard Drop-In is open again at the Salvation Army in Cobourg—Thursday, 4-6 pm.

Contact Sarah Tsang or Patricia Stuckless at 1-866-888-4577 or 905-885-9100 for more information.

To mark Family Literacy Day on January 27<sup>th</sup>, the **Education Sub-Committee** arranged a panel discussion: Improving Literacy Levels in Children and Youth held at the Keeler Centre in Colborne . There to talk about action plans in practice were representatives from

- KPRD School Board,
- Children's YMCA Northumberland,
- The Learning Disabilities Association of Peterborough,
- PVNC Catholic District School Board,
- Colborne Public Library.

## "MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO POVERTY IN NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY"

Through the generous support of the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation, The County of Northumberland, Northumberland United Way, and the Northumberland Community Legal Centre, NPRAC has completed a new discussion paper: "Making a Difference to Poverty in Northumberland County". The report has been presented to and endorsed by Northumberland County Council. The goal of the paper is to outline the various factors and issues for those in Northumberland County who live in poverty, whether generational or situational. Certainly, many of the issues interact with each other and level of income is generic and basic to all. One of the biggest challenges for Northumberland is the rural nature of our county which hides the extent of poverty and creates further disadvantage for those living in poverty. Local issues require attention and effort within the rural context.

The seven priorities outlined are:

- Basic Income Security, including access to food, clothing and health care
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Skills Development, Training and Education
- Economic Development
- Coordination of Agencies and Programs
- Awareness campaign and advocacy

The recommendations for long term strategies are based on NPRAC working at both the local action level and advocating broadly by joining with others across the country with similar goals to reduce poverty. In order to achieve this, the report makes recommendation to:

1. Focus activities on the seven key priorities.
2. Implement a social planning capacity for Northumberland County
3. Strive for excellence in advocacy
4. Make poverty reduction a "top of mind" issue for all sectors.

For a copy of the paper, visit <http://www.thehelpcentre.ca/documents/making-a-difference-2009-09.pdf> or call the Legal Center at 1-800-850-7882 or 905-373-4464

### Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee

Northumberland Community Legal Centre  
Northumberland United Way  
Northumberland County Community and Social Services  
Northumberland Child Development Centre  
Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty  
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board  
The Help Centre  
Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation  
Northumberland Labour Council  
Fleming College, Cobourg Campus,  
Academic Upgrading  
Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit  
Habitat for Humanity Northumberland  
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Port Hope Community Health Centre  
Ministry of Community and Social Services (Ontario Disability Support Program)  
Northumberland Transportation Initiative  
H.E.A.R.T. (Helping Everyone Access Recreation Together)  
F.A.N. (Food Access Northumberland)  
Affordable Housing Action Committee (Northumberland)  
Beginnings Pregnancy Care  
The Honourable Christine Stewart, P.C.  
Carolyn Rienstra  
Doug Bates  
Rev. Phyllis Dietrich  
Gerald Gray  
Paul Feeley  
Stephanie Escott

### NPRAC Guiding Principles

- To take collective action in multiple sectors and by multiple methods, to reduce poverty in our county;
- To take the "poverty reduction" message out to all sectors and asking that it be part of all discussions;
- To support the work being done by others in the seven action areas;
- To share information and make linkages among those working on poverty reduction and with groups working in the seven action areas;
- To identify areas where poverty reduction work is not being done and to "light the fire" to get the work started.



*Reach Out. Change Lives.*

### CONTACT US

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