



April Newsletter  
Volume 2, Issue 4



## Why Don't the Homeless Just Go Home?

There are many **reasons why people become homeless**: losing their job; family break-up; family violence; mental illness; poor physical health; substance use; physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse – to name just a few. But, the defining reason is **the loss of housing**.

Let's look at the top three reasons people lose their homes – reasons that have contributed overwhelmingly to the current homelessness crisis in Niagara Falls.

### 1. Because their home now can exceed 80% of their income

Current Niagara Falls MLS stats indicate an average house price of \$693,393.00 and 212 new listings in the last 28 days. As of today, Niagara Falls housing data shows the median days for a house to be on the market is 21 days. Over the last few years, the housing prices have increased by 78.1% annually. Unfortunately, the cost of rent in Niagara Falls goes up every year (monthly, in the case of the homeless) and people's incomes can't catch up. To put it into perspective, the average market rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Niagara Falls in 2017 was \$550.00 per month. Today it is \$1450.00 per month—an almost 300% increase in the last five years. For those who are low-income (\$34,000 per year if you're single, or under \$48,000 per year for a couple), purchasing or renting is not feasible. Imagine if you were homeless with less than \$12,000.00 income per year! This is **nowhere near affordable**. It has been stated in a recent study that Canadian Housing Affordability has reached its worst level in twenty-eight years, with an average household needing to spend 80% of its income to cover the cost of owning a home.

### 2. Because their home was destroyed in a civil war

“There is no civil war in Niagara Falls, Canada,” you say. Think beyond the obvious. A home should be a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable – and, most of all, safe. Unfortunately for many people, this is not the case. Thousands of individuals and families are **forced to leave their homes due to unsafe living conditions**. This could mean overcrowding, structural damage, or substandard health and safety standards. Other potential dangers include the threat of **theft, harassment, abuse, and assault**. This is particularly an issue for [women](#), especially those with children and youth. Have you ever witnessed a divorce gone all wrong? Truly, a civil war has happened.

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#### Special Needs

- Running Shoes
- Socks
- Backpacks
- Blankets/Sleeping Bags
- Volunteers--Call 365-880-0818
- Hotel Soaps, Shampoos etc
- Women's Hygiene Products
- Sweat Pants and Shirts
- Financial Donation  
[donate@JCsPlace.org](mailto:donate@JCsPlace.org)

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Why does JC's Place Ministries need a cell phone? It's an expense that might have been trimmed but for three reasons it wasn't.

1. The safety of our volunteers is paramount.
2. Emergencies happen on the streets with our homeless folks.
3. Special needs. What are special needs? Here is an example:

Carl's cell phone buzzes with a text message. "Is this Pam or John?" It's Caller #1.

Carl replies, "This is Carl. What may I do to help you?"

Caller #1, "Sorry, Carl. I'm just wondering if you guys still go out on Wednesday? I'm really hungry today; haven't eaten for a few days."

Carl says, "Hang on for a minute."

Caller #1 agrees, "Okay."

After a brief pause, Carl says, "Call John at 385-880-0818. He's waiting for your call."

Caller #1 responds, "Okay."

John: She was five minutes from our house, at a motel. We took her a loaf of bread, two jars of peanut butter, and A&W and Tim Horton's cards. Caller #1 is trying her best to survive. She has applied for work at thirty locations, but the tourist season in Niagara Falls is still very, very slow, and Caller #1 is seeking employment. Caller #1 was very grateful and gave us a great big hug of thanks. This is how an emergency is handled and accomplished with modern technology.

Early last month Pam and I went on a shopping trip and low and behold a young girl was on the sidewalk, crying, with a single bag of all her life's belongs at her side. Sitting down beside her and asking how we could help, she related the following: She had given all her savings to a person to allow her to stay in a room for a month. Today they kicked her out, and kept her money for drugs. She was hungry and had no where to go, so she was weeping in despair. Asked if she was on drugs, she reluctantly said she was on methadone. We gave her \$20 to go into the store to get something to eat. Usually it is not a good idea to give cash but there are exceptions to the rule. She went into the store to get food. Coming out, she said, "I remember you. You're the ones who gave me the chili and bun last year." It suddenly hit me! This was the girl I saw last year, laying on a concrete pad in the winter with a blanket around her, 7 months pregnant. She has the ministry's cell number and will call later so I can bring other items to help her. We were going to do something different and to take a rest today, but God had other plans.

On Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup> we were able to get four new volunteers out on the routes. Two were in the Ministry van, distributing clothing and sandwiches, and two were giving out soup from the second vehicle. By the end of the day, the soup was almost gone and thirty sandwiches had been given out. We welcome these four new volunteers to JC's Place Ministries. Congratulations on a successful maiden voyage. We look forward to your help.

*~ John and Pam*

## Volunteers are an Important Asset for JC's Place Ministries

Recently we welcomed twelve new volunteers. Four are driving vehicles; four are assisting with food distribution; two are sorting clothing and other donated items; two are helping with food preparations. Carole and Cheryl of West Lincoln provided the St. Patrick's Day cookies which were given out on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We also have a homeless person who is trying to find the Ministry a replacement van. We say a big, "Welcome, and Thank you" for "Lending a Helping Hand."

Before closing off this section I must add that, believe it or not, the homeless are also volunteers in their own way, with their limited resources. One person, after having been given a bag of clothing just his size, returned later to the van, and said, "Thank you. I really appreciate what you gave me last week. In fact, I shared some with my neighbour who was also in need."

Many of our recipients come to the van and say, "Thank you for the food and support you give each week. Hugs and kisses to all the Ministry Volunteers." Then there are the unsung volunteers who drop off clothing for the Ministry, or the one who called and said, "Can you do a pick up? I have twelve bags to donate." It helps the Ministry to have the correct size of clothing or shoes, when requested, as we visit with the homeless each week.

## Warming and Overnight Sleeping Centres will be closing April 15, 2022

With these centers closing, there will be a need for warm clothing, and sleeping bags and blankets, until at least the May 24<sup>th</sup> weekend, unless there is a drastic upswing in the temperature earlier. Have you ever tried to sleep in 60°F weather without any blankets, at home? O yes, I know there are a few of you who are very hot all night long, but if you are like me, you will be freezing cold when you wake up.

Our Van Volunteers are surprised that, when they need something, it is there on the truck, ready to be given to the person in need. It's there, all because someone donated the item, someone else sorted and labeled the size, and then someone further saw to it that the van was adequately stocked, so the volunteers would be able to supply the need.

At present, we are needing large size sneakers 9-12, and, even though we have stated over and over that we do not need extra large clothing, we do sometimes stumble on someone in need of larger sizes. We may have to reorganize the bins on the truck so we have a few larger-sized clothing for men and women. Thankfully, we have not met any children on the street; we hope this doesn't change.

What does the ministry need?

- A new van that will carry 8-10 persons is high on our priority list. We will need funds to purchase this vehicle, and to keep all of our vehicles running.
- It seems that this winter we have not been able to give out the proper winter hand wear. Wool mitts are wonderful, if you have a place to dry them out. Good water-proof gloves were probably our most asked-for article, which we did not have.
- Hoodies, Hoodies, Hoodies! The homeless like the extra warmth that hoodies render over just sweat shirts. Winter coats came in and were distributed almost immediately. They were received with a grateful heart.
- Winter boots were also an article of which we did not have enough. Running shoes do not keep the feet warm or dry during the winter months.
- As mentioned elsewhere, sneakers, size 9-12, are in demand.

Again, as we approach warmer weather, we will be switching the items in our truck to summertime clothing. Thank you to all who donate their resources--goods, funds, and time--to the Ministry, and to those who pray for us, for our safety and the safety of those we serve.



[www.JCsPlace.org](http://www.JCsPlace.org) is now working. Please like our page and share us with your friends. You are now able to donate online . . . Thank you!

## Cookie Makers, Thank you !



**Needed: 8-10 Passenger Van**



**Clothing Donors, Thank You!**



**Thank You to the Person who donated these Boxes**

### 3. Because their temporary home was sold to make way for renovating a motel, or maybe building a new condo tower or affordable housing for those who can afford it

Many of the homeless who have made it off the streets into temporary accommodations are now facing the reality of eviction. Evictions allow the landlord to renovate the premises and increase the rental rates, or to demolish the building and replace it with a more profitable building with luxury apartments, lofts and commercial spaces. Our homeless folks are particularly exposed as they lose their affordable living space, that has changed into an unaffordable space, and there is not another place to live. People who live in rooming houses are especially imperilled because they **can't afford the market rent for another place to live**. They are often low-income families, seniors, newcomers or students.

It is important to understand that no one is safe from experiencing homelessness. It can happen to anyone. **As a community, we must work together to end homelessness. We need to start by understanding the homelessness crisis in Niagara Falls, breaking the stigma and discrimination around it, and building more affordable housing. Absolutely.**

The above article was adapted and modified for Niagara Falls from an article written by Fred Victor. Mr. Victor takes great pride in being the leader in ending homelessness in Toronto. We know that solving homelessness is an ambitious goal, but it is one that we believe can be achieved.

### Backpack Project for Homeless . . . Needs a Project Co Ordinator



What the Pandemic has done to the price of the van we need to purchase ^^^  
We missed the perfect fit again.  
Yet, we believe God is leading.  
There will be another one coming our way



JC's Place Ministries a mobile ministry of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church

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