

## Local housing challenges focus of new studies

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By Chris Drost

One of the challenges in making various levels of government aware of the seriousness of homelessness in North Hastings has been the lack of quality research and the collection of data on the subject. Without numbers and empirical evidence, it is difficult to make the case for such things as increased funding and supports.

Ellen Buck-McFayden, a researcher from the Trent/Fleming School of Nursing has recently received approval from Trent University to carry out two separate, but related, research projects in North Hastings.

One of the studies will focus on the experience of housing insecurity and factors that lead to homelessness in North Hastings.

Buck-McFayden is looking to speak with individuals who have experienced housing challenges or have found themselves without a safe place to live. She is also interested in interviewing others who have knowledge about the housing issues in the area. "This study will help us understand more about the experience of housing insecurity, how it affects residents, and what can be done about it," she says. Those who are willing to be interviewed, either on their own or part of a focus group, should set aside about one hour of time. Each participant will receive a small thank you of \$20 for their time.

Housing insecurity may also mean that a person has some kind of housing at the moment but it may be unstable or short-term or may not be meeting their needs, explained Buck-McFayden.

Individuals interested in sharing their story can contact Buck-McFayden at the Trent/Fleming School of Nursing at 705-748-1000 ext. 7029 or by email at [ellenbuckmcfayden@trentu.ca](mailto:ellenbuckmcfayden@trentu.ca)

The second research project revolves around the new Home Share initiative in North Hastings and will address poverty, insecure housing and social isolation in rural communities. Participants must be involved in the Home Share North Hastings project, either as someone who has found a home through the program, or has offered one. The first interview will take place when the individual is matched with their home share partner, and then again about nine months later. Questions will be about your housing situation, social life, health and feelings of loneliness. Again, the interviews will be about one hour in length and participants will receive \$20 in cash as a thank you.

While the Home Share program has recently had a couple of home owners step forward to be matched with someone in need of housing, there is still considerable need for homes where a room can be rented. Interested home share partners can contact the new Home Share coordinator, Shannon O'Keefe at North Hastings Community Trust at 613-332-3657 or stop by the NHCT office at 23B Bridge St. West in Bancroft.