

Community Consultations / North Hastings

RURAL POVERTY

North Hastings Community Trust (NHCT)

“Over half our population does not have enough to meet their basic needs. This is a rural crisis”.

Jane Kali, Program Director, NHCT

Our Mission: North Hastings Community Trust (NHCT) works together with our community to provide emergency and sustainable solutions to poverty in North Hastings.

North Hastings is one of the most under resourced regions in Ontario.

See Map for location: <http://www.northhastings.com/index.php/maps-directions.html>

North Hastings population is 12,054

Bancroft, major town centre is 3,800

In 2016 NHCT heard from nearly 500 people seeking financial assistance and our local food banks served 530 people monthly with numbers ever increasing. In September 2016 NHCT in collaboration with A Place For The Arts, The Poverty Round Table (Belleville) and Put Food in the Budget, facilitated three local community consultations to ask people about poverty in North Hastings. The aim of these consultations was to better understand the extent of the impacts of poverty, to hear what is working in communities to address these issues, and to discuss what is needed to end poverty.

The consultations were held with the understanding that rural poverty is different from poverty experienced in urban and suburban areas and has particular kinds of hardships.

We also recognize that there are particular kinds of opportunities and resiliencies in rural areas to create long term solutions to community well-being. Consultations took place in Bancroft, Coe Hill and Maynooth and were documented with art, photography and video. See the Video here: <https://vimeo.com/195360359> We heard from nearly 60 people collectively through these discussions and presented our findings at a community gathering and meal where we met with an additional 80 people. Drawings included in this report illustrate our conversations, discoveries and recommendations.

We heard stories of community strength, people supporting each other in creative and co-operative ways, problem solving, and neighbours looking out for, and after each other. We also heard stories of painful survival, of the impacts of struggling daily without enough money to pay bills and eat. We heard stories of isolation, lack of transportation options, and stories of people stuck in the bush with no way to access services or stores.

Many people shared anxiety over the fear of losing their vehicles due to breakdowns with no funds for repair or maintenance. We heard detailed explanations of deteriorating quality of life as people are forced to make choices with limited resources:

“Do I pay my hydro or feed my family?”

Summary of our findings:

What happens when you don't have enough to live:

Hunger Not enough money to feed ourselves and our families

Isolation Extremely limited transportation
Often people stuck in the bush
No way to get food or meet with people

Quality of life affected Cannot afford basic necessities
(heat becomes a luxury)

Mental health impacts Anxiety and depression
Cannot afford basic needs, stress of making choices
between paying bills and purchasing food

Physical Health is affected Cannot afford medication, dental work,
eye glasses, healthy food, heat

Homelessness and precarious housing
No heat, no water

Cannot afford hydro Many disconnected from power on account
of not being able to afford bills
To get water, we need hydro because our houses have pumps
Hydro costs taking away money for food

What are people and communities doing to address the impacts of poverty:

Community gardens (Harvest the North)
Sharing resources, bartering, exchanges
Wood Share (program to share wood for heating)
Neighbours helping each other

What needs to be done:

Raise social assistance rates Currently not enough to live on
Reduce hydro costs Demand fair energy strategy for rural Ontario
Increase minimum wage
Raise pensions for low income seniors
Raise corporate tax More fair distribution of resources
Invest in rural transportation
Resource local community projects and programs
Reduce regulations and barriers to success for cottage industries and home-based businesses
Invest and support more local and collective ownership and control of resources including hydro and water

NHCT is the only anti-poverty agency in North Hastings. We operate with limited financial resources and less than one full time staff. Our strength is our community and our reputation for working to make positive change. Our capacities would be greatly increased with additional funding for staffing, an expansion of community programming, and enhanced responses to poverty including emergency assistance and sustainable solutions.

“I believe it is possible for everyone to belong to a caring community with a sense of connection and belonging, where we are safe, warm, and nourished by good food and sustainable practices.”

Community member, NHCT

For more information, please contact:

North Hastings Community Trust

613 339-1100

nhcommunitytrust@gmail.com

Giving Thanks

Thank you to everyone who attended the consultations in Bancroft, Coe Hill and Maynooth. Thank you for your generosity and sharing your stories and leading our work and vision for a community free of poverty and injustice.

Thank you to Lee Maidlow for hosting our gathering in Coe Hill at the *Mystery Market* and Ro Munich for hosting in Maynooth at *The Arlington Hotel*.

Thank you Dianne Eastman, Don Wilson and Harold Eastman for your enormous commitment to your community and support of our work at NHCT. Thank you for making this documentation possible and beautiful.

Thank you to Mike Balkwill, Pauline Bryant and Susan Bender from *Put Food in the Budget* for your on-going support and wisdom and generous participation in the consultations.

Thank you to Christine Durant with *The Poverty Roundtable* for participating and supporting the consultation, gathering and community meal.

BANCROFT

SHOW US THE MONEY

SAYS FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER
23, 2016 4PM

We meet here.



COST OF LIVING
HAS INCREASED
&
SOCIAL
ASSISTANCE
& HASN'T.
PENSIONS
HAVEN'T.



We are not able to live sustainably. HYDRO IS A BIG PROBLEM.

Put Food in the Budget campaigning for 8 years.



can't afford!

Do the math: People on social assistance do not receive enough to live.

35% RURAL COMMUNITIES.

WE NEED TO PUSH POLITICIANS OR THEY WILL NOT RESPOND



WHAT ARE BIGGEST ISSUES WHEN THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TO LIVE?

OUR AREA HAS PRECARIOUS WORK.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

FOOD Healthy



stress

ELECTRICITY



QUALITY OF LIFE

no options no choices

even just to be able to buy a cup of coffee in town

HOUSE

HYDRO BILL DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

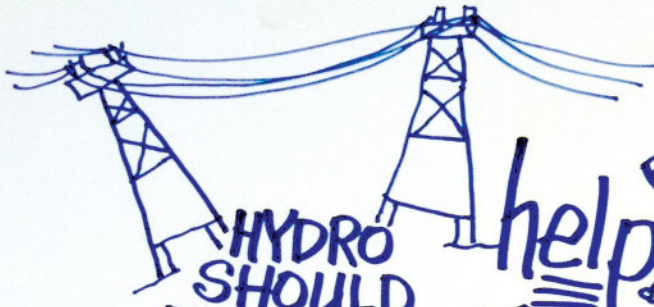
HOW TO BUY THE KIDS THE CLOTHES THEY NEED TO GO TO SCHOOL

is this a pet warthog?

HOW TO PAY FOR MEDICATIONS, EYEGASSES, VITAMINS, DENTISTRY.

DIABETIC NEEDLES





HYDRO SHOULD PROFIT-SHARE: SEND THE \$\$\$ BACK TO THE PEOPLE

need BETTER EDUCATION



Stress on young people. No homes for youth in crisis.

Often 1 hour before Police can get to a call.



SAFETY NET BROKE
CORPORATISM: JUSTIFY THAT THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS TO PROVIDE GOOD SERVICES. BUT

PEOPLE CAN'T AFFORD THERAPY, COUNSELLING, ANGER MANAGEMENT.

The funding formula for rural communities can't be the same as for cities

RURAL ^{are} ^{area} PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE.

EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR
MUNICIPAL GOVT SHOULD HELP PEOPLE GET GREEN ENERGY GRANT AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION



Community micro-loans

SOLUTIONS

CITY ~~university~~ ~~university~~ COUNTRY

WE DEMAND FULL COVERAGE FOR HEALTH CARE NEEDS. (MEDICATION, AMBULANCE, ETC.)
Be part of a larger social justice MOVEMENT

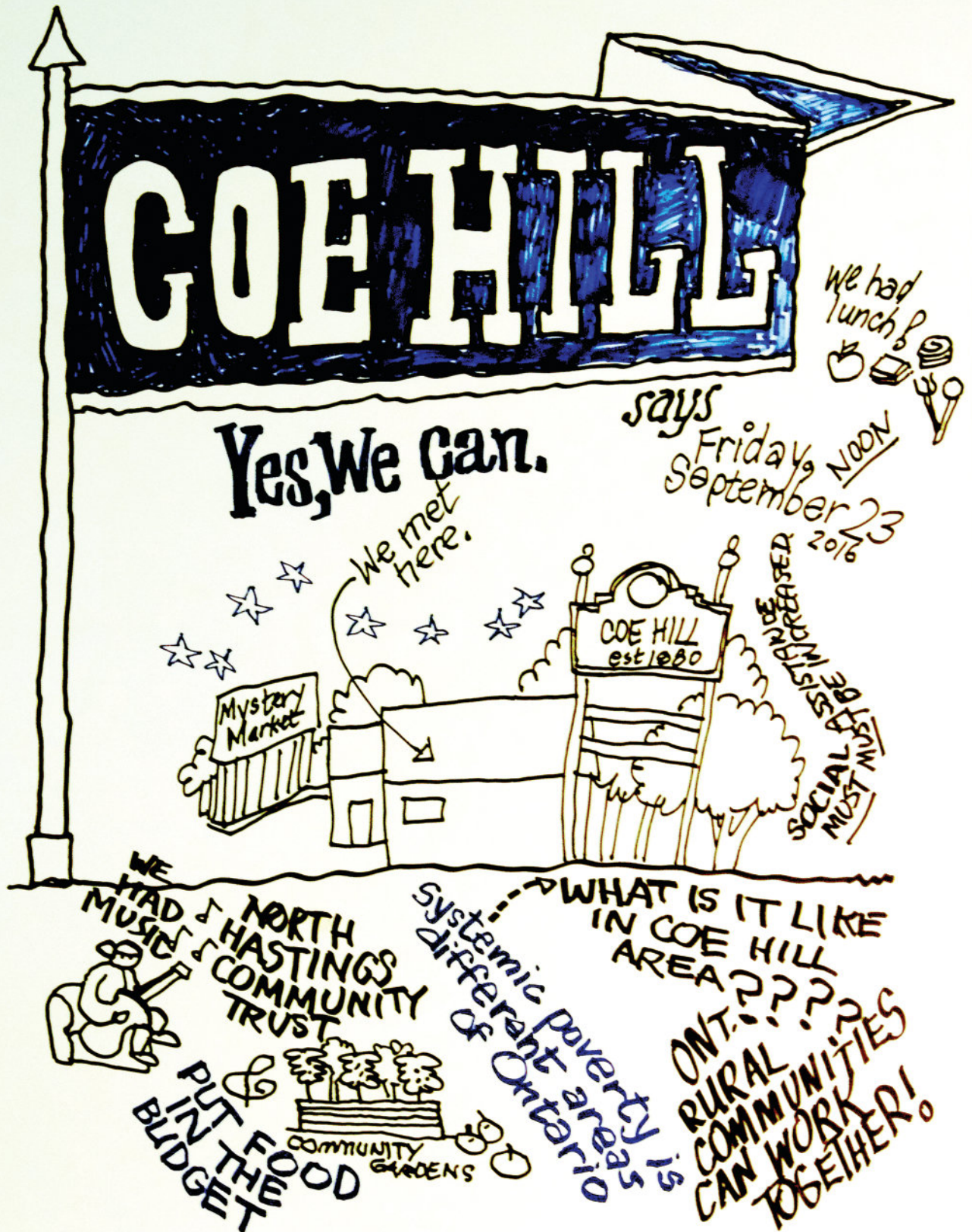
Hydro One should open their books!!!



Keep it in the news

Stop the Hydro trucks
INVITE ENERGY MINISTER

GO SEE THE OMBUDSON @ LEGION TO COME HERE
Get transportation



WHAT IS the IMPACT of Poverty in our area?



NOT ENOUGH HOUSING or SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

STIGMA

LACK OF PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES especially intellectual disabilities

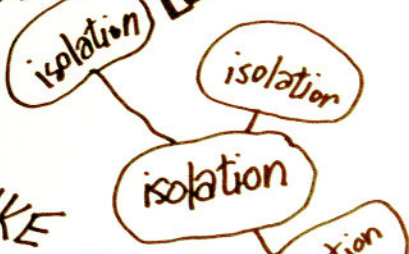
can't pay Hydro

TRANSPORTATION NO CARS
Trout bus service only comes one a month now.
CANT DEPEND ON SERVICES. DON'T EVEN HAVE THEM. HAVE IN BANCROFT

HAVE TO WALK & HITCH-HIKE
too proud to go to the food bank

WORKING POOR OFTEN LEFT.

Difficulty of budget the way the cheques work



10 MILE WALK TO GET TO THE FOOD BANK

sometimes have to walk all day... carrying their food



FOOD BANK GREAT... ONLY ONCE TWICE A MONTH

HIDDEN POVERTY

many people alone in the woods in very bad sequences



Older people have died

OLDER PEOPLE NOT CAPABLE OF LOOKING AFTER OWN NEEDS

Food security:
home & community
gardens

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

people have skills / loosen

BUILDING CODE so that people can make things better

fight for person who wants to do this.

COMMUNITY IS GOOD AT HELPING EACH OTHER

mutual aid

BUILD SENIORS HOUSING FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE CAN STAY IN THEIR OWN HOME TOWN

ONLY 4 SENIOR APARTMENTS IN COE HILL SO FAR

affordable

SUBSIDIZE PUBLIC TRANSIT

WOODSHARE



BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH

specific demands

Tell politicians. We want to keep our library, school, doctor, post office.



WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN AT A SYSTEMS LEVEL

WIN

Plan for growth better than sustaining community expensively until it dies

GOVERNMENT OWES THE COMMUNITY THEY CAN'T JUST KEEP TAKING THINGS AWAY

ASK ENERGY MINISTER TO COME HERE US.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: Decide on our budget priorities locally

Postcard to Premier: agree with the demands

- lower rates Hydro
- stop disconnects
- Increase social assistance
- Increase min wage \$15/hr
- Raise pensions for low income seniors
- Raise corporate tax.

Coe Hill says



Fix Hydro & Pure Food IN THE BUDGET

YES, we stand together. YES, we can make a difference.



YES WE CAN

60-70%
LOW income our
area



MAYNOOTH

says

HYDRO
WILL
DIS-
CONNECT

Thursday
Sept 22
2016

Gov't
Penalties

We met
here

TRANSCIENCE
Need to
move!

Learn
sustain-
ability



Live
10%
less

DOWN
LOADING
Municipality
can't
pay.

Health Impact

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH to Live???

HOW TO CHOOSE
WHICH BILL TO PAY?

Need
to be
resource-
ful. Losing power
in winter!

CRIME
LOSE
YOUNG
PEOPLE

Home-
Less-
ness

NO CAR

STRESS

NO BUS

if safety net was secure - I AM POOR & PROUD.
NO STIGMA

promote solidarity

support small & medium-size business so they can pay \$15/hr minimum wage

Rural communities are part of the solution

RURAL AREAS ARE RESILIENT IN WAYS THE CITY CANNOT BE.

we need charity
Challenge the limits of charity.
we shouldn't absolve govt of responsibility.

Without Maynooth, you will have no one to shovel the snow off your cottage roof.
increase awareness of how to get help and how to pressure power



Poverty sucks
EVOLUTIONARY



Challenge of bad-mouthing poverty
RIDE & CAR SHARE
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The poor need allies.

Guaranteed minimum wage
do something we do every day
ATTITUDES & ACTIONS
Busloads of people from rural Ontario to Queens Park. Give us the tools.

Co-ops
Listen to us.
Community Currency

ELIMINATE DELIVERY CHARGE / HYDRO ONE



There is homelessness in rural areas it is more hidden couches than in the city.



FIGHT HOMELESSNESS
No change without conflict
Maynooth is cool and we won't stop until change happens



Welcome polarized conversations
Can't be neutral
We don't want to move to the city.
We have ideas

HYDRO RATES SHOULDN'T BE BASED ON POPULATION DENSITY

INTERSECTION

Maynooth is here.
would you city-people like to be told you have to move here for a good life!

The power of Maynooth is through the roof.

PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET ADVOCATES

35 ONTARIO COMMUNITIES LIKE US

Ask the Minister of Energy to come here in 100 days; 100 DAYS OR WE TURN THE POWER OFF

Government knows social assistance is not enough BUT

OW: ONTARIO WORKS & ODSP

Businesses in our area can't afford to pay living wages \$\$\$\$\$\$

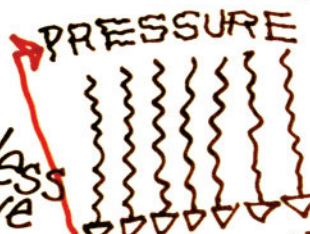
Free trade agreements cause poverty.



mental health

RE-EVALUATE THE VALUE OF WORK

They won't change unless they feel more pressure.



GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS

A life catastrophe is part of life shouldn't create life-long poverty

Small & medium-sized businesses also suffer



CAUSES & SOLUTIONS TO UNFAIR

WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL?

- WOODSHARE NHCT
- WOOD SPITTING SHARING
- FOOD BANKS
- community gardens
- THRIFT SHOPS

Barter

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

- mental health service
- radical policy change
- green energy
- change OW & ODSP
- TINY HOME RE-ZONING
- local hydro on river