

Journey Home Task Force AGENDA



Wednesday, December 13, 2017

5:00 pm

Okanagan Regional Library - Kelowna Branch

Lower Meeting Room

1380 Ellis Street, Kelowna, BC

		Pages
1.	Call to Order, Welcome & Introductions (Co-Chairs)	5:00 PM
2.	Confirmation of Minutes	5:00 PM
	November 1, 2017	3 - 7
3.	What will make you proud - Themes (Co-Chairs)	5:05 PM
4.	Current Initiatives Update (Ann Howard, BC Housing/Staff)	5:15 PM
	4.1 Task Force Updates (Task Force Members)	
	(Members: Please bring relevant updates)	
5.	Turner Strategies (Alina Turner, Turner Strategies)	5:45 PM
	5.1 Introduction	
	5.2 Proposal and Work Plan Overview	
6.	Meeting Break	6:15 PM
7.	Large Group Discussion (Alina Turner, Turner Strategies)	6:30 PM
	7.1 Expectations	
	What are your expectations of what we will accomplish as a Task Force upon completion of the Journey Home process?	
	7.2 Task Force Roles	
	How can you contribute, as a Task Force Member, during the Journey Home process?	

- 8. **Small Group Discussion (Alina Turner, Turner Strategies)** 6:55 PM
 - 8.1 **Task Force Member Engagement in Plan Development**
How do you want to be involved throughout the plan development process?
- 9. **Closing Discussion (Co-Chairs)** 7:20 PM
 - 9.1 **Suggestions from the Task Force for future meeting activities**
- 10. **Proposed Next Meeting Date** 7:30 PM
January 31, 2018
- 11. **Termination** 7:30 PM



Journey Home Task Force Minutes

Date:	Wednesday, November 1, 2017
Location:	Okanagan Regional Library - Kelowna Branch 1380 Ellis Street, Kelowna, BC
Task Force Members Present:	Co-Chair, Martin Bell; Co-Chair, Dr. Kyleen Myrah; Cheryl Miller (Central Okanagan Foundation); John Yarshenko* (Interior Health Authority); Harleen Price (Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction); Superintendent Brent Mundle (RCMP); Theresa Arsenaault, QC; Gaelene Askeland; Tom Dyas; Mike Gawliuk; David Krysko; Carrie McDonald; Lisa McHaffie; Pam Moore; Brenda Plitt; Kelly Taverner; and Shane Worman
Task Force Members Absent:	Ann Howard (BC Housing); Sheila Lewis (Okanagan Nation Alliance); Diane Entwistle; and Scott Lanigan
Staff Present:	Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture, Jim Gabriel; Social Development Manager, Sue Wheeler, Long Range Policy Planning Manager, James Moore*; Communications Advisor, Amanda Lamberti*; and FOI-Legislative Coordinator, Sandi Horning

(* denotes partial attendance)

1. Call to Order

The Co-Chairs called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

The Task Force Members that were not present for the inaugural meeting were introduced.

Task Force Member, John Yarshenko, joined the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Moved by Tom Dyas/Seconded by Shane Worman

THAT the Minutes of the September 27, 2017 Meeting of the Journey Home Task Force be confirmed as circulated.

Carried

3. Wishing Wall (Co-Chairs/Task Force Members)

3.1 Review of Wishing Wall Responses/Themes

Co-Chairs:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation with respect to the Wishing Wall Responses/Themes.
- Advised that the common themes were:
 - o Ensure that everyone in Kelowna has a place to call home and that every individual's needs are met; and
 - o Engage the whole community in collaborating together to address homelessness.
- Circulated recipe cards to the Members and asked them to write down "What would make you proud that the Task Force was able to achieve?"

3.2 Task Force Agenda Planning Input

Co-Chairs:

- Displayed a PowerPoint Presentation.
- Advised that they want to create an environment for sharing.
- Inquired as to any of the Members have suggested topics, speakers or format that they would like the Task Force to consider.
- Inquired if there are any opportunities outside the Task Force Meetings that Members may want to be involved in.

Task Force Members:

- The Members would like to see the following matters considered during the Task Force Meetings:
 - o How has homelessness been dealt with by other communities (best practices)? This could be done by way of reading material or video presentation;
 - o A subscription to the Homelessness Hub would be beneficial as information is gathered from across Canada;
 - o CMHA - Videos on "Housing First" concept;
 - o What is expected of the Task Force Members? Specific direction and advanced planning would be appreciated;
 - o Would like to form small working groups which can meet in between official Task Force Meetings and then report back at the official Meeting;
 - o What is happening locally?
 - o Role clarity - Role of Task Force Members vs. Role of City Staff vs. Role of Consultant;
 - o Would like to learn from other communities how they addressed the stigma of homelessness;

- Need to hear from the 'voice of the lived experience' - Responses need to be informed by the experience;
- Work on a valley-wide solution, not just a 'made in Kelowna' solution;
- What services are already being provided?
- Ongoing review of the homelessness statistics;
- Overview of the 2009 plan, Home for Good;
- Overview of the funding environment - funding allocations of local government/provincial government/federal government.

5. Journey Home Request for Proposals (Staff)

5.1 Outline of Process

Staff:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation.
- Provided an overview and background with respect to the outline of the strategy development process.
- Responded to questions from the Task Force Members.

5.2 Deliverables and Timelines

Staff:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation.
- Provided an overview of the deliverables and timelines:
 - Community Priorities Plan;
 - Systems Coordination Framework;
 - Integrated Information & Data System Development;
 - Request for Proposals closes November 2, 2017;
 - Consultant is expected to be in place by end of November 2017;
 - Strategy completion - End of June 2018.
- Responded to questions from the Task Force Members.

5.3 Consultant Role

Staff:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation.
- Provided an overview of the Consultant's role.
- Responded to questions from the Task Force Members.
- Provided an overview of the Request for Proposal process and selection process.

Co-Chairs:

- Provided additional comment on the Request for Proposal process.

4. Communication Tool Introduction - Get Involved Kelowna (Staff)

Staff:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation.
- Provided an overview of the communication tool, Get Involved Kelowna.

- Advised that the tool is only file sharing and that no decisions are to be made in the forum, only at official Task Force Meetings.
- If any of the Members would like to share a document (.pdf format), they can email it to journeyhome@kelowna.ca and it will be uploaded to the Get Involved Kelowna site.
- Confirmed that the Get Involved Kelowna site is also accessible to the public.
- Responded to questions from the Task Force Members.

6. Break

The meeting recessed at 6:07 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 6:20 p.m.

7. Housing (Staff)

7.1 Healthy Housing Strategy

7.2 Housing Needs Assessment - Overview

Staff:

- Displayed a PowerPoint presentation.
- Provided an overview of the Healthy Housing Strategy.
- Provided an overview of the Housing Needs Assessment Report.
- Provided an overview of the identified gaps that relate to Journey Home.
- Provided an overview of the recommendations that relate to Journey Home.
- Responded to questions from the Task Force Members.

8. Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness - 2017 National Conference - Insights and Learnings (Staff/Task Force Members)

Staff:

- Provided an overview of the takeaways from the National Conference.

Task Force Member, Mike Gawliuk:

- Provided an overview of his takeaways from the National Conference.

Task Force Member, Cheryl Miller:

- Provided an overview of her takeaways from the National Conference.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date of the Task Force is scheduled for November 29, 2017.

10. Termination

The Co-Chairs provided closing comments. The meeting was declared terminated at 7:08 p.m.

Martin Bell, Co-Chair

Dr. Kyleen Myrah, Co-Chair

/slh

DRAFT

Journey Home

Journey Home Task Force Current Initiatives Update - December 13, 2017

To ensure the Journey Home Task Force is able to make the most of the meeting time available, a “Current Initiatives Update” will be included to keep the Task Force members informed. The update will be included in each Task Force meeting agenda package. Task Force members are encouraged to provide updates to share with the rest of committee by sending in their update to staff two weeks prior to Task Force Meetings (journeyhome@kelowna.ca).

Kelowna benefits from a multitude of strengths within the homeless serving sector including many quality resources and services. The success in increased coordination and collaboration demonstrated by the initiatives below will strengthen the local homeless-serving sector’s ability to work collectively to address emerging issues and to plan ongoing strategies.

Journey Home – Lived Experience Circle

Best practices in addressing the needs of housing-vulnerable citizens indicate that the voices of people with Lived Experience are critical to the development of effective strategies. The Journey Home structure has been designed to include active involvement of community members with lived experience of homelessness.

Staff have been working with a team of local homeless-serving sector professionals that work directly with individuals that have experienced homelessness to assist in designing and developing the Lived Experience Circle. The Circle will inform and guide the work of the Task Force and play a key role by providing insight on the strengths, gaps and barriers in the current homeless-serving system. The role of Convener to support the Lived Experience Circle has been posted with selection of the successful candidate to be complete over the next couple of weeks. The Circle will have its first meeting in January.

Temporary Shelter Response

As the temperature dipped in early November it became apparent that there was a significant increase in the numbers of individuals in our community requiring shelter services. In response to this current increase in demand for access to shelters during the cold winter months BC Housing, the City and a number of community partners have been working together to find solutions. Interim shelters were put in place while BC Housing worked towards opening a winter shelter. The level of cooperation and collaboration that was demonstrated by all the local partners has been remarkable:

- A temporary mat program for men opened in mid November at the Salvation Army on Burtch and Sutherland, and was operated by Gospel Mission staff.
- A temporary mat program for women and couples also opened mid November at John Howard Society operated by their staff.
- A bus supplied by Trinity Baptist Church and operated by Gospel Mission staff, transported individuals needing shelter to both locations.

Journey Home

- There was a two-day gap between the men's temporary shelter at Salvation Army closing and the new Winter Shelter opening during which Gospel Mission helped out by operating a mat program.

Community partners are to be commended for their contributions to helping to fill this gap while the work to achieve additional shelter space was underway. This level of cooperation will be foundational to our ability to work in a collective framework as the Journey Home process unfolds.

Winter Shelter

On November 30th an Emergency Winter Shelter operated by John Howard Society opened at the former A&B Sound location at 425 Leon Avenue. BC Housing is to be commended for all their efforts in working with our community to put the Winter Shelter in place so quickly.

The new shelter, known as Cornerstone, will be available 24/7 to its residents. The Province is funding this winter shelter as an immediate response to the cold winter months ahead providing approximately 80 temporary shelter beds. Once someone has undergone the intake process they will have a mat for as long as they need. There will be three meals per day served to residents, two of which will be hot meals provided by Kelowna Gospel Mission. Residents of Cornerstone will also be able to store their belongings, bring their pets, and have access to health and wellness services.

Several agencies including security services from Downtown Kelowna Association, City Bylaw staff, Interior Health staff and contracted services, will be working within a coordinated framework to assist Cornerstone staff to support individuals off the street into shelter.

Additional Supportive Housing

Approximately 55 units of repurposed modular housing is proposed to be located on property leased by BC Housing at 1642 Commerce Avenue, pending approval of a development permit by the City of Kelowna at the December 11th Regular Council Meeting. This project is on private land which BC Housing has leased for four years; as such, it is a temporary, short-term solution while a more permanent project is worked on. The Province has allocated \$3.4 million in capital funding for this project.

In addition, 20 supportive housing units will be available at Heath House, the former Good Night Inn at 2639 Highway 97, while BC Housing finalizes renovation plans for the building for more longer-term housing.

New Modular Supportive Housing

The City is working with BC Housing to finalize a location for approximately 52 units of new modular housing with supports. The opening date will depend on site selection. The Provincial Government's funding commitment is \$8.1 million.

Outreach Coordination

In preparation for the Supportive Housing Units the Province is working on providing, work has begun to convene partners to form a coordinated "street to housing outreach" approach. In early November,

Journey Home

the City and CMHA-Kelowna partnered and through Federal Homeless Partnership Strategy funding hosted an Outreach training workshop. Close to 100 participants spent a day learning about leading edge approaches and tools designed to support those that are 'sleeping rough' in our community to connect with resources, assessments, and services. The outcome of the workshop is that a Street to Housing Outreach team is in the process of being formed with the goal of ensuring that our community's most housing-vulnerable citizens have access to the upcoming supportive units being provided by the Province.

Approximately 159 units are expected to become available over the coming months:

- the recently proposed 55 units at the temporary supportive housing project at Commerce Avenue (early 2018) and approximately 52 units of new modular housing (opening date pending location finalization);
- 10 units are under renovation at Gordon Place (formerly the Econolodge) (early 2018); and
- 42 units at the recently purchased former 'Good Night Inn' (20 units available temporarily in the winter months).

Point-in-Time Count 2018

The Central Okanagan Foundation, in their role as Community Entity for the Homeless Partnership Strategy have secured funding to conduct a Point-in-Time (PiT) Count in February 2018. This will be the first year of data that will be comparable to the benchmark set with the new methodology applied in the 2016 Count that aligned the Kelowna count with other Designated Communities across Canada. This will allow the community to track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in reducing it.

The PiT Count is used to measure sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and aims to enumerate individuals in a community who are, at a given time, staying in shelters or "sleeping rough". This provides a "snapshot" at one point in time of homelessness in the community, as well as information on the characteristics of the local homeless population (e.g., age, gender, Veteran status, Indigenous identity). This information can be used to help determine where to direct resources to areas of greatest need, and to connect individuals with specific backgrounds to targeted supports to help them achieve stable housing.

Update on Other Community Initiatives

Initiative	Update
City Bylaw Services	Currently working closely with Outreach Services in the community. The goal is to increase Bylaw staff's ability to connect individuals with local outreach services, as well as with the transitional storage program.
Transitional Storage Program	In partnership with BC Housing and Gospel Mission: It is well documented that for people living without homes, being able to store their belongings can

Journey Home

	<p>be transformative. Implemented in the fall of 2016, this program has been effective in supporting individuals to connect with services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 people have been housed or entered treatment programs after connecting through storage program.
Coordinated Access Committee	<p>BC Housing is leading work with local service providers to implement a coordinated approach across service providers to assess needs; integrate housing applications across 8 housing providers; and facilitate housing referrals. Through the application of this coordinated approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 people have been housed at Gordon Place, and there are ten more apartments under renovation that will eventually be filled; • Upcoming supportive housing units will be filled (estimated 107 additional units over the coming months).
Police and Crisis Team (PACT)	<p>Interior Health and the Kelowna RCMP partnered to create the Police and Crisis Team (PACT). A dedicated psychiatric nurse and specially trained RCMP officer who together form the mental health and substance intervention team. PACT responded to 160 calls between March and July, 2017. With PACT responding to these calls, it helps to divert visits to the Emergency Room (ER), and connection to services through personalized attention.</p>
Housing First - Canadian Mental Health Association Kelowna (CMHA)	<p>Through the Federal Government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding, CMHA has been delivering the first official Housing First program in Kelowna since April, 2016. The current number of participants in the program is 21. In addition, through this funding CMHA Kelowna has hosted a number of Housing First training workshops attended by community partners.</p> <p>Participants are accepted based on their level of vulnerability, with the most vulnerable prioritized first, including those that are the highest users of emergency services such as RCMP, Hospital, and Paramedics. Priority is given to the chronically homeless, meaning they have been homeless for at least a year or have had several episodes of homelessness with only brief periods of housing.</p>
Foundry Kelowna	<p>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kelowna is the lead agency that worked with the 25 partner agencies to bring existing services under one roof so families and young people can access a 'one-stop shop' for primary care, mental health and substance use, and social services. The Centre opened in the autumn of 2017.</p>
iSearch Kelowna	<p>A partnership between Central Okanagan Foundation, United Way of the Central/South Okanagan/Similkameen, UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College, Mitacs and Innovations in Wellness Fund. This project involves implementing</p>

Journey Home

	<p>and monitoring/evaluating the use of a web-based mapping application that functions as an accessible and searchable spatial database of housing and related services for the homeless in Kelowna. The resulting online tool called i-Search Kelowna, was launched in March 2017.</p> <p>The intent is to continue to develop this tool. By utilizing current and innovative technology, the project is designed to benefit the broader community through improved access to real-time, locational information on homelessness services in Kelowna.</p>
<p>Integrated Court</p>	<p>John Howard Society is currently investigating the opportunity to apply to the Provincial Court for an Integrated Court in Kelowna. The goal of an Integrated Court is to reduce crime, improve public safety, and provide integrated justice, health and social services approach designed to address the root causes of crime. This type of approach is designed specifically to address the ineffectiveness of the traditional court approach for the population whose interactions with the criminal justice system are a result of their substance use, mental health and housing challenges. An Integrated Court is designed to break the cycle of criminal justice involvement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging the community and its resources at an early stage; • Allowing the court to be better informed about the offender; • Providing sentences that have a higher prospect of effecting some degree of rehabilitation.
<p>Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team</p>	<p>Implemented by the Interior Health Authority in April 2015, this team provides flexible, community-based support for adults with serious and persistent mental illness and significant functional impairments who have not connected with, or responded well to, traditional outpatient mental health or rehabilitation services.</p> <p>The Province created ACT Teams to ensure people with mental health challenges remain housed and to reduce the strain on emergency services dealing with mental health crises. These teams reach out to people living with severe mental illness to help them improve their mental health, manage other health problems and prevent hospitalization. A small group of professionals such as a psychiatrist, nurse, counsellors and outreach workers provide 24-hour emergency care and follow-up services with a capacity of 80 clients that receive the individualized care they require in order to follow through on treatment plans and services.</p>

Turner Strategies

Turner Strategies is a consulting group solely dedicated to accelerating social impact. We work to accelerate large-scale social change through community engagement, data analysis and visualization, best practice research and evaluation.

Turner Strategies is led by Dr. Alina Turner, who founded the firm in 2012; since then, over 40 projects have been completed across diverse social issues and organizations. Dr. Turner leads all aspects of the work, curating teams of experts to meet the needs of each project. The aim is to provide the highest quality of work, best possible value and impact. Past projects have focused on resolving complex social issues including affordable housing, homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, and food and energy insecurity.

Turner Strategies has partnered with the **Canadian Observatory on Homelessness**, and **A Way Home Canada** to support Kelowna in advancing an evidence-led system planning approach to developing the Journey Home Plan.

DR. ALINA TURNER | PRINCIPAL, TURNER STRATEGIES

The principal applicant, **Dr. Alina Turner**, will be leading all aspects of the project, bringing expertise in system planning, performance management, and program evaluation specific to Housing First implementation as seen through her work across Canadian communities. Dr. Turner has extensive experience working with communities across Canada to support homelessness strategy development and implementation, including **Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Yellowknife, Fredericton, St. John's, Lethbridge**, and **Red Deer**. She has also worked with smaller communities, and has published key studies **on rural homelessness** in Canada. A list of Plans to End Homelessness developed by Dr. Turner is available: <https://www.turnerstrategies.org>.

Alina is recognized across Canada as a leading expert working on homelessness issues, and has written seminal works on [system planning](#) and Housing First. She led the development of the national Point-in-Time Homeless Count methodology as well as the [Functional Zero](#) and Absolute Zero definition to ending homelessness and performance criteria. She has also worked on developing alternatives to criminalization and is actively involved in research on [sobering centres](#) and innovative approaches to complex, high system users. Alina's PhD focused on housing, homelessness and migration; she is a Fellow at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy.

Alina has worked at an executive leadership level at both management and board of director levels for the past 10 years. During her tenure as Vice President of Strategy at the Calgary Homeless Foundation, Alina led the implementation of Canada's first **Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)**, and designed Calgary's **Housing First System of Care**. She oversaw \$35 million in annual investments across 40 programs in Calgary, focusing on performance management and quality assurance. Prior to this, Alina worked at the Poverty Reduction Initiative of the United Way of Calgary & Area, and a variety of front-line immigrant and homeless-serving agencies.

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) is a non-partisan research and policy

partnership, between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness that leverages the collaborative research and knowledge mobilization strategy that supports policy, including legislative change, and practice developments. We have a strong knowledge dissemination strategy and offer graphic design and communications services to communities across Canada.

DR. STEVE GAETZ

Dr. Stephen Gaetz is a Professor in the Faculty of Education and the President of Raising the Roof, a leading Canadian charity that focuses on long term solutions to homelessness. Dr. Gaetz also served on the Ontario Government's Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness, which informed the Government's action plan on homelessness and strengthened the partnerships needed to work toward solutions to homelessness. Dr. Gaetz brings a wealth of expertise in research and evaluation design and dissemination strategies. He is an internationally recognized leader on research and evaluation in homelessness and has published several reports on youth homelessness, Housing First, and systems-level planning. He led the development of the Canadian Definition of Youth Homelessness, the Housing First for Youth framework, and the first-ever National Survey on Youth Homelessness.

A Way Home - Canada

MELANIE REDMAN

Relevant Experience & Skills

Melanie Redman is the co-founder and President & CEO of A Way Home Canada. Melanie also leads the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness, which is a national community of practice of youth homelessness service providers committed to reducing the amount of time any young person is in an emergency shelter or mired in homelessness (CMHA Kelowna is a member of the Learning Community). In her previous role as the Director of National Initiatives at Eva's Initiatives, Melanie led a national pilot project to support a number of communities to develop targeted strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness. Learning from that project, other communities, and international best practices in planning led to the development of A Way Home's Youth Homelessness Community Planning Toolkit (authored by Dr. Alina Turner), which is utilized in communities around the world. She most recently led an international consultation process to refine and build consensus on the Canadian-made Housing First for Youth program model, which responds to the needs of developing adolescents. Melanie is an internationally-recognized thought leader on utilizing Collective Impact to work across the systems that drive young people into homelessness to ensure they are also be part of the solutions.

OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

Turner Strategies

JAIME ROGERS, MSW

Relevant Experience & Skills

Medicine Hat, Alberta has been recognized provincially and nationally for the significant strides that have been made towards ending homelessness. Jaime Rogers is the Manager of the Homeless and Housing Development Department with the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society. Ms. Rogers is the local lead for the Medicine Hat ending homelessness initiative, ensuring the city maintains its success.

CHANTAL HANSEN, MGIS

Relevant Experience & Skills

Chantal Hansen brings 15 years of experience in the field of health and human services with a focus on the collection, interpretation, and visualization of data to inform policy and programming. Chantal has contributed her technical expertise to the analysis of databases in child health, income inequality and living wage, homelessness, food insecurity, and social well-being projects. Through her company, Geo-Lens, she brings practical experience developing and implementing technology change management, online database governance, privacy regulation and practices, data analytics, and geospatial techniques using Geographic Information Science (GIS) technology.

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

DR. JOHN ECKER – DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Relevant Experience & Skills

Dr. John Ecker brings expertise in research and evaluation with individuals experiencing homelessness and marginal housing. He completed his Ph.D. in experimental psychology at the University of Ottawa under the supervision of Dr. Tim Aubry. Dr. Ecker's Ph.D. thesis focused on the community integration of homeless and vulnerably housed individuals. He has received advanced training in quantitative and qualitative methodologies and analysis. He was able to apply this knowledge during work experience as a research assistant throughout his graduate studies and independently as a Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services. The majority of Dr. Ecker's work has been within the community and volunteer sector, including the Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, a community coalition of community organizations and concerned citizens.

DR. ERIN DEJ – POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

Relevant Experience & Skills

Dr. Erin Dej is a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the COH. In that position she has co-authored The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016 as well as the Framework for Homelessness Prevention. Through her involvement in the prevention framework, she has conducted a literature review on

eviction prevention programs, thus gaining a deep understanding of best practices for programs similar to EPIC. She is also engaged in a research project that seeks to create more equitable relationships between non-profit organizations and individuals with lived experiences of homelessness when sharing their story. Dr. Dej received her Ph.D. in Criminology from the University of Ottawa, where she studied the convergence of mental health, homelessness, and social control. Her research included participant observation, interviews with homeless men and women, and focus groups.

SARAH HOLDEN, MSW - RESEARCH & EVALUATION OFFICER

Relevant Experience & Skills

Sarah completed her MSW at York University, where she received training on quantitative and qualitative research methods. As part of her MSW, she undertook a project on pet ownership among individuals experiencing homelessness. She has experience conducting program evaluations and developing quality assurance measures within the social service sector. She also has front-line experience working at an emergency shelter for youth experiencing homelessness.

STEPHANIE VASKO – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Stephanie is the Communications Manager at the COH. She leads the team responsible for designing the COH's publications and communications materials, which range from reports and books to infographics and videos, that help advance the COH's mandate to enhance the impact of research on policy and practice. Stephanie oversees the Homeless Hub website, a key vehicle of knowledge mobilization and the world's largest library of homelessness research. Stephanie has been involved in website development and communications management at a variety of organizations in Canada and Switzerland, from non-profits to non-governmental organizations in consultation with the United Nations.