

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION***

### **PRESS RELEASE**

With only 200 days until the end of federal funding,  
the homelessness groups are worried

**Ottawa / Gatineau, September 13th, 2006.** Sixty members and activists from Collectif de lutte à l'itinérance de l'Outaouais (CRIO), Réseau SOLIDARITÉ Itinérance du Québec (RSIQ), National Housing and Homelessness network (NHHN) and from the Alliance To End Homelessness in Ottawa (ATEH) held a rally this morning in front of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa to warn the Harper government about the situation of the homeless. Today, War Museum welcomed a pan-Canadian roundtable organized by Minister Diane Finley, in charge of the National Homelessness Initiative which includes SCPI (Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative).

Since it was implemented in 2001, the SCPI program has allowed improvements in the living conditions of thousands of people who are homeless or living at risk of homelessness, and helped a great many of them get off the street.

Community groups and the homeless people they are able to help with SCPI funding are still without any word from Ottawa about the federal homelessness initiative after March 2007. Ending financing of these groups will be a significant step backwards for organizations whose situation is already precarious, and will threaten the thousands of homeless individuals who benefit from SCPI.

With 200 days left until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007, which marks the end of homelessness funding, and in support of the Réseau SOLIDARITÉ Itinérance du Québec (RSIQ), hundreds of people were taking to the streets in several Quebec cities yesterday, as here in Ottawa, Toronto and Halifax. Elsewhere in Canada, coalitions answered the call and defended publicly the SCPI program.

"We want to let the Minister know the vital importance of this program for the continuation of these services for people who are homeless or struggling to keep their homes", states Rosine Kaley from the Alliance to End Homelessness.

The protesters brought their alarm clocks to demonstrate the urgency of the need for an announcement about the continuation and enhancement of federal homelessness funding. "Time is passing and we have been waiting for a commitment since the Conservatives came to power, and 200 days doesn't give much time for the dispersal of funds on the ground."

ATEH and RSIQ, which were not invited to the federal consultation, want their call for the continuation of homelessness funding to be heard. Their struggle is supported by more than 350 community groups, the large municipalities and the three opposition parties. The RSIQ is seeking \$50 million a year for the province of Quebec under the SCPI program, and this for at least the next 3 years.

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