



**United Way**  
Peterborough & District

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – October 6, 2022

## Homelessness Highlighted as a Prominent Campaign Issue

**PETERBOROUGH, ON (October 6, 2022)** – Last night over **170 people** attended a community discussion on homelessness with **all five candidates** vying for the position of **mayor of Peterborough**. Additionally, almost 700 people watched the livestream. **United Way** Peterborough & District, **One City** Peterborough, the **Research for Social Change Lab** at Trent University, and **All Saints' Anglican Church** collaborated to host the event, providing the opportunity for community members to hear the candidates' plans for addressing the **homelessness crisis** that impacts the city.

Prior to the event, the organizing partners hosted a free barbeque in All Saints' parking lot which provided the opportunity for community members to connect and discuss key issues. Many of those in attendance had current or past **lived experience** with homelessness, substance use, poverty, and/or mental health concerns, sharing their perspectives on the current homelessness crisis.

The event opened with **Dr. Naomi Nichols of Trent University's** Research for Social Change Lab providing an overview of the state of homelessness in Peterborough. Referencing research and **Canada's declaration of housing as a human right**, Dr. Nichols oriented the audience members and candidates to the devastating implications resulting from the gap between income and the cost of housing.

Co-facilitators Dr. Naomi Nichols and **Jim Russell, CEO of United Way** Peterborough & District, moderated the discussion. Candidates were briefed on the structure of the discussion, emphasizing the importance of answering each question about their own plans as mayor rather than rebutting each other's responses. The first five questions were written by the organizing partners and provided to the candidates two weeks in advance. These questions focused on the themes of **dignity, inclusion, and human rights** to discuss topics of **affordable housing, shelter, encampments, and leadership**.

A **community question period** followed the five pre-written questions, allowing those attending in person and online the opportunity to pose a question to the candidates. Audience members asked questions related to the **safety and wellbeing** of all residents, supports for **Indigenous people** experiencing homelessness, **reintegration** support for those exiting the justice system, whether the candidates were **landlords**, plans for **winter homelessness**, and reducing **stigma** and misinformation.

**"The strong collaboration between the organizing partners** made last night's conversation about homelessness possible. Homelessness is not an issue that will end



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the night of the election, but rather one that **must be at the forefront of our new council's discussions** moving forward,” shared Jim Russell.

United Way Peterborough & District has plans to continue this conversation over the coming weeks. **Upcoming events include:**

- October 11<sup>th</sup> – release of the 2022 **Housing is Fundamental** report
- November 3<sup>rd</sup> – screening of “**Pushback**”, a local documentary on homelessness, followed by a panel discussion. The newly elected council will be invited to participate in the event.
- November 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> – release of the 2022 **Living Wage** report

A recording of the event can be found on All Saints' YouTube channel by scanning the QR code or clicking the below URL.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3MwE3wNhaQ&ab\\_channel=AllSaints%27Peterborough](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3MwE3wNhaQ&ab_channel=AllSaints%27Peterborough)

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