

## **WE CAN'T AFFORD POVERTY FACT SHEET**

### **POVERTY FACTS**

- 1 in 7 Canadians lives in poverty (Stats Can). That's over 5 million people;
- According to Campaign 2000 over 1 million or 19.1% of children in Canada live in poverty;
- Four million people are struggling to find decent affordable housing (CHRA);
- There are an estimated 150,000 to 300,000 people that are homeless in Canada (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness);
- According to Food Banks Canada, almost 900,000 Canadians use food banks every month in 2014, which is close to the record high;
- Poverty disproportionately affects older people, women, children, recent immigrants, the disabled and aboriginal people;
- The gap between the rich and the poor is on the rise in Canada. The top-earning 1 per cent of Canadians almost doubled their share of national income, from 7.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent, over the past 3 decades (until 2006). While earnings for the middle class stagnated and earnings for the low income group fell by 20.6 percent. This undermines social cohesion. (Stats Can)

### **WE CAN'T AFFORD POVERTY ANYMORE**

- Poverty forces up our tax bills, depresses the economy, increases health care cost and breeds alienation and crime;
- A study guided by leading economists, estimates that poverty costs this country over \$30 billion annually. With \$7.5 billion dollars a year in health care costs alone and between \$8 and \$13 billion in lost productivity (Ontario Association of Food Banks);
- The poorest quarter of Canadians use twice the health care services as those in the wealthiest quarter (The Canadian Pediatric Society);
- A report by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce said that in order to address the coming labour shortages because of an aging population, we need to tap into underutilized segments of our society which are also the groups overrepresented in poverty;
- It is more cost effective to provide housing and supports to the homeless than to leave someone on the street. Former Premier of Alberta, Ed Stelmach, said that an average homeless person costs society roughly \$100,000 a year but the cost drops to about \$35,000 annually if that person is given a long-term home.