



## Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada Legislation Standing Committee

*Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call*

**Directive #3**

**Pages: 1**

**April 26, 2018**

**Attachments: 5 pages**

To: Diocesan Legislation Standing Committee Chairpersons  
From: Karen McDonald, Provincial Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson  
cc: Provincial Officers, Diocesan Presidents, Legislation Sub-Committee  
Chairpersons and National Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson

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### ***Legislation Homelessness Project ... a "Scavenger Hunt"!***

Each provincial standing committee was asked to develop a small project or offer suggestions to members in all 13 dioceses across Ontario to assist the homeless.

The provincial legislation *team* (Carol, Sue, Karen) has developed a *Scavenger Hunt*.

The ***Scavenger Hunt*** is attached to this directive and it includes the following:

- **Instructions**
- **Scenario #1**
- **Scenario #2**
- **Scenario #3**
- **Survey**

This *Scavenger Hunt* involves working as a team to do a little bit of *digging* and *discovering* what legislation is in place and the programs available in our communities that *target* homelessness. We sincerely hope to educate and enlighten our members as you *hunt* for information. We encourage all councils to participate (to the extent that you can) and respond by completing the short survey.

Good luck, have fun with it! You will be amazed what you learn (it opened my eyes). If you have any questions, please email me.

This being the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, it is a perfect day to send this out. I certainly prayed to our patroness for inspiration in developing this Scavenger Hunt!

Lots of love,

*Karen*

## **SCAVENGER HUNT**

As you know, the Ontario Provincial Council has chosen to focus on the topic of **homelessness**. To date, members of the provincial council have sent many wonderful ideas to our parish councils as to how we can educate ourselves and how we can help those who are homeless.

Spring brings new life. Now, the legislation committee offers something new - a **Scavenger Hunt!**

Scavenger Hunts are always fun ... this one is aimed at educating us about events that can lead to homelessness; discovering what **legislation** is in place; exploring programs available in our communities, dioceses, province; how we can access these programs; how to become involved.

By participating, we can do our part to alleviate homelessness. Try your best ... have fun with it!

You will be amazed at the information gathered. You may even discover there is a need for services within your area and be inspired to get out there and to bring about change. Or, you may find that a resolution should be written to address an identified need. Work with your team to research the topic, consult your resolutions chairperson, or pass the idea to those in your parish/diocese with experience in developing a resolution. Volunteer to be on the committee.

Finally, remember to pray at every step of the way ... there is power in prayer!

### **The Scavenger Hunt**

- form a **team** (2 or more people) and **give your team a name** (be creative!)
- councils are given **three (3) scenarios** and are asked to choose **one**
- proceed through the suggested activities (try to accomplish as many as you can)
- take notes from the information gathered
- complete the **survey** and return it **via email** to Karen McDonald ([opclegislation@gmail.com](mailto:opclegislation@gmail.com))

Our provincial legislation *team* will then compile the survey results and prepare a detailed report. We will also acknowledge the teams and councils who have completed "**the Hunt!**"

**Completion Date ... October 16, 2018** (*World Food Day & Feast of Ste. Marguerite d'Youville*)

This is the latest date to complete the Scavenger Hunt **and** to return the **attached Survey**. This time of year, members are busy attending conventions and summer will be here soon. We wanted to allow you enough time to participate ... if you can do so before October, kudos!

**Ontario Provincial Legislation Chairperson Karen McDonald  
Sub-committee, Carol Richer and Sue Lubowitz  
April, 2018**

## **Legislation Scavenger Hunt, Scenario #1**

*"Marcie" is the mother of three small children. She has been living with an abusive partner for several years. She has put up with the situation because she thought the children needed their father, but lately things have gotten worse, and he is now abusing the children as well. She has been a stay at home Mom, and so has no money of her own to rent a place to live or to provide the necessities for her children. She has made few friends in the area, and has no family that she can turn to. As bad as things are, she has been attending Mass regularly with the children.*

*Sunday you noticed that she remained in her pew when Mass was over, and that she was crying. You decide to go over and speak to her, to see if she was okay. She asked the children to wait for her outside, then broke down and told you her story. She is frightened for her children and herself but doesn't know what to do. She tells you that her partner is leaving with his buddies on a weeklong fishing trip in a few days, and would like to be gone when he returns. She does not want to contact the police for fear that he will make her life even more miserable. You exchange phone numbers and agree that she will call you when her partner leaves to go fishing.*

**You then begin to seek information on what services are available to her in your community.**

1. Contact the nearest Women's Shelter, in person or by phone, to find out if they have interim shelter available, the length of stay possible, and the conditions to be met. Do they provide assistance with clothing, health care, schooling for the children, assistance in applying for social assistance and with finding rental accommodation and moving? Explain the situation and ask if they must involve the police and what protection can be provided for her and the children when they leave.
2. Visit the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services website, Programs and Services, to find out what services they provide, how to apply, who is eligible, etc.
3. Contact local Real Estate offices to determine the average rent for a 3-bedroom apartment in the area. Ask what is included, what deposits are required, and if they are able to provide information relating to subsidized/geared to income accommodation (the Women's Shelter may have some of this information).
4. Visit the CWL provincial website to seek out legislation relating to affordable housing or low income housing. Contact your local MPP to ask what is currently being done in this area.
5. Review past national and provincial resolutions to see if any address issues that might have led to this situation.
6. Contact your parish priest to discuss what on-going support (physical, spiritual or financial) the parish or your CWL council might provide for this woman and her children so that they are able to continue attending Mass and participating in parish activities.

## **Legislation Scavenger Hunt, Scenario #2**

*"Ben" is the sole provider for his wife and two children (ages 1 and 3). On the way home from a hockey game, Ben is involved in a serious motor vehicle accident and he suffers a back injury. After being released from the hospital, he returns to work but is unable to complete his shift. Over the next few months, Ben struggles to perform his work duties due to the chronic pain that he is experiencing. He is worried about losing his job and becomes depressed. Ben is forced to take an extended leave of absence from his job. His wife cares for their children and they have no other source of regular income. Unfortunately, the family finds there is very little money left to buy food after paying their monthly rent, utilities, household items, gasoline for the car, etc.*

**Begin by looking for information on services available in your community to assist this family.**

- 1.** *Contact your City/Town to find out how many local food banks there are (you may be surprised). Find out which food bank is closest to you. Donate or volunteer at a food bank (if not already doing so) and spread the word to family/friends to donate.*
- 2.** *A pilot project was recently launched in four Ontario cities to **rescue surplus food** for the less fortunate. Grocery stores, restaurants, hotels etc. donate perishable and prepared foods to social service agencies who use the food for their programs and clients. Find out the name of this pilot project. Find out which cities it operates in. If you live in these cities, read about the project and see if you can become involved.*
- 3.** *While at your favourite grocery store, speak to the manager to find out if the store has a policy about donating perishable or prepared foods that are not sold.*
- 4.** *Find out about Breakfast Clubs for kids in your community. Consider donating your time or giving a monetary gift to a local Breakfast Club.*
- 5.** *Google <http://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo> for federal legislation and [www.ontla.on.ca/lao/en/bills](http://www.ontla.on.ca/lao/en/bills) for provincial legislation relating to food banks and food waste.*
- 6.** *Google the national ([www.cwl.ca](http://www.cwl.ca)) and provincial websites ([www.cwl.on.ca](http://www.cwl.on.ca)) to find resolutions passed relating to food and providing for the less fortunate.*
- 7.** *Consider researching and writing a resolution relating to food waste.*

## Legislation Scavenger Hunt, Scenario #3

### There's no place like home ...

*"Sarah" was well-known to many of the senior-serving non-profit organizations in her hometown. Her behaviour became erratic due to a psychotic or schizophrenic episode, and she was evicted from her apartment. From here, her options were limited: find alternate housing (difficult to do in a low vacancy environment); stay in a motel (expensive); or go to an emergency shelter (often over capacity). With no safe, supportive housing available, homelessness is becoming a real possibility for her.*

Older adults living with mental illness often face a double stigma in our society – both from aging and mental illness. They are some of the most invisible and most vulnerable individuals in our communities, and we need to find better ways to support them.

1. Can you find a statistic(s) for how many homeless are counted in your community and/or region? How many were seniors?
2. Seniors experiencing - or at risk of - homelessness may not be able to take care of their physical health. What are the resources in your community that would help in this area?
3. Depression is not a part of normal aging. Identify support groups - or other groups focusing on the aging population - in your area that can provide valuable information and support from peers experiencing similar situations.
4. When people find themselves struggling financially, they may become bitter and disenchanted. There are a number of programs available for elderly citizens including energy assistance, OHIP+, tax allowances, and rental subsidies. Where would you look for this information? How is eligibility determined? How would you encourage someone to realize that asking for help is okay?
5. 211Ontario.ca is a telephone help line. Find out what services they can help you find within your community.
6. Visit the PovNet website <http://www.povnet.org/find-an-advocate/on/province-wide> to find resources in your area that can help with advocacy, legal help, crisis services etc.
7. How can your council bring awareness to this issue in your parish community and beyond to your greater civic community?

**SCAVENGER HUNT**  
**SURVEY**

(The provincial legislation committee wants to hear from you!)

1. What is your *team* name? Who did you invite to be part of your team?
  
2. Name of your parish council and diocese.
  
3. Which scenario(s) did you choose?
  
4. What programs did you learn about?
  
5. List the **legislation** that is in place for the topics and programs that you researched.
  
6. Has the League passed a resolution(s) relating to your topic? If so, name it/them.
  
7. What did you learn about homelessness from completing this "*Scavenger Hunt*"?
  
8. Name a program(s) that you discovered in your community but never knew it existed.

**Attach a separate sheet(s) if you require more space to answer.**

**Return via email to: [opclegislation@gmail.com](mailto:opclegislation@gmail.com) ... thanks a bunch for completing the Scavenger Hunt!**