



APPENDIX B – RECRUITMENT LETTER THOMPSON HOMELESS YOUTH COUNT

Drs. Marleny Bonnycastle and Maureen Simpkins have been conducting research in Thompson on Homelessness since 2013. Their current research focuses on Youth Homelessness and as part of this research, they are conducting a:

Youth Count from May 11 – 19, 2016

This Youth Count will provide much needed information on youth, homelessness and housing instability in Thompson. To do this, it is important to get input from the youth on issues that they deal with on a daily basis.

During the Youth Count, youth (between the ages of 16-29) who are homeless, have experienced housing instability or are vulnerable to housing instability such as those attending special programs for youth will be encouraged to fill out a brief 10 minute survey. We know that there are many youth under the age of 16 that are vulnerable to or experiencing housing instability issues. Due to the research ethics that we must adhere to, youth under 16 cannot fill out the survey. They can be counted on a tally sheet but will not participate in completing the survey.

No names will be used in this research. Survey questions cover:

- demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, involvement in foster care;
- educational status, such as stating if they are in high school or university;
- employment status, if they are working part time or full time;
- youth housing issues, whether it be stable, unstable and staying with various people or homeless.
- Youth's ideas about youth homelessness/housing instability and how to address them in Thompson

What is a Youth Count?

In Canada many cities have conducted what is called a "Point in Time" (PiT) Homeless Count. Youth are typically undercounted in PiT Counts. Youth are often less visible due to the transient nature of their homelessness. Many youth "couch surf" living temporarily with various friends, acquaintances and relations. Also due to a mistrust of the child welfare system and adults generally, they may actively avoid contact. Some cities in Canada have conducted specific counts for youth that take place over a number of days instead of the 24 hour PiT model. (Point-in-Time Toolkit 2016). This provides the time for youth to complete the survey at a time best for them.

A Youth Count is a critical part of a community's response to homelessness, as it provides a baseline of important information upon which to build a local strategy to end youth homelessness. The following are the benefits of conducting a Youth Count:

1. Increase the community's ability to take action towards ending youth homelessness by:
 - a. Improving and understanding characteristics of northern youth who are at risk
 - b. Increasing the capacity to undertake a local needs assessment
 - c. Contributing to the measurement and progress toward ending homelessness over time
 - d. Increasing public awareness of youth homelessness and housing instability
2. Provide useful data to develop the community action plan for youth in Thompson.

We would like to set up times for groups of youth to complete the survey between May 11th and May 19th. Your support would be appreciated.