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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Homeless Count Numbers Released

**Abbotsford, March 22, 2017** – The 2017 Homelessness Count shows that there are reportedly 271 individuals in our community who are experiencing homelessness, which is an increase from the previous count in 2014 of 151, announced Mayor Henry Braun.

Out of the 271 individuals, 112 people have shelter through local service providers. These new statistics show that there is an increase of people experiencing homelessness by 79% in Abbotsford, with an overall increase of 74% throughout the Fraser Valley Regional District.

“Although municipal governments do not have the mandate for housing or health, we have made a commitment to utilizing a Housing First approach toward homelessness in the community,” said Mayor Henry Braun. “Our goal is to be a city where everyone has a home.”

At the time of the count on March 8, 2017, the new supportive housing facility on Gladys Road, Hearthstone Place, had a total of 6 individuals in the facility.

“24 more individuals will be housed in Hearthstone Place during the gradual entry phase, which will bring Abbotsford’s count down to 247. This decreases the percent change to 63%, which is below the regional average,” said Braun.

Hearthstone Place is operating with a gradual entry of individuals in order to create a sense of home and community for those being housed.

“We are making strong headway in accomplishing many of the directions set out in our Homelessness Action Plan, but we know that there is a lot of work yet to be done.”

Several initiatives are currently underway, including an update to the Affordable Housing Strategy, which will include an emphasis on rental options for low-income individuals and housing for vulnerable populations.

The City of Abbotsford, along with multi-stakeholders, has created a Collaborative Roadmap for the Prevention and Response to Homelessness. This “roadmap” articulates community-action priorities and includes areas such as housing capacity, outreach and wrap-around services, access to housing, health services and support connections, community integration, and funding resources.

The Coordinated Intake Referral Program will begin this spring, ensuring our community agencies work together to support people coping with issues related to homelessness.

A new program, Abbotsford Rental Connect, will also be initiated to help those who need to find a home by connecting tenants and landlords and supporting a successful tenant-landlord relationship through providing key services..

“We will continue to build strong partnerships and relationships with other levels of governments and service providers so that we are better able to respond to the housing and health needs in our community.”

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