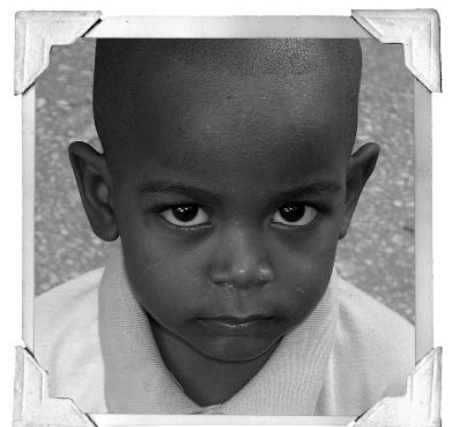
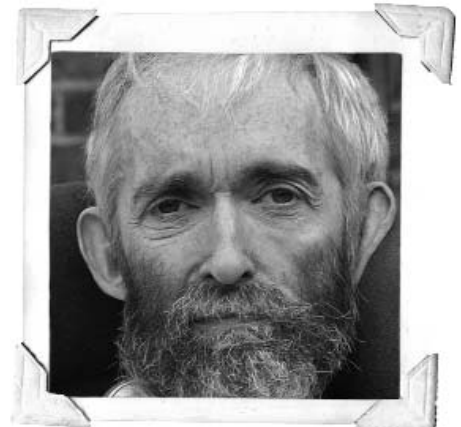




Portraits of Peel

Facing the Facts



A collaboration of the Fair Share Task Force, the Region of Peel, the Social Planning Council of Peel, and United Way of Peel Region

Revised and updated, September 2005

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Portraits of Peel: *Facing the Facts*

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A Message from the Managing Editor

In September 2004, the Social Planning Council of Peel published *Portraits of Peel: Neighbourhood Environmental Scan 1996 to 2001*. This report is a comprehensive look at the formidable social and economic challenges within the Peel population. Relying on statistical data from the Census of Canada, *Portraits of Peel* was prepared to be a strong voice of advocacy for social service agencies and community groups.

Now, I am pleased to introduce you to *Portraits of Peel: Facing the Facts*. This publication synthesizes the content of the complete *Portraits of Peel* report and provides substantive information focusing on the human impact of the data. Most important, *Facing the Facts* shows the funding context in which these challenges are being addressed, a context characterized by grossly inequitable provincial and federal funding of social services in Peel.

Facing the Facts is the product of a collaborative effort of United Way of Peel Region, the Social Planning Council of Peel, the Region of Peel and members of the Fair Share Task Force, a coalition of more than 70 social service, community, business and educational organizations committed to achieving equal access to social services for all citizens in the province of Ontario. This publication serves as an instrument for public education and advocacy on social and funding issues. Its goal is to put a human face on the challenges confronting the region and make a compelling case for more equitable investment to strengthen the community and improve the quality of life for everyone.

Shelley White
Executive Director, United Way of Peel Region

Portraits of Peel

Raj

Nine-year-old Raj has autism and his mother, a single parent of two children who was abandoned by her husband, has a disability resulting from a car accident. What is being done to help Raj and his family cope?

Rita

Rita has experienced health concerns for the past 10 years. As a single mother of two, how can she possibly deal with a son suffering from severe mental illness?

John

After years of cardiovascular problems, John had a heart transplant. Today, the resident of Peel is unable to work and cannot adequately support his family. Who does he turn to for help?

Needa and Rahil

Needa and her husband, Rahil, immigrated to Ontario in 2004 to join their two children, both university students. Despite the fact that both Needa and Rahil are highly educated and experienced professionals in their respective fields, they have been unable to find employment.

Dorothy

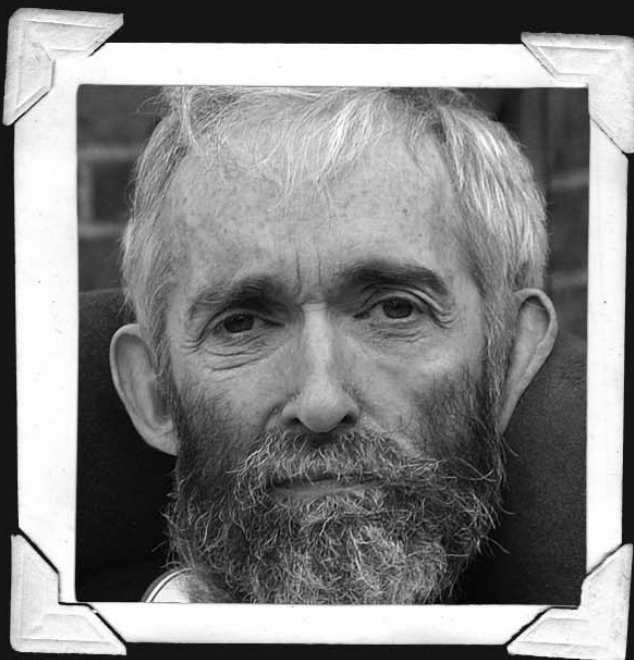
Dorothy is 74 years old. A widow with no children, she lives alone, has trouble walking and no friend or relative to help her. What can an ailing senior citizen on her own do when she needs help?

George

Moving from shelter to shelter, George has been homeless on and off for years. He is mentally challenged and has a physical disability. Will George ever find permanent roots in his life?

These stories are not hypothetical. Although in most cases their names have been changed to protect their privacy, these are authentic life situations of citizens of the Region of Peel.

For the past two decades, Peel has experienced tremendous economic growth. An ever-increasing number of businesses have made Peel their home. Unfortunately, the focus on burgeoning economic development has masked many critical social issues and challenges in the community. When an urban area experiences rapid growth, inner-city problems arise. Such is the case in Peel. The region is affected by two factors: growth on the one hand, social issues on the other. Some social services demands are driven by growth. For example, the more people who reside in a particular area, the higher the number of developmental disabilities and the higher the incidence of abuse. These issues cut across all economic groups. Other demands for social services are driven by social issues, such as poverty.



Fast Facts

- Between 1996 and 2001 Peel's population grew by 16%, compared to only 4% in Toronto, 6% provincially, and 4% nationally; this is an increase of 136,422 people, more than the entire population of St. Catharines, Peterborough or Guelph.
- More than 13,500 live births were recorded in Peel in 2001. (Registrar General)
- Peel's growth is expected to continue at the same rate for the next five years, with about 27,000 people added each year.
- Growth in Peel during the next 10 years is forecast to be 43.5% or more than 2.5 times greater than the projected overall provincial rate.

A Community at the Crossroads

Thirty years ago, Peel became an especially attractive place to live. This was due in large part to the availability of bigger lots and homes. Today, however, Peel is no longer the bedroom community it once was. It is a major urban, commercial, industrial and residential centre. The majority of its citizens work in the region. Peel has a broad range of inner-city issues in a suburban context. These issues are impacted by several factors.

Explosive Population Growth

The population of Peel is approximately one million, which represents 8.7% of Ontario's population. It is growing rapidly. Peel has the second-fastest rate of population growth in Ontario and one of the fastest in Canada. This rate of growth puts pressure on every corner of the

community and exacerbates many of the challenges faced. Keeping up with the growth has become virtual-

Peel has the second-fastest rate of population growth in Ontario and one of the fastest in Canada.

ly impossible for agencies seeking to deliver services and programs. Waiting lists for social services are increasing. Delays in receiving services can create new, more serious problems. Among the many problems are children with mental illness or developmental disabilities going untreated. The explosive population growth has precipitated an urgent need for an increase in social and health services, as well as housing, schools and transportation. But financial resources have been limited in addressing these issues.





Mental Illness in the Family: *A Mother's Plea for Help*

Rita is a single mother of two boys: Jose, 9, and Michele, 11. She needed assistance with her oldest son, Michele. Michele had behavioural problems and was difficult to handle, causing Rita to become withdrawn and unable to function normally. She has suffered health concerns for the past 10 years and her son's outbursts and aggressive behaviour were creating a great deal of stress in her family.

With the help of Peel Children's Aid, Michele was identified as needing residential treatment. There were no immediate identifiable protection

concerns for Michele, but he was brought into the care of Peel Children's Aid nevertheless due to the unavailability of resources within the children's mental health system. Peel Children's Aid resources were used mainly as a respite until room became available in the residential treatment facility. Children like Michele are taken into care because there are not enough resources available to meet their needs and their family situation quickly deteriorates.

Fast Facts

- Peel has the second highest volume of new immigrants in the country, second only to Toronto.
- Immigrants make up 43% (424,820) of Peel's population.
- The immigrant population is growing at a faster rate than the Canadian-born population.
- Statistics Canada has announced that visible minorities will comprise the majority of the population in the GTA by 2017.
- There are more than 93 distinct ethnic groups in Peel and more than 60 different languages spoken.
- Peel is the "home of choice" for a vast number of immigrants arriving from abroad.
- Even with university degrees, newcomers earn only 71% of what Canadian-born university graduates earn. (Poverty By Postal Code, April, 2004)
- 60% of newcomers to Canada do not work in the same occupational field as they did before coming to Canada. (Poverty By Postal Code, April 2004)
- Foreign-educated immigrants earn \$2.4-billion less annually than native-born Canadians with comparable skills because the newcomers are employed in jobs below their skill levels.
- Canada's economy loses an estimated \$4.1-billion to \$5.9-billion a year due to the lack of recognition of qualifications and credentials of newcomers. (Conference Board of Canada)

Extensive Ethnic Diversity

Immigration is vital to the economic stability and growth of Peel. The current and future success of the region is dependent on immigrants. New immigrants, who offer tremendous value to the community, face significant barriers to equitable participation in our society. Barriers include language, lack of Canadian experience, difficulty in having trade and professional credentials from their homelands recognized, and other forms of discrimination. It can take up

to 10 years for successful integration. According to service providers in the area, Peel's large newcomer and immigrant population has a huge impact on the delivery of human services, as agencies must provide services in different languages and be culturally appropriate and sensitive. Again, funding deficiencies are hindering their capacity to respond to the needs of these new Canadians.

It can take up to 10 years for successful integration.

Paula DeCoito, Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Peel, speaks passionately about the challenges faced by new immigrants:

Paula DeCoito, Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Peel, speaks passionately about the challenges faced by new immigrants:

"Thousands of new immigrants arrive in Peel each year, hoping for a better life for themselves and their families," she said. "In return, they want to work, to participate in their communities, to feel a sense of belonging in their new country. Alas, for many of them, the hurdles they encounter – language barriers, no recognition of their foreign professional credentials, racism – often shatter their dreams and leave them instead with a nightmare of fear, doubt and despair. This situation is both unjust and inefficient. We need strong civic leadership, coupled with adequate public funding, to develop a public culture that promotes the acceptance of new immigrants and the tearing down of the barriers to their successful settlement in Peel. We need to replace those barriers with attitudes, services and programs that can help new immigrants to achieve their dreams and contribute to building a healthy community for all of us."



Employment:

A New Immigrant's Challenge

She is a marketing professional with a post-graduate degree in commercial art and graphic design. He is an investment banker who was once president of an off-shore bank in Bahrain. But neither Needa nor her husband, Rahil, has been able to find employment commensurate with their education and experience since arriving in Peel from India in 2004.

Needa was educated in New York, Germany, Hong Kong and Malaysia. She has worked in advertising and design for major corporations in India and New York City. Her English is flawless and she understands the idioms of North American speech. Furthermore, her portfolio is impressive and includes work for a wide range of industries, from

financial services to packaged goods. Even though she has extensive international experience in preparing marketing communications materials in English for global audiences, including North America, she says that employers are citing her lack of Canadian experience as a reason for not hiring her.

Rahil has taken Canadian investment banker certification courses and passed at the top of his class. He still cannot find a job in banking and is considering taking a telemarketing job to make ends meet.

Like Needa and Rahil, many new immigrants in Peel are frustrated and angry at not being able to find suitable employment.

Fast Facts

- In 2000 there were 27,090 low-income families in Peel. More than one in 10 families in Peel have low incomes. (based on Statistics Canada low-income cut-off)
- These families spent more than 64% of their total income on food, clothing and housing.
- There are 18 official food banks in Peel, with more than 6,000 people using the largest one at least once every month.
- In two areas of Peel, the incidence of low-income households is greater than provincial or Canadian averages, and in five others, the incidence is not far off the provincial average.

Poverty and Homelessness

Small pockets of poverty exist throughout Peel. These pockets are often obscured by their proximity to the relative affluence of other parts of the region. For many observers, it is hard to believe that there are approximately 115,000 people in Peel living below the poverty line. This represents more than 10% of the region's population. To put this number in perspective, the number of impoverished Peel residents is as great as the population of Barrie. The issue of poverty has led to an increased need for, among other things, income support, affordable housing, employment training, prenatal care, child care subsidies, support for the elderly and drug rehabilitation centres.

While homelessness is a problem usually associated with big cities, a growing number of homeless people exist in Peel. In December 1998, more than 300 different men sought refuge in the Public Works

garage in Brampton that was converted to an emergency shelter for the winter.

... a growing number of homeless people exist in Peel.

In addition, there are 125 hostel beds in four permanent facilities that are available for single women, women with children, couples with children and youth. These beds are often fully occupied. An initiative is under way to add more beds, but they still will not be enough to meet the need.

The impact on families and, particularly, children, of not having a home is devastating. When a family loses its home, the children are often required to change schools. They lose their friends, which contributes to their frustration, behavioural challenges and academic issues. The impact on mental health and academic progress can take many years to overcome.

Young people looking for shelter are increasingly troubled. Many are experiencing mental health problems, learning disabilities, behavioural, emotional and physical health challenges, substance abuse, pregnancy, the effects of physical and sexual abuse, and poverty. Unfortunately for many young people, shelter use is a repeated experience. Peel has only 18 shelter beds to accommodate the situation.

Shelter Use in Peel (2003)

Shelter	Total Users	Children
Family Life Resource Centre	799	511
Our Place (Peel)	610	0
Family	1,825	1,112
Wilkinson	3,682	0
Mavis	2,048	0
St. Leonard's House (Peel)	157	0
Interim Place 1	471	233
Interim Place 2	457	217
Total	10,049	2,073

Peel's Homelessness Outreach Program Outreach: 2000 (case load-223) – 2001 (case load-182)

Average age:	39.7
Age range:	12-78 years
Gender:	63% men 37% women
Housing on entry: (when first reached by outreach program)	38% at risk 14% no fixed address 29% living on the street 13% in a shelter
Municipality:	53% Brampton 26% Mississauga 2% Caledon

Peel's outreach program reaches those at risk of homelessness as well as homeless people who do not choose to use shelters.

General research on homelessness shows the following:

Homelessness Hurts

Main Causes of Homelessness:

- Family breakdown
- Lack of affordable housing

Top 4 Contributing Factors:

- Addiction
- Family breakdown
- No affordable housing
- Mental and physical health

Greatest Challenges Faced by Client:

- Insufficient finances
- Lack of affordable housing

David Szwarc, Commissioner of Social Services for the Region of Peel, had this to say:

“It continues to shock me that in 2003 over 10,000 individuals in Peel were without a home for a period of time. It is a relatively recent social issue: In 1999 the Region of Peel spent about \$600,000 helping families and individuals who were without a place to live. By 2004 Peel was spending over \$9.3-million a year on services to support people without homes. Over 2,000 of those assisted were school-aged children whose families were without shelter. We have not even tried to calculate the costs to the health and education systems and the pressures for services on other human services agencies that accompany this degree of disruption and uncertainty in people’s lives.”



Homelessness: *A Revolving Door*

Mentally challenged since birth and suffering from degenerative bone disease since early childhood, George hasn't had the easiest of lives. His problems were compounded in 1989 when four of his vertebrae were crushed when he was struck by a car while on his way to church.

George has never been married and the only member of his family still alive is a sister in Toronto. Despite his mental and physical issues, George has been employed by Goodwill Industries for 42 years. But for many of those years, George has been able to work only two days a week due to problems with his legs. As a result, he has lived in various homeless shelters in Peel. Existing on a meagre income, George has been able to

afford an apartment of his own from time to time, giving him a sense of satisfaction and boosting his self-esteem. But the burden of bills to pay would eventually become overwhelming and George would find himself back in a shelter.

Other than his pride and his determination, the only thing George really has going for him is his scooter, specially designed for the disabled. It gives him the mobility to visit Knight's Table, a non-profit kitchen in Brampton, for his meals. There is sincerity and a sense of urgency in his voice that speaks volumes about George's situation – a seemingly hopeless situation that far too many people find themselves in.

Fast Facts

- In 2001 there were 276,090 families in Peel, representing 8.5% of all families in Ontario.
- Peel has one of the highest proportions of households with children in the province - close to 70%; the children and youth population under 19 in Peel is more than 288,000, the second largest in the province.
- 14.5% of families (39,945) in Peel are lone-parent families, of which approximately 80% are headed by women; more than 60,000 children in Peel live in lone-parent families.
- There are 17,820 students from Grade 1 to 8 and 1,955 students from Grade 9 to 12 in an ESL/English Literacy Development program.
- As many as 1 in 4 children in Peel are entering Grade 1 without the experiences they need to prepare them for successful learning.
- There is more than a 50% increase in the number of children requiring developmental services over the past five years in Mississauga alone. (Community Living Mississauga).
- At least 500 children are waiting for mental health services in Peel.
- 450 families are waiting to receive any kind of respite care to ensure good quality care and support to strengthen their ability to care for a loved one with a developmental delay.

The Challenges for Children and Families

There are troubling signs of challenges for families in the region. Balancing the needs of children and often, aging parents, with school, work and financial challenges can be difficult for many families. For families facing poverty, experiencing unemployment or caring for family members with special needs that compound these realities, life can be overwhelming. Lone-parent families experience significant stress due to issues such as child-care and before- and after-school care, unemployment and financial duress. Especially vulnerable are children who are both poor and live in homes where English is the second language. Children experiencing any or all of these situations tend to fall behind their peers in their physical, intellectual and social development. More preventative services, early learning and child care programs for children of all cultures will strengthen the support to families in vulnerable circumstances and children with special needs.

Children with serious mental health difficulties, including severe behavioural management problems, depression, aggression, and children with developmental disabilities, are in need of a range of residential, community-based and day treatment services.

Children and families in Peel do not have the same access to services as those in other regions. They wait longer and receive less service. In addition, many people do not even go on the waiting lists because they realize their needs cannot be met in a timely fashion.

Children in particular can be irreparably damaged emotionally and psychologically. It is a societal obligation to pay attention to

Children and families in Peel do not have the same access to services as those in other regions.

children, because they represent the future of the community. Dealing with children's problems long after they have started could be more complex, costly and less effective. Imagine what would happen if there were waiting lists for children to get into school. Waiting lists are another serious consequence of inadequate funding of social agencies.

Leanne Baldwin, Clinical Director of Peel Behavioural Services at Trillium Health Centre, explained:

“Currently we have 254 clients waiting for services. This is made up of 123 school-aged children, 47 adults and 84 pre-schoolers. While we try to manage the waiting list by offering some minimal assistance, individuals can wait up to 18 months for the type of service they really need. We do prioritize urgent cases: however, right now we have nine referrals in this category (five school-aged and four adults), which means they may be presenting a danger to themselves or to others and/or are threatened with being removed from a program due to their behaviour. When individuals are required to wait an excessive amount of time for services, their behavioural issues often escalate. This may result in the need for more intrusive services and/or lengthier stays in service once they are finally admitted.”



Developmental Dilemma:

A Family Affair

Raj is 9 years old. He lives with his mother, aunt, grandparents and two other children. The family is of Sikh heritage, but most family members speak English.

Raj's father left the family once he received his landed-immigrant status in Canada. Seema, Raj's mother, was involved in a motor vehicle accident prior to Raj's birth. She was in a coma but has recovered. Seema lives on a modest, fixed monthly income, which she receives as a result of her accident.

Adding to Seema's challenges is that Raj is autistic. He attends a fulltime special needs program in Peel. Peel Behavioural Services, part of the Trillium Health Centre, was the first agency to be involved with the family except for the doctor who diagnosed Raj with autism. Raj has

some language but it is mostly meaningless repetition of another person's words and he engages in self-injurious behaviour. The family had no information on autism until Peel Behavioural Services became involved. The family thought he would grow out of his "illness". They were saving for his future education and were hoping to arrange a marriage for him at some point.

In providing services to Raj and his family, it will be necessary to encourage all family members interacting with him to follow the same behavioural suggestions. Furthermore, it has become evident that a number of other services will be required. He has been placed on a number of waiting lists for case management, respite, and wraparound services (various sources of formal and informal support for families experiencing significant difficulties).

Fast Facts

- One in eight women (more than 62,000 in Peel) are abused by their intimate partner.
- One in three women victims of sexual assault were assaulted by a friend or casual acquaintance; one in four by a family member including a spouse or ex-spouse (Tremblay, 1999).
- An estimated 7% of women in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered violence from their partner during a five-year period up to and including 2004 (Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, July 2005).
- Female victims of spousal violence were three times more likely than male victims to fear for their lives, and three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence.
- 39% of violent marriages have children who have witnessed the violence.
- Only 17% of survivors of woman abuse will actually use a shelter.
- Each year Interim Place provides shelter and/or support to over 6,000 women and their children, but due to lack of spaces and inadequate funding for more spaces, it has to refer many other women (with or without children) to other services.
- In 2004-05, Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin dealt with 2,467 persons in services related to partner abuse; 1,006 were seen in individual or mother and children counselling, 1,045 were helped through the Helping End Abuse for Life; 416 men completed groups in the Man to Man program (men who have abused their partners and who want to stop).

Woman Abuse

Woman abuse is a prevalent problem throughout Canada. Women of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, social-economic classes, religion, ability levels and professions can experience abuse. As such, violence against women must be understood and responded to in a way that the behaviour is not restricted by any social boundaries. The broad ethnic and cultural diversity of Peel's population has created challenges for social service agencies dealing with the issue of woman abuse.

The Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse (PCAWA) defines woman abuse as a behaviour that can include, but is not limited to, the physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, social, spiritual and financial abuse that occurs in an intimate relationship. Woman abuse is the intentional and systematic use of tactics to establish and maintain power and control over the thoughts, beliefs and conduct of women.

Woman abuse can instigate a cycle of violence. It takes its toll on children, who often suffer emotionally, physically and cognitively from exposure to violence against their mother. In addition, children who are exposed to abuse have an increased chance of being abused and/or being abusive as an adult. Boys whose fathers abused their mothers have a 1,000% greater likelihood of abusing their partners as adults than sons of non-violent partners.

Woman abuse can instigate a cycle of violence.

Addressing the cycle-of-violence syndrome, Mark Creedon, Executive Director of Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin (CFSPD), says the real tragedy is that most families think that they're the only ones experiencing violence. If families could seek professional help, he says, they would go through a painful period at first, but then the healing process would begin and the cycle of violence would be broken.

According to PCAWA, there are several factors that inhibit a woman from reporting abuse, including: a fear for her life or the lives of her children; poverty and economic dependency; the love for or the emotional attachment to her partner; cultural and religious beliefs; lack of affordable child care; a barrier to accessing resources (due to racism, language, fear, unawareness of rights, etc.).

In order to offer a continuum of services, PCAWA developed a protocol to help agencies respond to woman abuse in a coordinated and effective manner that includes crisis response, first-stage counselling, second-stage counselling, and housing.

There are five shelters in Peel that abused women can turn to for help: Armagh (second-stage counselling); Interim Place I; Interim Place II; Our Place Peel (ages 16-21); and Salvation Army Family Life Resource Centre. It is important to note that Interim Place (I & II) is the only organization in Peel focused solely on providing shelter, interim support and counselling for abused women and their children. It has the ability to accommodate 39 women and children with shelter in a safe, secure and confidential environment. Interim Place also provides crisis intervention. Its 24-hour crisis lines responded to 5,005 crisis calls in 2004. In total, Peel's five shelters can accommodate approximately 155 individuals at any given time.

Catherine Fox, Executive Director of Interim Place, explains that women's problems extend beyond abuse: "There has been an increase in the number of women we serve who are also experiencing other challenges in their lives such as health and immigration issues. More funding is needed so that more services can be provided."



Poverty:

A Tale of Hardship

John is a single father with three children. He has suffered with a chronic heart condition all his life. Several years ago, John received a heart transplant. He is unable to work to support his family and they live off his disability pension and the child tax credit. In the past year his health has deteriorated and his body is rejecting the transplant.

John has turned to Foodpath – a food bank – for assistance and, as he cannot walk too far, arrangements have been made for his order to be delivered by volunteers from the community or his neighbours. The order is selected when he or a family member calls.

Foodpath's assistance to John has provided another avenue of support for his family and allowed them to stay together. It has also relieved one area

of stress that they are experiencing in their day to day lives. John must be doing something right with his family as his eldest daughter is now attending nursing school at a community college.

Foodpath supports 2,000 families each month in much the same manner as it does John's. The agency also provides food products to three other food banks in the region as well as approximately 30 support programs. They include breakfast programs, soup kitchens, shelters, drug/alcohol programs and hospices.

Fast Facts

- There has been a 28.2% increase in the 65-plus population between 1996 and 2001.
- There are 78,805 seniors in Peel. This is an increase of 17,339 between 1996 and 2001.
- 16.6% (12,610) of the seniors population live alone.
- The number of seniors aged 65-plus is expected to double during the next 20 years and quadruple over the next 40 years.
- 85-plus is the fastest-growing age group.

The Plight of Seniors

One of the most significant changes in the composition of Peel is the rapidly aging population and the relatively high percentage of seniors who live alone. Aging can bring its own challenges, including increased health concerns, depression, loneliness, isolation and addiction issues related to prescription medicines. Many seniors accessing services in Peel have multiple mental and physical health concerns. Furthermore, a growing number of seniors in Peel, particularly women, live in poverty or just above the poverty line.

Many seniors accessing services in Peel have multiple mental and physical health concerns.

Seniors have a strong desire to maintain their independence and social connections. Limited access to social and support networks, caused by such issues as disability, frailty, inadequate transportation and financial hardship following the death of a spouse, can create barriers that seem almost impossible to overcome.

The incidence of disability increases with age. Over one-third of persons aged 65 to 74 years and one-half of those aged 75-plus are disabled, according to the Statistics Canada 2001 Participation and Activity Limitations (PALS) survey. This translates into 40% of persons aged 65 and over being disabled. The most common disabilities among seniors are those related to mobility, pain, agility, hearing, vision and psychological issues.

With the anticipated rapid growth in seniors 65-plus in Peel, the number of persons with disabilities is expected to increase at about twice the rate of growth of the general population. This will lead to increased demand for health services, safe and affordable housing modified to be accessible to seniors, transportation, and a vast variety of social services, including general counselling, bereavement counselling, homemaking, rehabilitation and physiotherapy, recreational and cultural programs, and legal and financial advice.

In addition, according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the rental housing affordability challenges facing seniors aged 65-plus in Peel are very severe. In 2001, more than 705 of single-senior renter households were spending in excess of 30% of their income on shelter, and nearly one in three were spending over 50%.

Another challenge facing many seniors is living with or looking after their adult children. Large numbers of multi-generational families are residing together in Peel – in other words, mothers, fathers, children and grandparents.

Often, loss or lack of employment and mental health issues force the offspring of seniors to move in with their parents. This can cause stress and other forms of hardship for the elderly.

Furthermore, there are many incidences of elder abuse that force seniors to seek refuge in shelters. In many cases, seniors in low-income brackets are often compelled to go to shelters due to abuse or because their children cannot afford to provide financial support.



Isolated and Ill: *A Senior's Predicament*

Dorothy was born in Port Carling, Ontario, in 1930. During her 33-year marriage, she worked as a clerk in the finishing room of a company in Brampton. Her job was to place a carbon between invoices. She was supposed to insert 16,000 carbons a day, but she did 20,000 for stockpiling purposes in the event of illness. In other words, she didn't get paid when she was off sick.

"My doctor sent me to Peel Senior Link," said Dorothy. "He said I needed help because I was falling down all the time. I move too fast – have to slow down."

Peel Senior Link is a non-profit charitable organization that makes independent living possible for senior citizens who might otherwise be

expected to enter more institutional settings, such as long-term care facilities and hospitals. The agency coordinates personal care and home-making services – at no charge – for more than 1,000 seniors in designated buildings in Peel.

"When I need help, knowing that they [Peel Senior Link] are here, gives me a lot of self-assurance. I can call them anytime. Before, when I got sick, I just kept getting sicker. I had nobody to call...I have very few friends. Now I have friends and family [Peel Senior Link] who really care for me."

Fast Facts

- The level of provincial funding provided to Peel for programs related to children's services, child care services, adult services and development services is, in most cases, less than 50% of the provincial per capita funding.
- Peel has 8.7% of Ontario's population but receives only 4.4% of the province's social services funding.
- Peel receives less than other neighbouring municipalities on a per capita basis. (Durham, Halton and York have also experienced a great deal of population growth.)
- Waiting lists severely underestimate the scope of unmet needs as some people, discouraged by the wait, look for help in other regions or give up until their problems escalate into a crisis requiring intervention by police, hospitals or Children's Aid.

Deteriorating Access to Services

People like Rita, Raj, John, Needa and Rahil, Dorothy, and George – all citizens of Peel – were at crossroads in their lives. Far too many people find themselves in similar situations and cannot get access to the help they need. The fact is, every citizen has the right to equal access to services that would help them minimize their vulnerability and build healthy and productive lives. Unfortunately, the people of Peel are not gaining equal access to the services they desperately need.

The Failure of Funding

Current funding approaches for providing social services have not responded to the profound social changes and challenges occurring in Peel – challenges driven by high growth and increasing diversity on the one hand and by the growing number of inner-city problems that emanate from having the seventh and sixteenth largest municipalities (Mississauga and Brampton) in the country within its regional boundaries. As a result, citizens in Peel do not have equal access to essential human services that citizens in other areas can count on. They wait longer and receive less service because of this funding inequity. With the anticipated rapid growth in seniors 65-plus in Peel, the number of persons with disabilities is expected to increase at about twice the rate of growth of the general population. This will lead to increased demand for health services, safe and affordable housing modified to be accessible to seniors, transportation, and a vast variety of social services, including general counselling, bereavement counselling, homemaking, rehabilitation and physiotherapy, recreational and cultural programs, and legal and financial advice.

The Impact of Under-funding at a Glance

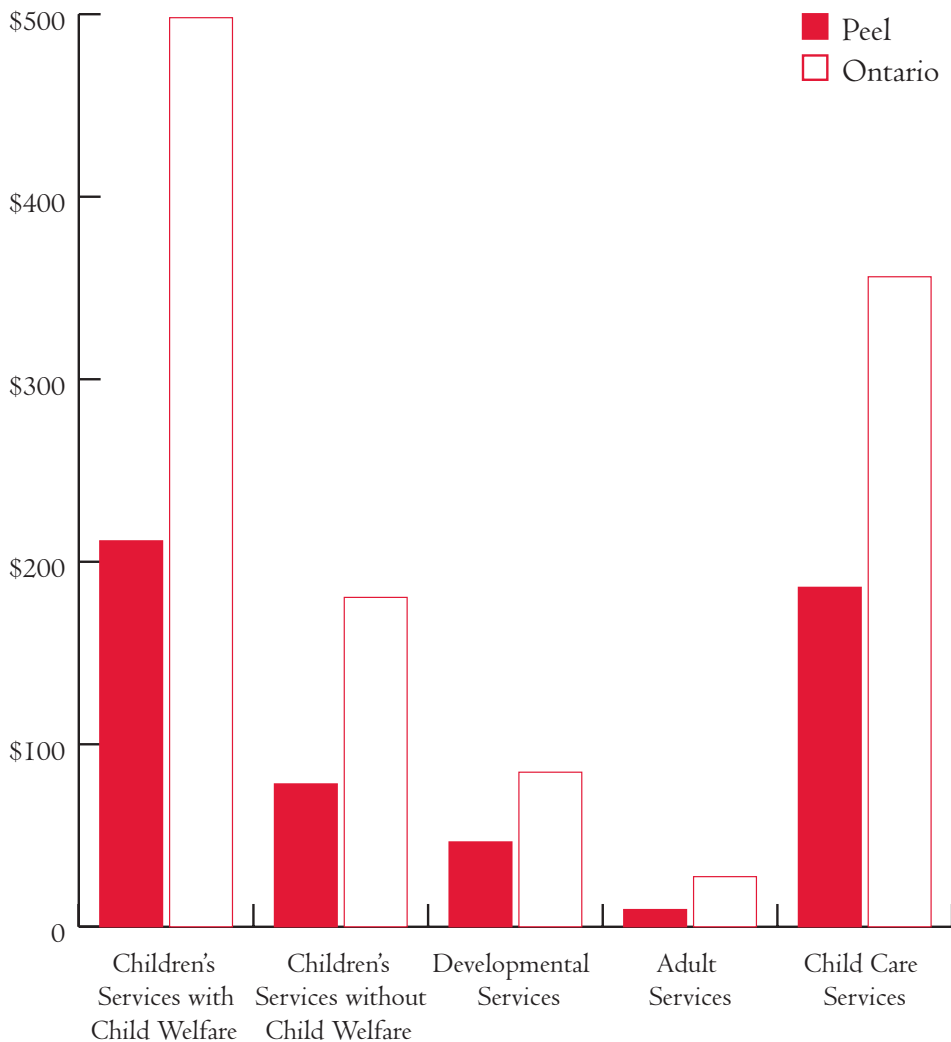
Children in Peel wait longer and receive fewer services than those in other regions. This exacerbates the problems they face. The longer children are left untreated, the more costly and complex their challenges can become. Unattended problems spill over into crises in schools or costly interventions by police, hospitals and child welfare agencies. Businesses are affected by increased absenteeism and reduced productivity when employees cannot get the services they need for their children.

It costs the Ontario government much more to address the consequences of unattended problems when you factor in interventions by health, child welfare and criminal justice systems. Young children miss significant stages of development without timely services. Bullying, violence and other behavioural issues impact the learning of all children when needy children do not get the counselling they need. Young people without a sound start in life cost Ontario much more by placing greater demands on the health, social welfare and criminal justice systems in the long term.

It costs the Ontario government much more to address the consequences of unattended problems when you factor in interventions by health, child welfare and criminal justice systems.

Comparison of Per Capita Social Service Funding in Peel and Ontario 2002-03

	Peel	Ontario
Children's Services with Child Welfare	\$211.48	\$498.09
Children's Services without Child Welfare	\$78.30	\$180.48
Developmental Services	\$46.51	\$84.70
Adult Services	\$9.46	\$27.47
Child Care Services	\$186.01	\$356.15



Note: The accompanying chart and graph demonstrate the per capita funding provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for each of five service categories during the fiscal year 2002-03. Children's Services comprise all children's mental health, such as autism, young offender and community services. Developmental Services include all such services for children and adults. Adult Services encompass programs for persons affected by domestic violence.

The per diem calculations were based upon the 2001 census data and Ministry-provided information about the allocations for each category of service. The ages used for the two categories of Children's Services were 0 to 19; for Child Care – 0 to 9; for Developmental Services – the total population, and for Adult Services – 20 to 65.

What Is the Community Doing?

The extreme demands on Peel's over-loaded services have resulted in the development of innovative and creative solutions that will help the region effectively use further financial resources. Peel has developed a pattern of collaboration that has led to the creation of several cross-jurisdictional and multidisciplinary programs at both the system-wide and local levels. There are significant and effective cooperative programs and services in place to promote the well-being of Peel's citizens and to respond to human suffering and vulnerability. They deal with such challenges as children's mental health, violence and abuse, poverty, housing, developmental issues, immigration and literacy.

A Snapshot of Community Initiatives

Below are just three examples of the kind of activity that epitomizes the collaborative approach of Peel's social and health organizations. There are many other examples that enable agencies to stretch their limited resources. Despite these collaborative efforts, however, individuals and families are placed on waiting lists for services or, in some cases, the appropriate infrastructure does not exist to accommodate them.



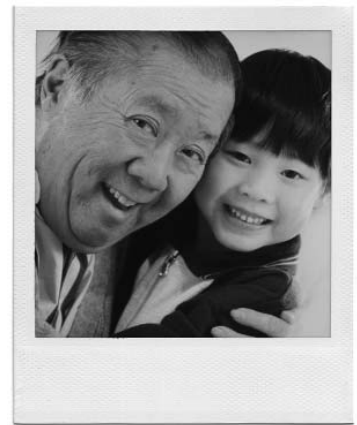
Success By 6 Peel

In March 2005, after many years of development, Success By 6 Peel was launched. It is a collaboration of more than 60 partners in business, labour, education, recreation, health, social services and government. The initiative is dedicated to providing opportunities for children from birth to age 6 in Peel to grow and develop to their fullest potential.



The Mentoring Partnership

Launched in Peel in February 2005 as part of a larger initiative of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, The Mentoring Partnership links immigrants with Canadian mentors in their field. Several strategic partners support this new service, including Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the Region of Peel, United Way of Peel Region, Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, the Brampton Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Malton Neighbourhood Services and Caledon Community Services.



Safer Families Project

The Safer Families Project is an effort to provide more timely and more effective services for families in which partner abuse occurs. The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The partners in Safer Families are Family Services of Peel, Peel Children's Aid, and Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin.



Fundamental Reform is Vital

Beyond the continued efforts of the Peel community to effectively and strategically use its resources and strengths to support and assist the most vulnerable citizens, there are a number of public policy decisions that will greatly impact the region's ability to address these challenges.

Social Service Funding Reform

Children, families, seniors and new immigrants in Peel will only have equal access to critical social services if fundamental reform of funding approaches is undertaken. For close to a decade and a half, Peel has been short-changed by funding and the region is now far behind other regions in the level of support it receives. The result is a reduced level of service for the region's most vulnerable citizens.

Peel is one of several areas that have experienced major demographic or social change. This is affected by funding approaches that have not recognized and responded to the changes and their associated increase in demands for human services. Government needs to look at the demographic and social realities around the province in order to determine a more equitable funding model based on population and need.

There is an urgent need for the provincial and federal governments to enhance the capacity of communities like Peel to meet the needs of their vulnerable citizens.

First, in the short term, the provincial government should seek opportunities to provide catch-up funding to high-need areas such as Peel, where provincial funding has not kept pace with population and service demand growth. In Peel, the historical trend of funding inequity needs to be addressed immediately.

There was some recognition of the need for funding equity in the November 2004 allocation of children's mental health funding. It is important to note, however, that even with this funding Peel's per capita funding average, which increased from 42% to 45%, is still less than half of the provincial per capita average in this area. Therefore, short-term efforts like these will not easily close the huge gap that exists in Peel. In addition to children's mental health, there is a need to acknowledge funding inequities pertaining to other children's services (with and without welfare), developmental services, child care services and adult services.

Second, in the long term, both the federal and provincial governments need to review their funding formulae to ensure they support each of the service areas for which they are responsible. The formulae need to take into full account factors of prevalence, poverty and population so that they have a stable basis upon which future growth can be accommodated. Providing equitable funding to embrace all

social services is necessary so that people are not denied access to services depending on where they live.

Third, the provincial government should re-examine its approach to using the property taxes of York, Halton and Peel citizens to pay for social services in Toronto. Peel is required to raise approximately \$66-million a year from property taxes to pay into the provincial government's pooling program that funds social service and housing programs outside Peel. Peel Regional Council has requested that the provincial government establish a capping of pooled costs to protect municipalities from sharing in uncontrolled spending of pooling partners. The council has further requested that, "should the government choose not to enforce a pooling process that promotes service efficiency and effectiveness, then the Minister of Finance should repeal the pooling legislation and eliminate pooling in the Greater Toronto Area altogether." The region could put its property tax revenue to good use by investing in a number of areas of infrastructure, such as transportation, to accommodate population growth and the aging population.

Fourth, it is recognized that there needs to be a broader range of changes in social policy and service programming combined with the reform of funding policies underlying them. These policy directions are worthy of much more significant support.

Invest in Early Learning and Child Care

The province's commitment to creating a fully integrated range of early learning and child care services and fully accessible neighbourhood hubs that include early identification, remediation, treatment, parenting support and educational programs is a very laudable goal. It is a staged approach that is very modest, with an implementation time frame of more than 10 years. A much more aggressive time table for change with commensurate resources is necessary. Otherwise, two or more generations of 0- to 5-year-olds will outlive the opportunity to be supported by the benefits of the new system.

Reduce Poverty

The provincial government has promised to eliminate the current claw-back of the child tax credit from parents on social assistance. To accomplish this successfully will require an early commitment to: 1) Reinstatement of the funding that was taken from families receiving social assistance through the National Child Benefit Supplement claw-back, without jeopardizing the services provided through the reinvestment of those funds; and 2) Develop a children's benefit such as that proposed by the

Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and remove children from social assistance.

In addition, the rate of social assistance has only been increased once since the 20%-plus cutback of 1995. Therefore, a significant increase is needed to reduce the numbers of people and especially children living in poverty.

Increase Funding for Immigration Services

Immigration is the main component of population growth in Peel, which, at 43%, is second only to the City of Toronto in the proportion of immigrants.

Currently, the province is actively negotiating for a fairer share of federal funding in the area of settlement services: Ontario receives just \$819 per immigrant compared with \$3,806 in Quebec.

The federal funding shortfall is felt most acutely in Peel, which has received more than 20% of the immigrants arriving in the GTA in recent years. Immigrants are settling more and more in suburban areas like Peel, where the services are less well developed and less accessible by public transit than in Toronto. There is a modest commitment within the recent federal budget to provide a slight improvement to the Ontario share over the next five years. But the gap will remain essentially the same. We support the provincial government in urging the federal government to provide Ontario with a fair share of federal funding for new immigrants and urge that the distribution of these funds be undertaken on a per capita basis.

Alleviate Homelessness

Further assistance is needed to fully maximize the social-housing funding available from the federal government. This would help reduce the untenable waiting lists for supportive and subsidized housing.

Transform Developmental Services

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has announced a system-wide transformation of services to persons with developmental challenges and their families. There is a commitment to a fair, accessible and sustainable developmental services system as a result of this transformation plan. Implementation of this policy reform would enhance the quality of living for many families in Peel.

Reform Children's and Youth Services

With creation of the new Ministry for Children's and Youth Services, the government has signalled its intent to promote and create a much more integrated and comprehensive service system. A more concentrated and aggressive approach to the implementation of the vision that resulted in the creation of the lead Ministry for Children is necessary. This would reinforce the community's efforts to address the needs of all of its citizens and promote healthy and supportive neighbourhoods.

Increase Public Access to Schools

The Ontario government has given the school boards \$20-million across the province to enable them to reduce the rental fee to community groups. This resulted in the Peel District School Board's lowering of the costs for child care operators. But this new provincial policy and funding to support this move should be expanded so that schools are able to be open and accessible to the community at a low cost on a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week basis. Elementary schools should be the "civic centres" of their neighbourhoods.

Fund Pilot Projects

Pilot projects are an effective way of providing support to communities facing significant challenges and enabling them to try out new and innovative programs and to test new policies and practices. Peel would welcome the opportunity to use its strengths to pursue certain endeavours. Recently launched pilot projects, such as Action for Neighbourhood Change and Best Start, are examples of the kinds of initiatives that would help Peel to be able to serve its citizens pending a fairer distribution of resources for these services.



Funding in Related Systems

The impact of growth has also negatively affected the companion services of health and education. This increases the challenges facing the region in responding to the needs of its citizens, as these social services are often best provided in partnership with these systems.

Although the province now has a population-based funding model for education, there are still problems in coping with growth. Peel in particular has challenges when you consider that between 1991 and 2001 the number of 0- to 14-year-olds grew by more than 30%, the highest increase in Canada. In the face of this, the region continues to struggle with capital expansion and curriculum delivery.

...for education, there are still problems in coping with growth.

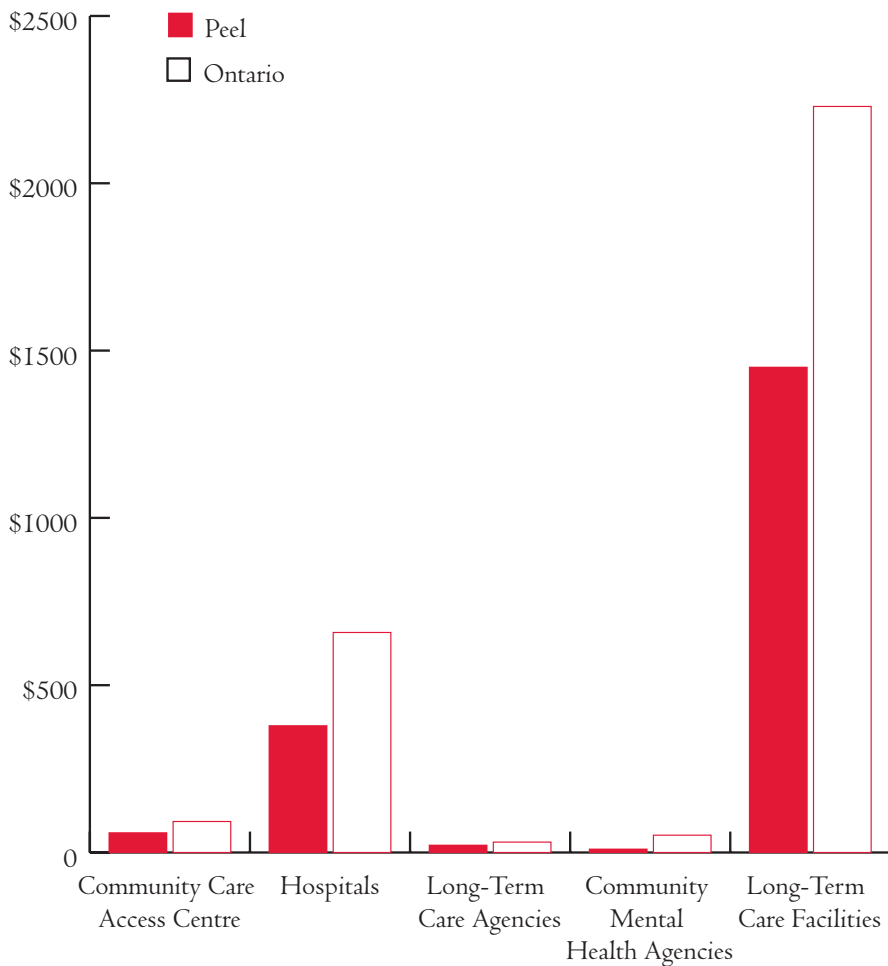
The projects proposed to open in the 2005-06 school year already have enrolment pressures at their respective holding schools, and there is still a compelling need for the boards to respond with a considerable number of new student facilities. The dramatic influx of new immigrants has created a greater demand for ESL programs than the school boards are able to provide.

Similarly in health, growth drives demand without commensurate funding. In 2001, Peel Health could provide only 70% of required public health services due to inadequate government funding. Peel's level of public health services is ranked one of the lowest at 36 out of 37 municipalities in the province. In 2003, Peel's share of per capita funding was the second lowest in the province at \$27.75 compared with the provincial average of \$39.84.

Peel's level of public health services is ranked one of the lowest at 36 out of 37 municipalities in the province.

Health Care Expenditures by Sector, Peel and Ontario, 1999/2000
(Total Expenditures present in \$ millions)

		Peel	Ontario
Community Care Access	Total \$	\$57.4	\$1,067.30
	Per Capita	\$58.83	\$92.65
Hospitals	Total \$	\$369.6	\$7,574.5
	Per Capita	\$378.78	\$657.55
Long-Term Care Agencies	Total \$	\$21.2	\$358.0
	Per Capita	\$21.73	\$31.08
Community Mental Health Agencies	Total \$	\$9.7	\$596.2
	Per Capita	\$9.94	\$51.76*
Long-Term Care Facilities	Total \$	\$40.7	\$1,387.6
	Per Capita	\$1,450.10	\$2,229.56



* Community Mental Health Agency data (particularly rates per capita) include funding to psychiatric hospitals (i.e., Middlesex, Hamilton-Wentworth, Nipissing, Thunder Bay and Toronto). More appropriate per capita local comparators include Durham (\$9.16), Simcoe (\$11.44), York (\$8.80), Waterloo (\$11.16) and Wellington-Dufferin (\$18.99).

Source: A Regional Hospital Infrastructure Plan for Halton and Peel.

A Call to Action

Raj



Autistic Raj and his disabled mother are still having a tough time. Families facing multiple challenges are not rare and deserve extra support and caring from the community.

Rita

Rita and her mentally ill son continue to face challenges. Waiting lists for children needing treatment for mental illness are far too long, resulting in further severity of the psychological and emotional problems they experience.

John



John is able to feed his family but can offer no other form of support. He continues to rely on a food bank but has been unable to work following his heart transplant. An inordinate number of people in Peel are in his position and suffering greatly.

Needa and Rahil

Needa and Rahil continue to seek suitable employment commensurate with their education and experience. They are typical of many new immigrants in Peel, struggling and striving to find their proper place in the workforce.

Dorothy

Dorothy continues to live as an isolated senior with a medical condition. How many other seniors in Peel are living alone and ailing but not getting the emotional and medical support they need?

George

George still relies on homeless shelters on a sporadic basis. The homeless shelters in Peel are always at full capacity.



The stories of Rita, Raj, John, Needa and Rahil, Dorothy, and George are just the tip of the iceberg. There are untold numbers of others who have found themselves in similarly difficult circumstances and facing major challenges in their lives.

The picture is clear. The Region of Peel has fallen far behind in funding for its rapidly escalating human care needs. If this trend continues, what will be the cost in the future to restore the community to acceptable levels of living? Can the municipalities, the region and the province afford to allow vulnerable individuals and families in Peel to descend to increasingly greater depths of human despair? The people of Peel need help now so that they can help others in the future.

It is time to face the facts. Successive governments continue the practice of inequitable funding. A fair share of provincial and federal funding for Peel's social services sector is long overdue. The region cannot continue to accept human suffering due to inequitable, inadequate funding and outdated public policies. If immediate action is not taken, the consequences will be grave and irreversible. The downward spiral must be halted.

There exists in Peel a tremendous will and capacity to improve the quality of life for citizens in need. But it is a daunting task and it cannot be accomplished alone. The various levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit sector have to work together much better as an effective partnership in order to create equal opportunities for everyone and initiate positive social changes. This is an immediate and critical call to action that impacts Peel's current and future viability as a community.

Primary Sources:

- The Social Planning Council of Peel (Portraits of Peel: Neighbourhood Environmental Scan 1996 to 2001)
- Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 1996; 2001
- Fair Share Task Force (Annual Funding Reports)

Photo Credits:

With the exception of the picture of Dorothy (associated with Peel Senior Link) that appears on page 18 and in other places, the photographs contained in this publication do not necessarily depict or represent the people, circumstances or events portrayed.

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- www.comstock.com



Put Yourself in the Picture

You can help us face the facts. Here's how:

If you're a municipal political representative in Peel...

- Advocate for social reform and increased funding for social services to the provincial and federal governments

If you're an MPP in Peel...

- Voice your concerns to the Premier and members of Cabinet
- Push for more equitable funding of social services in Peel
- Support the Fair Share Task Force in any way possible

If you're an MP in Peel...

- Express your concerns to the Prime Minister and members of Cabinet
- Emphasize the need for increased settlement funding for Peel and other areas
- Encourage your constituents to write to you about the issue and share their letters with the Prime Minister and members of Cabinet

If you're a corporate leader...

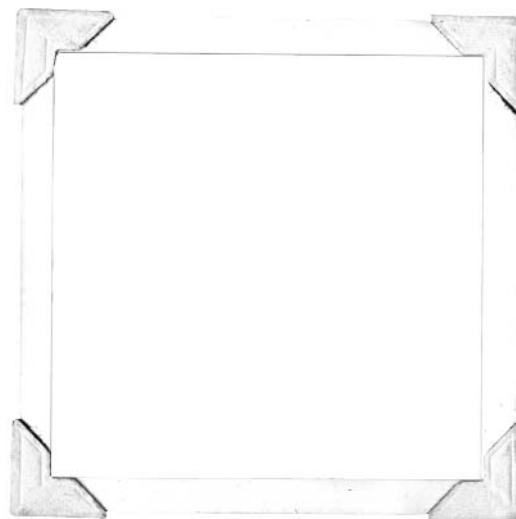
- Send letters of concern to your provincial and federal government representatives
- Meet with these representatives
- Join the Fair Share Task Force
- Become active in United Way of Peel Region or an associated organization

If you're a labour leader...

- Educate your members about the issue
- Write letters to the Premier and the Prime Minister
- Have your members write letters to their federal and provincial representatives
- Have members write letters to the editors of newspapers
- Become active in United Way of Peel Region or an associated organization

If you're a concerned citizen...

- Write to your provincial and federal government representatives
- Write letters to the editors of newspapers
- Join the Fair Share Task Force
- Become active in United Way of Peel Region or an associated organization



If you're an educator...

- Discuss the issue with your colleagues
- Communicate with your union representatives and your provincial and federal government representatives

If you're a community agency...

- Write to your provincial and federal government representatives
- Invite Fair Share to make a presentation to your board, volunteers and client groups
- Join the Fair Share Task Force
- Encourage other agencies to get involved with the issue

If you're a community leader...

- Educate the members of your community about the issue
- Write letters on behalf of your group to the appropriate politicians
- Join the Fair Share Task Force

If you're involved in a religious group...

- Invite a Fair Share representative to speak to your congregation
- Start a petition to advocate for equitable funding of social services in Peel
- Become active in United Way of Peel Region or an associated organization

If you're a parent...

- Get involved – talk to other parents and start your own advocacy group
- Write to the Premier and the Prime Minister about grossly inadequate and inequitable funding for Peel
- Become active in United Way of Peel Region or an associated organization

Together, we can make Peel a better community for everyone.

Portraits of Peel: *Facing the Facts*

is a collaboration of:

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