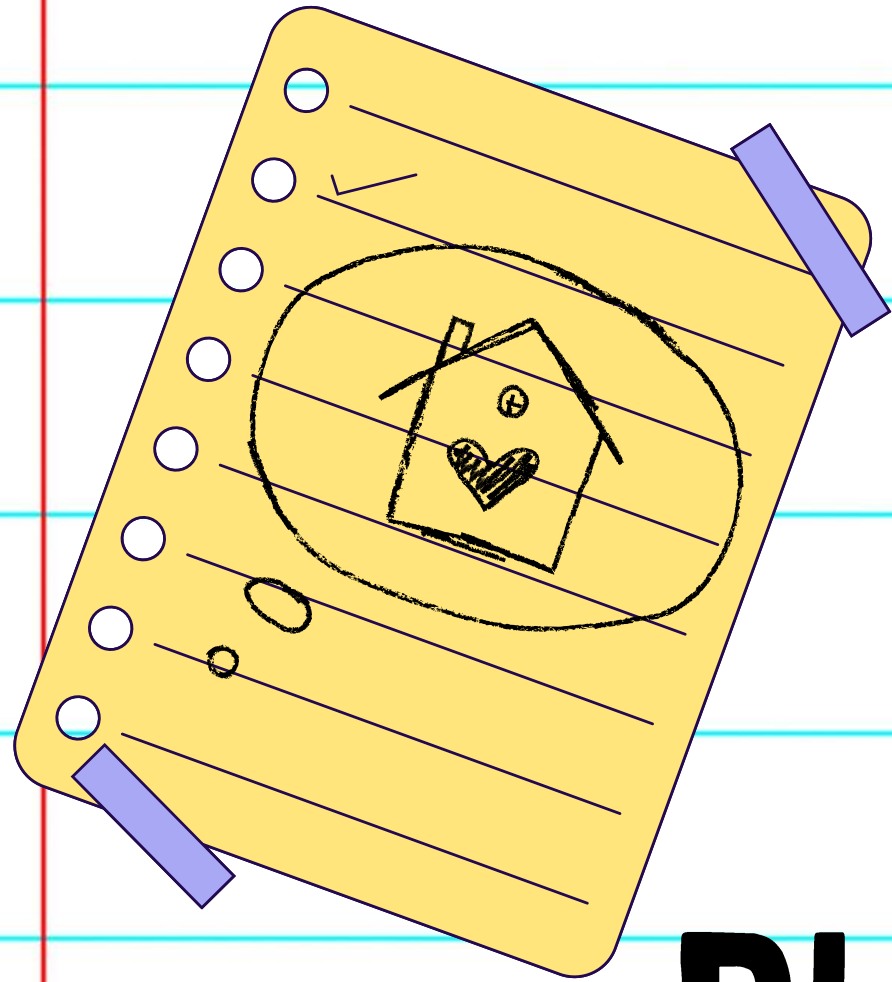
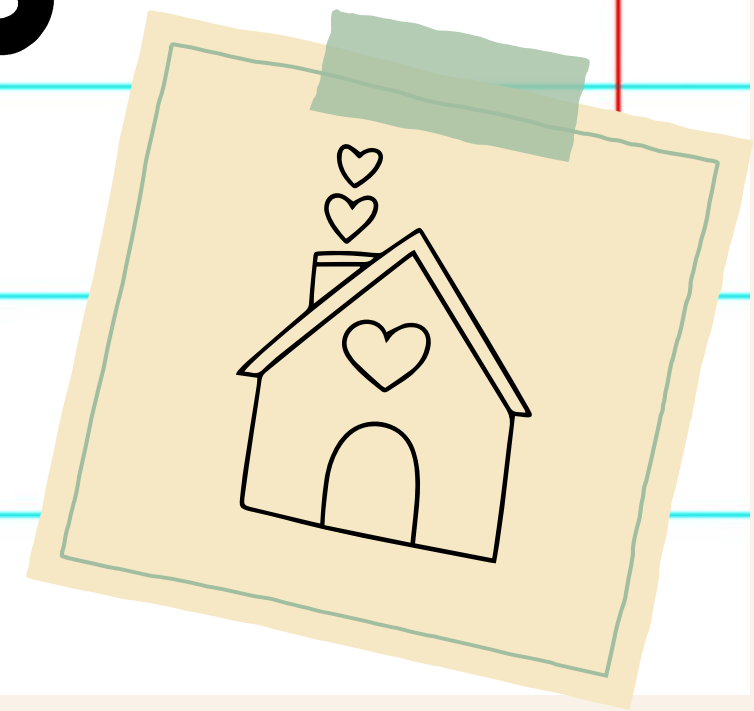


FROM CRISIS TO COMMUNITY



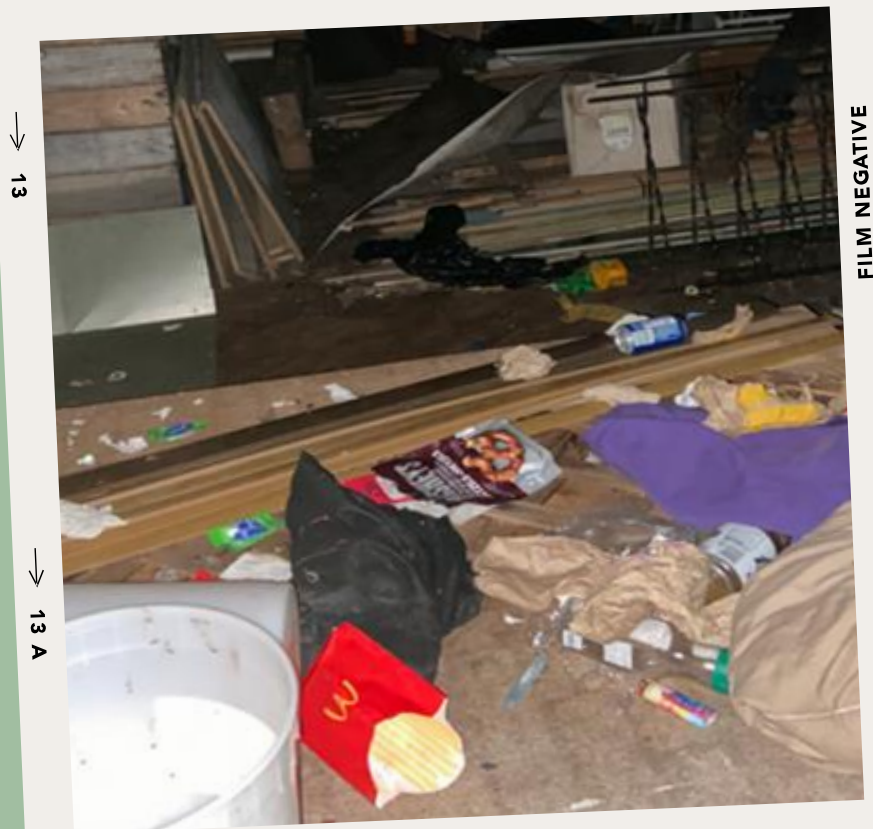
RURAL STRATEGIES FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY



LET ME TAKE YOU BACK TO THE BEGINNING

The Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association was established in 2018 and achieved charitable status in 2020. Although homelessness was not initially apparent, the situation escalated into a crisis with the onset of the pandemic, shifting from “hidden homelessness” to a pressing issue.

For the first time, Amherst, Nova Scotia, witnessed homeless encampments appearing throughout the town and just beyond its borders. Affordable housing had become a relic of the past, as many buildings that once offered affordable units were either destroyed by fire, declared condemned, or seized due to unpaid taxes.



COMMUNITY-LED, PARTNER-DRIVEN BUILD TOGETHER

A multi-partner steering committee was formed. Made up of volunteers, community agencies, politicians from every party and level of government and concerned citizens.

Together, they wrote the proposals, coordinated the response, and made a critical decision: that the Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association (CHHSA) would lead shelter operations.

This wasn't about one group. It was about a community coming together and saying, "We're not waiting for someone to die outside this winter to do something."



WINTER SHELTER – THE FIRST STEP

START SMALL

With winter approaching, we rented the vacant Pentecostal Church and opened a temporary emergency shelter.

The Department of Community Services provided operational funding specifically for this winter emergency response. It wasn't permanent. It wasn't enough. But it was a beginning and it showed what was possible.



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FILM NEGATIVE

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INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Amherst stepped up in a big way. They provided funding to hire CHHSA's first Executive Director with a mandate to build a permanent shelter. Then they donated land, an act of faith in our shared vision. With land, leadership, and proof of concept from the winter shelter, the groundwork was laid for a permanent solution.

*At a Town Council meeting 2 years later the CAO remarked that when they made the decision to fund the position it was the most emotional and proud he has been in his career with the Town of Amherst and that he is prouder now than he was then for that decision based on the work we have done in the community

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OPERATIONAL FUNDING & EXPANSION



END
HOMELESSNESS

BUILD CREDIBILITY

From there, CHHSA applied for operational and capital funding. Key partners supported the vision:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (DCS): OPERATIONAL FUNDING - 1 MILLION

AHANS/DMAH: CAPITAL INVESTMENT - 1.1 MILLION

THE CHRISTIE FOUNDATION: \$75K FOR FURNISHINGS

NSLC AND UNITED WAY: FOOD SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SUPPORT AND ADMIN COSTS

THE RIVER PHILIP FOUNDATION: MAJOR DONOR SUPPORT



RESPONSIVE GROWTH

We didn't wait for perfect. We launched services, adjusted policies, trained staff, and kept adapting. Every piece of feedback, every crisis response, and every partnership helped shape our model into what it is today: housing-focused, low-barrier, trauma-informed, and deeply rooted in community need.



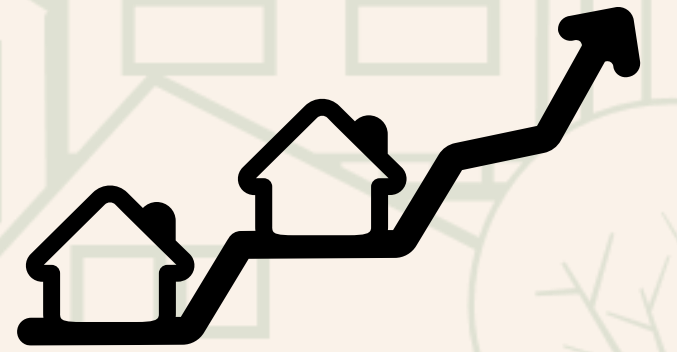
TODAY

- We serve 30–40 people daily with meals
- Provide 24/7 emergency shelter
- Support individuals transitioning into housing
- Operate a mobile response pilot
- Lead new efforts like a youth emergency shelter in partnership with government and local stakeholders



“Start small. Act fast. Adjust often.”

That’s how we built from a rented church in the snow, hiring staff on Boxing Day, to a system that’s saving lives, housing people, and redefining what’s possible in a rural community.



THANK YOU!

www.homelessincumberland.ca
www.facebook.com/CHHSA.NS

