



Alternatives North

"All We Want for Christmas is An End to Poverty"

Yellowknife—December 16, 2009

The Territorial government got a Christmas present today— a gift of past reports detailing the causes and effects of poverty in the Northwest Territories. The gift was from social justice groups and the City of Yellowknife, all calling for an Anti-Poverty Strategy for the NWT.

The alliance of 14 groups wants the GNWT to begin work immediately on adopting an integrated, fully resourced and cross-government approach to eliminating poverty in the NWT (list attached).

Alternatives North, a social justice coalition, organized the gift summit. Representatives of women's, labour, church, seniors, educational, homelessness, food security and other groups, the City of Yellowknife, and regional representatives of national anti-poverty organizations have so far joined the alliance.

Individuals and groups across the NWT are being urged to contact their MLAs, Aboriginal and local governments, and community group leaders, asking them to call on the GNWT to create a Territorial strategy.

The call to eliminate poverty affirms that every person has the right to a standard of living adequate to the well-being of their families and themselves. Alliance members agree it's time for the GNWT to focus on the roots of poverty and combat its effects with a common approach.

Six provinces have adopted anti-poverty strategies, two more jurisdictions are preparing theirs and the House of Commons recently passed a motion calling on the federal government to "develop an immediate plan for the elimination of poverty." Although one in 10 Canadians are known to live in poverty, the GNWT has not created a definition of poverty to assess the problem.

The groups are offering the Territorial government their help to begin immediately on the creation of the strategy.

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