



News Release

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The Homeless Count More Than Ever

Annual Homeless Count Scheduled for January 29 and 30

BREMERTON, WA — This evening, you may see your neighbor coming home from work, but you probably won't see hundreds of your other neighbors as they go to sleep in tents, abandoned buildings, and cars in a hidden epidemic of homelessness in Kitsap County. From 4:00 p.m. on Thursday January 29th to 4:00 p.m. on Friday January 30th, the Annual Kitsap County Homeless Count will be conducted by members of the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition. The count of the peninsula's homeless families and individuals is necessary so that appropriate strategies and resources can be identified to help the homeless.

To complete the survey, "point-in-time" survey forms will be distributed at various locations throughout Kitsap County, including all food bank locations and at several meal sites accessed by the homeless.

Concurrent with the count, the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition has also organized an event called "Operation Connect" to provide an opportunity for homeless individuals and families to meet with representatives from various social service organizations for information and services. Operation Connect is scheduled from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday January 29,

and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday January 30, at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds President's Hall, located at 1200 NW Fairgrounds Road in Silverdale.

Last year's countywide survey identified 715 homeless individuals, 60 percent of whom were male. Seventy-five households reported living outdoors, and 62 households reported living in vehicles. In the 2008 survey, 238 individuals reported having a mental health issue.

The homeless count is mandated by Washington State's Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act. The count is included as an action in Kitsap County's "10 Year Plan to End Homelessness." Annual counts give the Continuum of Care Coalition a set of benchmarks to measure progress over time in the effort to alleviate homelessness in Kitsap County.

The annual point-in-time countywide homeless count is sponsored by the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition, a network of housing and local service providers that was founded in 1994 to coordinate support services for low-income families in Kitsap County. Agency partners supporting the homeless count include Kitsap County, Kitsap Community Resources, Kitsap County Health District, Kitsap Mental Health, Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, Salvation Army, Catholic Community Resources, and several others.

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