

Vibrant Abbotsford Community Conversations 2009

As part of the research, and as a way to ascertain the attitudes on poverty in the community, Vibrant Abbotsford has been talking to the community about poverty. To that end we've held conversations with 100 members of the community, and recorded their responses. These conversations were conducted in 2008, and have been repeated for 2009 to continue engaging the community and see what changes to public perception have occurred.

These conversations were done on an anonymous one-to-one basis, and every effort was made not to bias the response. People were approached at random and asked to give their ideas about three questions:

1. What do you think of when you think of poverty in Abbotsford?
2. How is poverty an issue for Abbotsford and its citizens? Have you noticed any positive or negative changes over the last year related to poverty and if so what were they?
3. What efforts do you think you/ the community could make that would have the biggest impact on reducing poverty in Abbotsford?
4. What would you do to engage the community about the issue of poverty?

As many quotes have been left in as possible and all participants agreed to have their quotes used anonymously.

This was in no way intended to be statistical, but rather to elicit information and opinions. The conversations came from the following sources: 35% from the Bourquin Bus Loop, 34% from the libraries and recreation centers, 14% from UCFV, 13% from the Food Bank, and 4% from the prison population. Though most responses were completely individual, certain concepts came up over and over.

Responses have been categorized by themes and the number in the bracket represents how many times that theme was mentioned. Quotes that were noted have been included below the theme. Many people gave more than once response, so the numbers do not add up to 100.

Like last year homelessness was mentioned most frequently when people were asked "what do you think of when you think of poverty in Abbotsford?" (25 people in 2008, 27 people in 2009). While affordable housing is still the most mentioned solution to the issue of poverty, it has fallen in popularity since 2008 (from 36 people in 2008 to 18 people in 2009).

1. What do you think of when you think of poverty in Abbotsford?

- Homeless. (27)
 - “The homeless, there’s one man around Walmart that I think of.”
 - “It’s really bad, when you cruise around all you see is homeless people.”
 - “The people in the streets.”
 - “It’s bad, there’s a lot of homeless.”
 - People on the streets.
 - “People sleeping downtown.”
 - “There are 300 homeless.”
 - “The homeless lack the will to find a job no matter what it is, there are jobs out there.”
 - “I think of James Breckenridge, Compassion City, and Jubilee Park. The MCC put out a study a few years ago saying there were 400 people with out shelter.”
 - “I feel bad they don’t have a home.”
 - “The homeless people in the parking lots of food stores, especially Safeway, as soon as you pull in they’re at your car. It makes it difficult to shop.”
 - “People living on the street, with the current economic recession a lot of people have had to re-adjust their lifestyles.”
 - “There’s a guy that sits on the sidewalk in front of the London Drugs.”
 - “Poor people on the streets with no homes and losing jobs.”
 - “Homeless and lack of social programs.”
 - “It’s not nice living in the streets.”

- Areas in Abbotsford (8)
 - “There’s a lot of it in certain areas.”
 - Five corners.
 - Downtown. (2)
 - “I think of the areas of the town where there is prostitution and drug use.”
 - “It’s worse in some areas then others.”
 - “I think of Mill Lake and Jubilee Park.”
 - Old downtown Abbotsford.

- Drug Addicts (6)
 - Crack heads – there’s a lot of them hanging around the 7-11.”
 - “Downtown drug addicts.”
 - “Our freedoms make us blind to the lack of freedoms that junkies have.”

- Children and families (5)
 - “Children and families. Kids going to school hungry, and families trying to make a living.”

- “Unfed children. It’s the kids that have no way of getting away from it.”
- “Everyone thinks of homeless, but in reality it’s lots of kids.”
- “Kids that get kicked out because their parents can’t parent.”
- “Hungry children and people with no homes.”

- Reference to the amount of poverty (4)
 - “There’s a lot of poverty and no one is doing anything about it.”
 - “There’s lots.”
 - “It’s becoming more prevalent.”
 - “There’s too much of it.”

- Don’t know or not sure. (4)
 - “I’m a newcomer, so I don’t know.”
 - “Nothing comes to mind.”
 - “I don’t know much about it, I suppose those without enough food and housing.”

- Poverty is not a problem. (3)
 - “There is not much poverty.”
 - There are minimal homeless.
 - “I hear stories that downtown is the poor area, but I haven’t really seen the poverty.”

- Comparison to another community. (3)
 - “It’s not as bad as Surrey.”
 - “In comparison to Calgary it’s not as obvious. I’m happy to have moved here.”
 - “It’s pretty much the same as everywhere else. Abbotsford has better services than Edmonton, but worse than Calgary.”

- Low wage workers (3)
 - “People that don’t have wages to live properly.”
 - “Underpaid employees.”

- Lack of employment (3)
 - “Being out of work.”

- Sad. (3)
 - “I think it’s sad.”
 - “It’s sad and it’s getting worse by the day.”
 - “Deplorable.” (1)

- Lack of money. (3)
 - “Lack of sufficient funds to live a successful daily life.”
 - “People without money.”

- “There’s quite a bit of poverty, people that don’t have the means. Even me and I’m a middle class student and I have trouble making ends meet.”
- The need for more services (2)
 - “It should be fixed. There should be services to get people from the street to the workforce.”
 - “It’s really weird. They should make more shelters.”
- Mental illness. (2)
 - “Mental issues, like schizophrenia and psychosis.”
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- An overlooked issue. (2)
 - “It’s a problem most people aren’t aware of.”
 - “It’s overlooked.”
- People on Disability / Welfare (2)
 - “People on welfare and disability.”
 - “People on disability who only get \$600.”
- Other
 - Lack of education. (1)
 - Single parents. (1)
 - Old age pensioners – seniors. (1)
 - “I’m in Abbotsford not by choice. I have a ton of initials after my name, but the economy sucks. It’s affecting more people then we know. The idea that I would have to look to the community for food is incredible. I don’t drink, smoke, do drugs, and I’m at the food bank.”
 - “It’s something that can be overcome, but because of politics and society we are poor. The system creates poverty.”
 - “Unfortunate people. It’s unfortunate in the 21st Century that people have no food to eat. I am grateful for what I have.”
 - “The rich should give the poor money.”
 - “I know there’s a lot of people scratching, but generally we are well to do.”
 - “Damn these city streets.”
 - “People need help.”
 - “Housing people can’t afford.”
 - “Loss of hope and self worth.”
 - “It is not fair the ways those people are living.”
 - “Homelessness, drug addicts, families struggling to survive.”
 - “Faulty curriculum.”
 - “I think it’s a lack of wanting to get better, to help themselves and seek help.”

- “Why in a province as rich as BC. There is no need for poverty in a country so rich.”
- “Reality”
- “It can take a lot of faces, first I think of the street entrenched, and then I think of families and the student food bank.”
- “It’s no good.”
- “The increases of the homeless, crime, and drugs and alcohol.”

2. How is poverty an issue for Abbotsford and its citizens? Have you noticed any positive or negative changes over the last year related to poverty and if so what were they?

- There have been negative changes over the last year. (19)
 - “Worse, the average family is struggling more, the cost of living is going up, there are less jobs.”
 - “With today’s economy it’s getting worse. It’s the same everywhere now.”
 - “It’s getting worse, there are more youth on drugs.”
 - “It’s getting more prevalent. Outside the grocery store you are constantly being asked for change.”
 - “Abbotsford is getting bigger, getting big city problems.”
 - “It’s getting harder for most people to contribute to the charities. The current economy is making it harder for everyone.”

- Homelessness and begging is an issue (13)
 - There are more homeless, as the homeless move out of Vancouver. (1)
 - “Lots of pan handlers. People judge a book by a cover, they are made uncomfortable. It’s getting worse, because Abbotsford doesn’t want responsibility for others life, they are not used to homeless.” (1)
 - “Homeless who don’t have a place to go, and live on the street, at friends, or just disappear. More people are finding themselves homeless, lacking education and support.”
 - “It’s getting worse, you seem to see more people on the streets with signs.”
 - “Lots of people hanging round asking for money, it’s getting worse.”
 - “I notice there are more homeless in the mall , and outside the mall.”
 - “Having the homeless begging is not ‘appealing’ but it also provides opportunities to help out in the community.”
 - “There are lots begging for money and the city should do something, are there no facilities for help?”
 - “There’s a growing number of homeless in the downtown and they don’t get help.”
 - “They sit outside, but I wonder if maybe they’re just trying to get money. It’s weird when they have expensive shoes.”

- “Homeless, hungry, jobless, tough economy, these are all factors. But poverty is not always about not getting a job, sometimes it’s a choice to be homeless.”
 - “You see it on the streets, it makes me sad to see, especially the younger kids and it’s getting worse.”
 - “People don’t have the initiative to get a job, even picking up garbage. It doesn’t have to be a prestigious job. Pride should not get in the way. The homeless smoke, drink, and do drugs – if they have the money for that they should have the money for a home. Getting money from other people is not right.”
- Poverty isn’t an issue or is not an important issue (7)
 - “It’s not that big an issue.”
 - “Haven’t noticed that much poverty.”
 - “It’s not the biggest issue but it’s an issue. We need more shelters.”
 - “I’m a senior so I don’t have much to do with them.”
 - “An issue but not much of an issue.”
 - “I haven’t found it to be particularly noticeable, people seem to be well off.”
- Crime (6)
 - “Street crime and drug addiction. It will get worse in the rainy season and there will be more health care problems.”
 - “Crime makes it an issue. People have got to eat.”
 - “There are more crack heads and criminal activity.”
 - “I think it creates a stressful environment and people act out through crime.”
 - “It seems like there is increased crime and drug use.”
 - “Crime rates go up and people are not happy.”
- I don’t know (6)
 - “It’s such a big question, I couldn’t answer.”
 - “I don’t know, I’ve only been here for a few months.”
- It affects how Abbotsford is perceived (5)
 - “People come to town and see people pushing shopping carts.”
 - “It makes the community look bad, because there are people on the street.”
 - “It’s not good as far as appealing to visitors to Abbotsford.”
 - “It affects every city – it shows a lack of compassion in the city as a whole.”
 - “It affects what we look like and what we stand for.”
- Poverty in Abbotsford is increasing due to the Olympics. (4)

- “It’s increasing in certain areas, especially with the Olympics forcing people out of Vancouver.”
- “It’s getting worse, due to the Olympics.”
- “The homeless getting kicked out of Vancouver will have a trickle down effect.”
- “Really bad – the government won’t do anything all the money is going to the Olympics and the war in Iraq.”
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- Drugs (4)
 - “Drug users increase crime and lack social responsibility.”
 - There are crack heads in the community.
 - “I know that there are a lot of programs. There’s drug dealing going on and that’s part of the problem.”
- No change over the last year (4)
 - “It’s been this way my whole life.”
 - “I just arrived, I haven’t seen much change.”
 - “I have lived here a year, and there has been no big change.”
- Housing is an issue (4)
 - “Rent should be cheaper.”
 - “I think poverty here is more related to housing, it’s especially hard for bigger families.”
 - “How can anyone with children afford a home, you have to be a two person working family, and even then it’s hard.”
- Not enough services (3)
 - “There are not enough services here, it’s getting worse as the population expands.”
 - “Need to make more places for people to sleep.”
 - “The underdeveloped skills have lead to compulsive behaviours, we need more resources.”
 - “I moved away cause there’s not enough help or resources here.”
- There have been positive changes over the last year (3)
 - “I’ve seen less [homelessness] now.”
 - “Some positive – but there should be more.”
 - “It’s getting better by a little bit.”
- Poverty affects the whole community (3)
 - “It affects everybody, most have a tendency to have a dualistic thought that it affects only them, but this is not true.”
 - “It affects the community in every single way you can imagine, social, spiritual, financial and environmentally There is increased crime and immorality of every variety. It doesn’t reflect well on society in general.”

- “Increased social disorder. When there is any portion of our population living below poverty it’s going to cause shit and disturbance.”
- Lack of Dignity (3)
 - “It’s demeaning and demoralizing. It takes the spirit out of people. It creates moral depression to a point that it creates criminality. You have to have something to survive on, and if you can’t get it normally you talk yourself into taking what you need.”
 - “Not having a place to live, eat, take care of family. The embarrassment of being poor.”
 - “It’s a mind set effect, instead of being upbeat and growing, it’s ‘I haven’t worked for months etc.’ and that mind set translates into other issues.”
- Prices are going up. (2)
 - “Twenty years ago, it was cheaper, it was nothing like this.”
- Other
 - “It’s not good for any community – it lowers moral.”
 - “Poverty is everywhere.”
 - “It’s an issue of social expectation. There’s a failure of political decision making because the population wants something else.”
 - “I think there are a lot of people who don’t know, it’s hidden in back alleys.”
 - “The homeless make downtown a depressing place, but if you look at Vancouver our problems disappear.”
 - “You don’t want to walk around anymore.”
 - “People treat [poverty] as an annoyance.”
 - “Lately it’s turning into someplace I wouldn’t want to raise a child. I like Abbotsford but I don’t want to raise kids here. Beautiful little town and it’s destroying it”
 - “For Abbotsford it’s a bigger problem then they realize. I appreciate the work and compassion of the Food Bank. It will get worse before it gets better.”
 - “It shouldn’t be an issue – there is lots of work that needs to be done, they could have a cleaner city.”
 - “It’s a huge issue that needs to be addressed. Those on welfare have a difficult time getting a job. There needs to be another step between welfare and work.”
 - “Compared to Calgary poverty is spread out. There are not congregations of the poor.”
 - “Single mothers that are in poverty – it affects their life and children.”
 - “Lack of education keeps people in poverty, and keeps them in crime.”
 - “It creates bullying, and the exclusion of kids.”
 - “People who can’t afford food and find jobs.”

- “Abbotsford is religious and tries to take care of their own.”
- “I feel sorry – as society has failed them. But I think we are a rich country. We need to take people by the hand.”
- “Issues of social responsibility, and how we address them through provincial, municipal, and federal taxes.”

3. What efforts do you think you/ the community could make that would have the biggest impact on reducing poverty in Abbotsford?

- Affordable Housing (18)
 - “Build facilities where they can have a meal, and a shower, get a start and have a chance at getting a job.”
 - “That’s a dilemma, housing is a priority, but if we provide housing people from other communities will come here.”
 - “Open more shelters, affordable housing. In reality it’s not that many people, maybe a few thousand.”
 - “Housing, since once you have housing and an address you can get welfare.”
 - “Lower rent.”
 - “More low cost housing. Preference should be given to building on empty land, not tearing down old houses. The old houses have the cheapest rent, but they tear them down and put up condo’s that no one can afford.”
 - “Make places cheaper.”
 - “Supply better, cheaper housing”
 - “Government should have more affordable housing.”
 - Affordable housing for those on disability.
 - “Encourage more people to have basement suites. For example encourage renos.”
 - “Lower house prices.”
 - “More subsidized housing, I’m on a wait list and have been for a year.”

- Create jobs / Employment (16)
 - “Encourage industry to move here, make it real job creation.”
 - “Increase the organizations that create volunteer opportunities, especially work experience.”
 - “That’s difficult to do, but expand ‘entry level’ workforce opportunities. There’s great potential in this, but it’s not seen as economically viable.”
 - “Making more jobs picking up debris should be available to the homeless. It would keep our parks and roadsides clean. No one should have a free ride. Giving people a job will increase their self esteem.”
 - “People should have to find a job.”
 - “Give them a job instead of EI.”

- “Help all these people, plus myself, find jobs. I can see things that need to be done. People could even work in teams.”
 - Better employment schools and services
 - “Induce industry to locate here.”
 - “People should work for food and shelter in some way, so they are doing something.”
 - “Better job opportunities, some people always get preference.”
 - “Lots of companies don’t want to hire someone with out experience, but then how can you get experience.”
- Shelters (9)
 - “Homeless shelters are controversial, but they could be a way.”
 - “The government should provide more homeless shelters. There’s got to be more money. Schools that are being closed could be used. Services need to be central for people. A lot are helping out, but it’s not enough.”
 - “Build shelters. I think the closed down A&B Sound should be turned into a soup kitchen. It’s in the area where a lot of the homeless are.”
 - “More shelters, we don’t have many. Open more for youth and adults.”
 - “Make homeless shelters, they should have used the hospital.”
- Food Banks and Clothing Drives (8)
 - “More involvement from fundraising for food and food banks. Those resources can be moved towards giving to the community.”
 - “Open more food banks, more charities, encourage people to donate stuff that they don’t need instead of throwing it away.”
 - “The food bank should be more central.”
 - “The community should be more involved. I went to the food bank and there was nothing there.”
 - “The community should be more involved. I went to the food bank and there was nothing there.”
 - “They need a room, a place to eat, some dignity. People can even help out by bringing them coats, backpacks, gloves and scarves. A lot of people need stuff like that – the basics. There aren’t even enough places for people to keep a shopping cart. A lot don’t have family and need some support for everyday life.”
 - “I don’t understand why Safeway doesn’t do more for the food bank. They throw out meat on its expiry day - that meat could be given to a soup kitchen or frozen and given to the food bank.”
- I don’t know. (7)
 - “That’s a tough question with no simple answer.”
- More outreach and (undefined) programs (6)
 - “More funds for outreach, give the tax payers something they can be proud of supporting.”

- “There should be more programs available, though sometimes it gets abused. It’s everywhere. I think the Salvation Army and the local churches have been doing well. We should all do a little bit.”
 - “I know there are already community services and they do try, but our population is growing and the aid should too.”
 - “Help get people off the street.”
 - “It’s obvious – but it’s not going to happen – we need more money into programs that help people who live who live on the streets. That’s all. That’s going to help, more funding rather than less.”
- Education (5)
 - “Education. Lots resort to drugs because it’s all they know, they don’t know there’s a different way of life.”
 - “Education, since some poverty is brought on by themselves, education is important.”
 - “I wonder if there’s anything that can be done. Throwing money at the problem or forcing people to get help doesn’t seem to solve the problem. I think the solution is education and teaching people to read. Lots of poverty is caused by not being able to read.”
 - “Encourage people to study.”
 - “Create a stronger outcall to student to go to school. School is a right. If they don’t use it they’re putting themselves at risk. You can’t live on minimum wage. Parents need to be a strong support system while their kids go to school.” (1)
- Government Involvement or Change (5)
 - “Some form of government incentive.”
 - “Get rid of Gordon Campbell.”
 - “A better liaison between the lazy community and the lazy government.”
 - “Change the core of the central government because without a core of central legislations it won’t happen. Money is being spent on war and technology, rather than feeding the poor and bringing the necessities of life back to the community. Rather than having a big bail out, why not bail ourselves out. There’s got to be a way to remove the negative elements. The heart of the people has to change – a spiritual change. We’re all about ourselves, all about the money, all about the drugs. That has to change.”
 - “Stop the stupid political jargon. We need the solution to be broader than just the city.”
- Change attitudes / Increase awareness (5)
 - “Poverty is something that’s part of any community, but we need to change attitudes so that people look.”
 - “Quash the perception of poverty, put the emphasis on children. We can be poor individuals but rich citizens.”

- “Actually give a shit. It’s Abbotsford, a lot of uptight Christian people who preach compassion and then shoo the homeless away. For example they shut down the guy who was feeding the homeless in the park.”
- “People need to be educated about where street people come from. If they could be viewed as a child or parent they would be relatable and people would want to help.”
- “Needs to be public awareness about what groups can help. There should be community drives to help with the food bank. We need more awareness and action.”
- You can’t force people to accept help (3)
 - “It’s really difficult, since some have mental problems and don’t accept help. They need more services.”
 - “There should be a place for those who live on the streets, if they are able to accept help. Some can’t and it’s tough.”
 - “We have – there is the issue of human rights, you can’t force people into shelters – but some can’t make decisions. You have to take them by the hand and guide them to the resources.”
- Skill development and resources. (3)
 - “People need help to try to break the cycle. Cooking classes would help, if people ate properly the kids wouldn’t be hungry, and would learn better and break the cycle. There are so many young women who don’t know how to cook, and they’re the ones raising the kids.”
 - “People need a hand with organizational skills, coping skills, lots don’t have a grandmother they can go to for common sense advice.”
- Work with the Churches / Increase the outreach of Churches (3)
 - “Churches are an underused resource; they have the space for 400 people that only gets used once a week. They should let in ‘God’s children’ use the churches and follow in their teachers footsteps.”
 - “Churches don’t have nearly the outreach – they offer lip service and then think they’re going to heaven.”
 - “Continue to provide as much as can be done. The food bank and church are very involved.”
- Addiction Services (3)
 - “I think addictions need to be addressed, I’m not being judgemental, but I see a lot of folks who with alcohol and drug issues.”
 - “More help for the mentally ill and drug addicts.”
- Health and nutrition (2)
 - “Invest in practices which create good health as people grow up. Make the community aware of proper nutrition, reduce mental, physical abuse. Address the roots. Economically I have no answers.

Compassion plays a role, but at a certain point people have to be independent, or people will just live off the system.”

- “Breakfast and lunch programs at schools, good nutrition is important for the kids to learn.”
- Increase welfare rates (2)
 - “Increase welfare to those with children.”
 - “Welfare says that they’re giving enough money to survive, but it’s not enough to survive. They need to lower rents and raise welfare rates to what’s available in the city. The money should be the same as what’s generally available in every city, not just the lowest rent they can find.”
- More affordable daycare. (2)
- Increase pensions. (2)
 - “Raise pensions. The government gives themselves raises.”
- Improve Transit (2)
 - “More jobs and buses. It’s hard to get to jobs when the buses don’t run.”
 - “Increase transit, so people can work.”
- Other
 - “It’s common everywhere – even if you bring in more shelters. There needs to be rehabilitation programs.”
 - Free doctor and dentists.
 - “I can’t take the survey, I work 16 hour days. I don’t even have time to sleep.”
 - “Not much.”
 - “More free activities like bbq’s and pancake breakfasts.”
 - “Community efforts should avoid just giving money. There should be communication and involvement.”
 - “If I wanted more money on disability I would have to get a divorce from my wife. But we’ve been married twenty years, I don’t want a divorce.”
 - “That’s a tough one. I know in Vancouver there are places to eat all the time. We need more places to eat for free.”
 - “Less money needs to be spent on the cosmetics of the community, and more money needs to be spent on helping people. There should be a way to foster a homeless person, because people look down on the homeless.”
 - “You know that scene in Batman, when the Joker throws money out of the window, that’s what we need.”
 - “There are lots of homeless children. Some of that is due to the regulations that prevent people from becoming foster parents. For

example if you have a big dog or smoke, or don't have an empty room. The logic is stupid, these may be an issue, but it's minimal compared to the need."

- "Shelters have too many rules, for example they won't let people bring in their shopping carts, and there is nowhere to park them."
- "For everyone to get involved. It's not singular, it affects everyone. Insurance rates, cars getting broken into, etc. How healthy we make society is how healthy we will be."
- "Long term, we need social programs that will make people feel better, such as increased education, and up the standards and the norm. Short term, we need to contribute to the food bank, but it's a band aid solution. We need more social inclusion."
- "It's hard to do anything because if you create an area for one social class it will breed crime and social problems. It would become an underworld."
- "If you reduce poverty you will just be changing the definition. I mean, what's poor here is rich in a lot of countries."
- "Quit wasting money on bike lanes, and build shelters and support the food bank. I never see any bikes in the bike lanes, it's such a waste."

4. What would you do to engage the community about the issue of poverty?

- Media campaign (12)
 - "Articles in the local paper and a community forum."
 - "I would show them images, people love a perfect image, for example a children's park covered in homeless and the message "if you don't want this ... help."
 - "Graphic images and a good solid campaign."
 - Twitter.
 - "Put large ads in the newspaper to attract people."
 - "Media advertizing and TV commercials."
 - "Advertize better – get it out on all the news stations and newspapers, and not just the local ones."
 - Organize people, put pamphlets on doorsteps, and go on TV and talk to people.
 - "Have a rally, get news and media attention. Influence people on the issues."
 - "You should have people come out and talk to the public, like this survey."
 - "Find a way that people just can't shrug it off."
- I don't know. (11)
 - "I don't know – I guess if my neighbours were poor I would help them."
 - "I don't know, it will always be a problem."

- "I don't know, do something, create more services."
- Increase general awareness (9)
 - "Make people more aware, it's quite hush, hush in Abbotsford. We don't hear about it."
 - "A lot of people don't want it thrown in their face, they want good news stories. Programs can't be expected to solve all the problems. It must start at the grass roots. We need to make people more aware, change their awareness, that it's not a hopeless cause. Open up their minds."
 - "Education, if everyone is more aware it will be better, but you have to step beyond education and actually do something."
 - "Education. Let the community know what it is, what the issues are: lack of jobs, minimum wages. When people know they will help."
 - "Show them the damage [poverty] has done."
 - "Somehow put it out there to the church organizations, the food bank, go around talking to people."
- Events (7)
 - "Have a fundraiser, free bbq, and make them aware. Try to get the community aware."
 - "Have an event, with an open bar and a buffet dinner."
 - Rallies.
 - A demonstration.
 - "Find a fun way to get people involved, make the fundraisers fun, like a carnival."
 - "Start having town meetings"
 - Set up a fundraiser.
- Have people spend time with those in poverty (6)
 - "Volunteering more for the food bank, get to know them and discover that they have worth. Middle class people have an idea that "this is my money, I worked for it".
 - "I think they should see the reality, walk more in the street to see what's going on."
 - "Take people downtown to talk to the homeless."
 - "Bring harsh realities to them, make people have to go downtown and help people on the streets and in the food lines. Even if they are kicking and screaming they might learn something."
 - "People should go out as a group to learn about [the homeless]. I try to help, but there is so many of them. They live rough, and could use socks, clean underwear, and a shaver."
 - "Bring the bigwigs down to the poverty level so they can see what it's like."
- Put a face on poverty (5)

- “Make understand that it’s not just something related to drugs, there are single moms and poverty traps.”
 - “Get a figurehead on the news. There should be campaigns to get them to know what it looks like and why people end up where they do. The expected role of women as caregiver plays a role in it. Single moms are usually under the poverty line.”
 - “People need to understand Bill C-384, and understand that a lot in poverty have disorders or dysfunctions.”
 - “Put a human face on it, get average people to relate as human beings – the poor aren’t horrible people.”
 - “Make them aware, stop using terminology. Tell people why they’re on the street and the reason they have to go through dumpsters – they don’t want to.”
- Food bank / Clothing drives. (5)
 - “Poverty is growing. Abbotsford is still not so bad, but before it increases we need to be more proactive. There should be food donation boxes, but they are not being made use of because those in poverty don’t want to.”
 - “Empower groups, for example in one neighbourhood the Real Estate Agents would do a blanket drive and get free advertizing. If people volunteer time the media could volunteer coverage, there should be some kind of incentive.”
 - “Continue to involve people in the services through the food bank, the United Way, give the support that is needed.”
 - “We should donate clothes and food, rather than money, which gets spent on drugs.”
- Teach children about poverty (4)
 - “We need to add poverty to the school system, so that kids understand.”
 - “Get people involved through the schools. When children get involved the parents and grandparents will get involved.”
 - “Social events that will get schools involved.”
 - Start in the schools, maybe kids can talk to their parents, or grow up and be compassionate. Kids are very influential.”
- Lobby government officials. (4)
 - “Petition to get a homeless shelter.”
 - Petition MLA’s.
 - “Go to town meetings.”
- Job Programs (3)
 - “No one ever thinks to put the homeless to work. Hire them to build their own homes. If a fourteen year old kid can push a wheelbarrow, I’m sure the homeless can. We would find out who wants help.”

- “More social programs and job retraining.”
- “Have a designated place for people to go – the employment centre is useless – to get career counselling, with no fee for service.”
- You can’t make people care (2)
 - “The ones that care are already doing something, and what can you do about the ones that don’t care. I think something should be done on a neighbourhood rather than city wide scale.”
 - “I don’t think you can make people care.”
- Soup kitchens (2)
 - “Soup kitchens and places for people to sleep when it’s cold. We need more on a bigger scale. The Olympics will make it worse.”
 - “Food stations, like Love Abbotsford does, make sure they’re getting fed.”
- Increase organization (2)
 - “There are enough resources in this community, but it needs to be coordinated and organized.”
 - “Organize somehow.”
- Church involvement (2)
 - “Go to the church and make the pastor read the message.”
 - “This is a church community – see what they can do – they have the resources and the network.”
- Government action. (2)
 - “Take their taxes. Now people get a choice, with no choice we would have the funds to start projects.”
- Other
 - Teach people to manage their money.
 - Literacy programs.
 - “Get the people living in poverty involved. Their opinions should be considered.”
 - “Focus on children.”
 - “There should be a way of dealing with drug addictions that is not shameful. Maybe we should have a safe injection site.”
 - “We’ve screwed up our mental health system, so that people have gone from being functional.”
 - “Guilt them into caring.”
 - “I don’t know why people aren’t caring. The Sirius centre has been around for ages, but most people haven’t heard about it. It affects us all.”
 - “Not much. Public speaking engagements. Have the politicians, not give them a free ride, but give them jobs. We could pay them

minimum wage and reduce municipal spending. Give the person self respect.”

- “Take religion out of the whole equation.”
- “If you are impoverished your choices are a soup kitchen, EI, stealing, selling your body, selling drugs. We should give them a card that would give them entrance to the local pool, get them coffee and donuts, register them for a course to complete their GED. People who qualify should receive this card.”
- “Get the idea of ‘entry level’ jobs as a strength so that people can ‘move up’.”
- “The issue need not be politicized, solutions need to be realistic. It’s not about politics, religion, upbringing, education. Right now the system is failing. I don’t want a hand out – and when I come through this – I’m going to have more compassion to help those in need.”
- “There should be more links to the prisons, we can help the community. We are our own community.”
- “Money spent on the park should be spent on helping people. The city should spend money better.”
- “Waste, waste, waste... that’s what this town is good at.”
- “We need to crack down on the drug dealers.”
- “The second coming of Christ will be the only way people will reflect on their life. But we need the government to change. Regardless of how much you want it to change, it’s how much you allow it to change.”
- “The majority don’t want to work, that’s the trouble, that and poor parenting.”
- “Contact organizations, like the church, service providers, to talk to the provincial government, but we’re begging at their door too. Business is in a position to lure in an industry.”
- “Persuade people that the education is the key for all ages, to be successful both money wise and to be accomplished.”
- “Make a petition for homeless shelters.”
- “Number one, get people to reach out and take the services.”
- “Ask Abbotsford how they would like to get involved.”
- “People need to get together, and not be selfish. The whole world is selfish.”
- ‘Come up with ideas to help them, find out what the issues are.’
- “Statistics.”
- “Get rid of the politics. I hate to vote, it makes me feel like a hypocrite.”
- “There are no rec centers, there’s nothing to do out here.”