



Medicine Hat named recipient of 2015 Pollution Probe Award

Pollution Probe is proud to announce that Medicine Hat is the recipient of the 2015 Pollution Probe Award. The Pollution Probe Award, established in 2011, celebrates extraordinary achievement by individuals or organizations working toward positive, tangible environmental change and exemplifying in their work the values espoused by Pollution Probe.

Medicine Hat's efforts to end homelessness are an inspiring example of what can be achieved when local groups are empowered to make positive, tangible change. Pollution Probe believes that human health is at the core of sustainable development, and relies on communities, such as Medicine Hat, that are engaged, empowered and vibrant.

The award will be presented at this year's Pollution Probe Annual Gala on November 17 in Toronto. The Gala, entitled *Committed to Community*, celebrates community empowerment as the gateway to healthier living in a healthier environment. The award will be accepted by Jaime Rogers of the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS) on behalf of the community of partners, supporters and volunteers that contributed to the success of Medicine Hat's "housing first" initiative.

"We are honoured to recognize the Medicine Hat community for its exceptional efforts to end homelessness," says Stephen Damp, Chair of Pollution Probe's 2015 Gala Committee and Executive Vice President, Civil Division, EllisDon. "Within communities, human health and environmental health are deeply intertwined. By providing not only housing but homes, Medicine Hat is empowering its citizens to live healthier lives and thereby contribute to a healthier environment for all. It is a leader among leaders."

In 2009, Medicine Hat developed a five-year strategy to end homelessness joining six other cities in Alberta – Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Red Deer – that embraced the "housing first" philosophy at the core of the provincial plan to end homelessness by 2019. From 2009 to 2015, there have been 931 formerly homeless individuals housed in Medicine Hat, including 291 children.

Beyond helping individuals and families get back on their feet, Medicine Hat Mayor Ted Clugston, who proudly champions the work being done in his community, reports that "Interactions with emergency rooms go down, stays in the hospital go down, interactions with our paramedics and police go down." Medicine Hat is close to meeting its goal of ending homelessness by the end of this year.

"It's such an honour to be recognized as a community for the efforts that have been instrumental in moving us towards the bold target of ending homelessness," says MHCHS's Jaime Rogers. "We admire and are grateful to Pollution Probe for identifying and choosing to highlight the intrinsic and far-reaching value of this work. For our community, the work began with *believing* that it must be possible to end homelessness *as a way of life*. Confirmed by the results achieved to date, this belief continues to support the forward momentum toward our end goal. The 'housing first' model is used to build a system of care that fundamentally refuses to allow homelessness to take hold in our communities, which is the premise behind our Plan to End Homelessness. Maintaining that system of care will be our long-term responsibility."

Previous Pollution Probe Award recipients are the Dokis First Nation; astronaut and former Commander of the International Space Station, Colonel Chris Hadfield; renowned author and journalist, Jeffrey Simpson; and His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.

For more information about the Pollution Probe Gala and Award, visit:

<http://www.pollutionprobe.org/gala>