

ENGAGE

Homelessness

Hundreds walk for homeless at Coldest _____ of the Year

Christopher Poon
Now staff
Twitter @Questionchris

SURREY/WHITE ROCK — Hundreds turned out Saturday at locations in Surrey and White Rock to hit the pavement in the name of homeless prevention.

The event was the Coldest Night of the Year walk, a national movement that sees communities across the country take up the cause of fundraising for local homeless assistance and similar organizations. Locally, there were three walks held in Whalley, Cloverdale and White Rock.

The Whalley event was hosted by the Surrey Urban Mission and was raising funds for its shelter operations and outreach programs.

“The (Surrey Urban) mission is an extreme weather site and we accommodate 60 people overnight when the shelter’s open,” said Jonquil Hallgate, executive director at Surrey Urban Mission. “And that’s a fairly large contribution in the city because most of the other sites have 10 or 15 spaces so we are sort of the backup for the fact that there’s no winter shelter.”

In Whalley, 226 walkers raised \$41,710 or 83 per cent of their \$50,000 goal. However, that number is nearly double last year’s goal of \$25,000.

At the Cloverdale location, 178 walkers raised \$39,380 or 56 per cent of the \$70,000 goal. That walk was held by the Cloverdale Community Kitchen, which provides hot meals for the less fortunate in the area.

SOURCES Community Resources Society commanded the White Rock walk, with funds raised going towards its homeless prevention programs. The funds will be replacing part of the \$200,000 that was recently cut by the federal government. For the City by the Sea’s event, 248 walkers raised \$51,134, 63 per cent of their \$80,000 goal. Last year \$45,000 was raised from the same walk.

“We want to help people get stabilized so they don’t fall into the pit of homelessness because once that happens it’s a different ball game,” said Soraya VanBuskirk, advocacy programs manager for SOURCES. Donations are accepted up until March 31 and can be made online at coldestnightoftheyear.org.

cpoon@thenownewspaper.com