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and his girlfriend?
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The Leader

Friday
September 17, 2004

Serving Surrey and North Delta

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One of Surrey's needy people accepts a dish of food from a volunteer with the NightShift Street Ministry, an organization that continues to feed the homeless and poverty-stricken despite the lack of a permanent building from which to operate.

EVAN SEAL / THE LEADER

The hunger doesn't stop

KEVIN DAKIN
Staff Reporter

DAVE LOBS THE CRUSTS of his pizza to his dog Popeye, who happily gobbles them up. They're on hard times and need the meal. A food line in a grassy area of North Surrey is a well-come service.

Two years ago, Dave made a decent wage as a butcher at a Cloverdale meat plant, but the business shut down and he's been out of work since. Social assistance falls short of covering monthly bills, he

A group evicted from King George building now feeding people on the street

says, and groceries run out fast.

He's among about 60 others gathered under a tarp on a cold and damp Wednesday night in North Surrey, in a makeshift area to feed the city's hungry.

The NightShift Street Ministry was recently evicted from a building on King George Hwy. and now finds itself without a building to feed the

homeless.

The nightly meals must continue, says coordinator MaryAnne Connor.

So the group sets up in a public space, with full knowledge they could be shut down by the city or police at any time.

Connor will find out today (Friday) whether NightShift will secure

a permanent location in a Whalley commercial area.

Critics of the temporary arrangement say the homeless shouldn't be fed outside, where sanitary conditions can't be ensured. It also violates city's bylaws, which require the right zoning for such activity.

At least a couple of city officials aren't concerned, adding Connor is providing a needed service.

"She's someone who will do what she thinks is right and take it as far

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Hard times: No immunity

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as she can to keep people from going hungry," said Coun. Judy Villeneuve, co-chair of the Surrey Homelessness Task Force.

"And I admire her for that," Villeneuve said she'd rather see the hungry fed by Connor's group than scraping food from dumpsters.

Coun. Dianne Watts echoes Villeneuve's sentiments and says the number of hungry in North Surrey is worrisome.

There were three different operations feeding the hungry on Wednesday - the firefighters holding an event at the Front Room, a local church hosting a dinner, and NightShift.

There are upwards of 300 homeless in Surrey on any given night and many of the



Connor

comes, you start to think about how you're going to feed yourself," says Charlie, adding some of those ways aren't acceptable to area residents, businesses or police. Ralph points out no one is immune to hard times.

He ran a successful moving company and owned a Langley home with a pool just two years ago. Then he got hooked on cocaine and lost everything. He's clean now, but until a few days ago he was living in the back of his last moving van.

"I'm still poor as a church mouse," Ralph says, adding he and his girlfriend will probably need NightShift's help for a while.

Annie McKittrick, with Surrey Social Futures, says people typically pay all their bills

of groups feeding the homeless, including the Front Room Drop In Centre, NightShift, Surrey Food Bank and several faith groups.

McKittrick is working to organize the different services so there's little or no overlap and no gaps.

On any night, people should be able to get a meal, she says. MaryAnne Connor can be reached at 604-537-9543.

A list of food services can be found at <http://www.surreyfoodbank.org/food/>

Briere arrested on charge for pot

Former grower's license revoked after trial in Vancouver

DAN FERGUSON
Staff Reporter

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a former pot grower linked to the controversial Vancouver store that sells marijuana over the counter.

Vancouver Police Const. Sarah Bloom said officers seized "six pounds of marijuana and \$8,000 in cash" when they stopped Donald Briere's car Sunday in Vancouver.

Briere was on parole for 14 months of a four-year sentence for running a pot and smuggling operation.

Please see **MARIJUANA**

Healing ho

In this Sunday's

