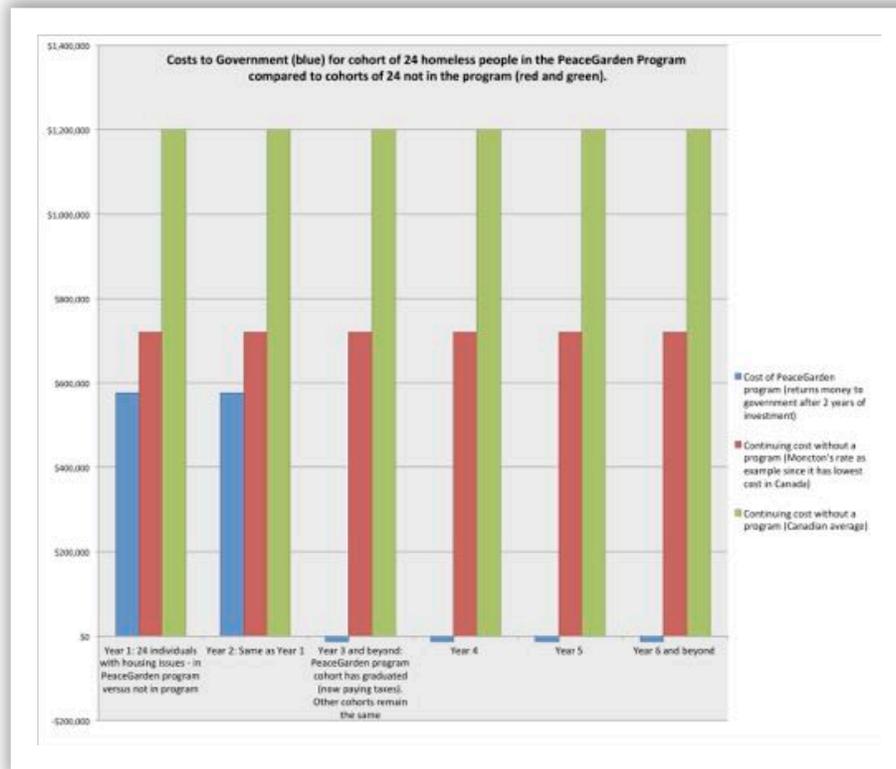


PeaceGarden Skills Development Community

Cost effective housing and training in New Brunswick – saves \$2.5 to \$5 million for every cohort of 24 participants. Savings increase over time and are cumulative.

Reduces Poverty.

Proposal by Deryk Houston and Elizabeth Wellburn



Deryk Houston and Elizabeth Wellburn, 1016 Verrinder Avenue, Victoria BC V8S 3T7

May, 2018

PeaceGarden Skills Development Community on the Miramichi River - Cost-effective employment training, restorative education, job creation, homefulness, connection, community engagement, farming, music and art. World-class destination. Non-denominational, open to all orientations. A hand up, not a hand-out!

Proposal

PeaceGarden Skills Development Community, operating as a charitable society, to purchase the fully-equipped, 86 acre Frank's Resort at 2655 Route 118, Miramichi. The facility will be repurposed, in partnership with New Brunswick businesses, to house participants, staff and live-in volunteers. It will run as a training and educational centre serving homeless and addicted people in a farm-oriented therapeutic community environment. *PeaceGarden* to negotiate their purchase of the property which is currently listed at \$1.6 million. Government to invest in the future of the community by funding fixed monthly costs of \$50,000./month to accommodate 24 participants, saving the government at least \$144,000. per year while participants are in the program. These calculations are based on 2017 data from Moncton NB (see footnotes at end of paper¹). New revenue, rather than ongoing costs, will come to the province from participants when they graduate from the program and the net benefit related to the initial cohort of 24 participants will be in the range of \$2.5 - \$5 million over the first six years. Note that actual savings are even greater because new cohorts would be formed approximately every two years and the benefits to government are cumulative. Also, the facility has the potential to serve 48 people and would gradually increase capacity. Also note that music and arts workshops for the participants and the broader community would be provided and would be self-funded and generate income.



- *PeaceGarden* will be a charitable organization in New Brunswick and will hire an executive director and staff (with input from NB government if the government so desires) and open a therapeutic farming and employment training community in Miramichi for homeless and/or addicted people to be combined with an art and music retreat.
- Various branches of the New Brunswick Government to commit to paying a total of \$50,000 month to house and serve 24 therapy participants at a cost of approximately \$2000 per person. Note that this is a significantly lower cost, even at the onset, when compared to “doing nothing” and after two years, each individual served will no longer be an ongoing cost but will instead contribute as a functioning member of society.
- Full funding is required in order for the model to work and would be carried by ministries that deal with Economic Development, Health, Tourism, etc.
- Specific training programs would be sponsored by the businesses that would benefit from them, for instance, the Sobeys chain of grocery stores has expressed interest in large-scale wholesale purchasing artisanal soap created by participants of the program.
- After a few years (no more than five), we expect a substantial decrease (reduction of at least 25%) in the required monthly funding from government as the *PeaceGarden* community becomes more self-sufficient. We will also continually reinvest in the project itself.

Benefits:

- Government saves \$2.5 to \$5 million from the first cohort of 24 participants. Savings are ongoing and cumulative.
- In the first year the NB Government saves at least \$144,000 to support 24 homeless individuals, compared to the costs of other supportive housing, substance use treatment, emergency and hospital admissions, police and justice-sector involvement and costs to social services.
- Savings to government increase every year as graduates of the program no longer cost the government anything - but instead become functional members of society who contribute skills, pay taxes, and live meaningful lives. Every participant who graduates saves the government approximately \$30000-\$50000 per year in perpetuity. After two years, the first cohort of 24 graduates will represent a savings to government in the range of \$720,000 to \$1.2 million PER YEAR. Savings are cumulative as more participants are accepted into the program.
- Respectable housing, appropriate training and a supportive environment are provided for homeless people. Provides skills and healing to homeless or addicted people so they may be integrated back into society. Provides a much higher level of service than is made available by existing facilities.
- Creates jobs and trains individuals for the type of employment that is required by New Brunswick (or other) businesses. Reduces poverty.
- Is a destination for tourists who may choose to volunteer as part of a working holiday.
- Works in conjunction with a community of vibrant volunteerism.
- Encourages young people to return to New Brunswick.
- Positive health outcomes are achieved. Having a home, nutritious meals and a consistent schedule of meaningful activities promotes physical and emotional health.
- Saves and changes lives. Homeless and addicted people are a very vulnerable population whose lives can be transformed if they have the opportunity to participate in a healthy community and learn to be self-sufficient.
- Allows the ‘pattern interrupt’ and supportive community environment for personal development that is proven to be successful.
- Encourages a new generation to recognize and love farming.
- Fosters self-worth, skills development, creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit.

- The arts are especially important in this program because creativity is the act of making something from nothing -- a process that is foundational to seeing ways around and through the problems of life.
- The therapeutic recovery method is recognized by the Canadian Federation of Therapeutic Communities Association
- Is cost effective because participants are involved in tasks such as maintenance of the premises, cooking meals, creating products to be sold in the market, etc.
- Music and arts workshops and camps create a broad community engagement (for instance, residents from seniors homes in the area could be bused in to the site for concerts or art classes) and the mixed use gives dignity to the community participants through a destigmatization of their environment.
- The local community benefits from space made available to conduct events, with a special focus on charitable and/or multicultural events.

After the first full year we would revisit the model and consider adding more participants. The facility can accommodate up to 48 participants. Income generated will be reinvested into the program.

We will track the success of participants by ensuring that follow-ups occur after individuals graduate from the program. When a potential participant expresses interest in the program, we will determine what goals they wish to achieve from the program, and the achievement of those goals, as well as the goals of a being a contributing member of society, free from substance abuse, will be included in our reports back to government.

We will work closely with New Brunswick businesses as partners to ensure that the training opportunities for participants are a good match to the needs of the province.

Some potential participants may first require a period of time in a detox program such as the ones provided by Addictions Services New Brunswick. Other potential participants may be referred from shelters or other sources. If there is a good match and we believe the individual can accomplish a reintegration into society and achieve their personal goals we will accept them. As they proceed we will note their progress towards their own goals as well as how they progress in their basic needs such as living with dignity, security and good health. When they leave the program, we will encourage them to stay in touch and we will invite them back for activities and dinners so everyone can see their success. If they need to return to the program, they will be welcome. Becoming a part of the community is a choice to be freely made by potential participants.

We have been volunteering at a similar farm near Victoria BC for the past five years, based on the San Patrignano model in Italy, which has a 72% success rate, one of the highest in the world!ⁱⁱ

Participants in the program develop skills through specific employment training and education. As well, they work on the land, helping with chickens, collecting eggs, growing plants in greenhouses, etc. They participate in preparing meals for the community, cleaning, maintenance, etc. They would also create woodwork and other arts, crafts and culinary products for sale in the farm market and at other outlets. The plan would be to ultimately grow more than half of the food required for the community.

Our goal is to create a stunningly beautiful world-class therapeutic and skills development community in New Brunswick also have musicians and artists from all over the world enroll for summer camps, classes and private lessons. There would be a focus on traditional arts from the region, including Aboriginal art and music as well as fiddling and folksong. Visual artists and crafters conducting workshops would be local people as well as some brought in from various parts of Canada. We would connect with organizers of events such as the Miramichi Folksong Festival and work with the organizers to coordinate our efforts in any way possible. Music and art has played a big part in our lives and we believe that it can change the world. The money raised would help with some of the ongoing costs of running the therapeutic program.

New Brunswick could play a part in this healthy and creative new solution to addictions and homelessness and help inspire young people back onto the land with employment training, high value crops and the arts.

Participants in the centre benefit in many ways. Essential work gets done by everyone in the program as they learn new skills while experiencing a sense of compassionate community that is fulfilling and sometimes completely new to them. Along with farming, crafts and outdoor exercise (and the feeling of helping a worthwhile project) there is the spiritual component of understanding that a homeless or addicted person's life can be turned around in the right environment. Volunteers benefit as well and are almost always grateful for the opportunity to be part of the community. Neighbours and tourists benefit from the offerings in the market and the art and music events. Opportunities for participants and others to learn or improve their French, English and/or other languages would be made available and guided conversational groups would be established.

Most participants in the community will stay for at least one year and occasionally longer. There would be no drugs or alcohol allowed. The healing takes place in a beautiful but simple way. *The community is the therapy!* Participants leave when they have acquired the skills and attitudes required to be functional members of the general community. The program will help them find employment, most often with the business partner who sponsored their training. The model gives people a reason to get out of bed in the morning as they create new memories filled with joyful moments such as the birth of the new piglets or mornings collecting warm, fresh laid eggs. Their restorative education leads them to a new life but graduates will remain connected to the program, returning as role models and guides for the new participants and allowing the program to record their successes.

Additional Information:

Frank's Resort has 24 joined wood cabin units and four beautiful, larger cabins, plus a 100-seat restaurant with full industrial kitchen, and several outbuildings on 86 acres of land. It would provide an ideal training opportunity for chefs, servers and others in the restaurant industry. Construction and building maintenance skills would be obtained through training in a workshop and through the real-world of the community caring for its own property. Farming and related high-value products can be produced on this site as well. There is ample space for expansion and room for summer music and art workshops. In this location, within three months of access to this property, we could easily provide housing and support for 24 participants who have been previously insufficiently housed and who will commit to a life free of drugs or alcohol. After one year of operation it would be easy to expand this.

We envision a soft startup of three months starting on January 1, 2019. Initially housing would be provided for 10 participants. From January-March, 2019, the first ten participants would

help in preparing the environment; organizing the living and work areas, etc. The complete program would be ready for 24 participants by April 1, 2019. Greenhouses would be installed once weather permits.



Photo of Frank's Resort – there is an additional 60 acres on the other side of the highway, not shown in this photo

Proposal

- *PeaceGarden* to purchase Miramichi property
- *PeaceGarden* to form partnerships with New Brunswick businesses to establish employee training opportunities
- Project to serve 24 therapy participants after a three month “soft” startup with ten participants.
- The New Brunswick Government (various branches including Health, Economic Development, Agriculture, Tourism, Opportunities NB, etc.) to commit to paying a total of \$50,000.00/month for five years to serve 24 therapy participants at a cost of approximately \$2000.00/month per person. Funding at this level would also be required during the three-month soft start up.
- The New Brunswick Government (or other partners) to fund the establishment of two greenhouses, equip the workshop and do general repairs in order to bring the facility on stream. (\$140,000.00)

First Full Year – Costs for housing and program for 24 participants (note that most costs represent money that will be spent in the local community.)

	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Mortgage	\$8500	\$102,000
Property Tax	3500	42,000
Insurance	2500	30,000
Live-in Staff (3 FTE at \$4000/month who are provided with room and board – at least two staff on the premises at all times)	12000	144000
Day Staff (1.5 FTE @ \$2600 mo)	3900	46,800
3 live-in volunteers - No cost other than food (included in food budget)	0	0
Food (30 @ \$16/day)	14400	172,800
Heat and light	3000	36,000
Truck lease	700	8400
Fuel and insurance for vehicle	700	8400
Legal, telephone, internet	600	7200
Maintenance and misc	1000	12000
Note: Music and art workshops will be self-supporting so no cost – ultimately they will generate revenue		
SUM	\$50800	\$609,600

- \$50800.00 for 24 participants equals a monthly cost of \$2100.00 per participant.
- We expect support from business partners and a market income to begin shortly after the first quarter and are estimating an average cost of around \$2000.00 per month per participant in the first year.
- Please see Appendix One, which shows how we expect to grow our income and be over 50% self-sustaining within in five years.
- Please see Appendix Two for the *PeaceGarden* Charter

Appendix One – Annual Income and self-sufficiency goals after the first two or three years

<p>Handcrafted Lavender Soap (marketed wholesale via Sobeys across Canada)</p> <p>Profit margin \$2/bar, 5 participants make 34 bars/day each =170 bars/day times 250 days per year = 42,500 bars. Times \$2 = \$85000</p> <p>There are 1500 Sobeys stores in Canada. If half of the stores carried the product, each would only have to sell 2 bars/week</p> <p>Note that this product would be an “introductory” manufacturing experience for the newer participants</p>	85000
<p>Handmade Wooden Crates and birdhouses – a beginning product for participants on the track to becoming woodworkers.</p> <p>Crates to be used for soap display etc. and will also be sold to local produce vendors etc (small scale distribution)</p> <p>3 participants make 5 crates/day = 15 crates times 250 days per year = 3750 crates. Profit margin is \$6/crate (and/or birdhouse)</p>	22500
Savings when 35% of participant’s food is self-grown	60000
<p>Chef School – restaurant partners pay \$4000 per student for training of 8 participants per year to become mid-level chefs (restaurant partners cover the costs of materials and instruction)</p>	32000
<p>Shed factory – profit margin of \$200/shed, Team of five participants to create 2 sheds/week for 40 weeks each year</p>	16000
<p>Adult Music Camp Workshops – 10 weeks for 12 students per week at \$500/week profit (after paying instructors etc.)</p>	60000
<p>Concerts (10 concerts/year - instructor/students as performers concerts. Average 50 tickets to the public each at \$10)</p>	5000
<p>Arts/Crafts Instructional Workshops – 30 weekends at \$80 profit/session times 10 students</p>	24000
Donations and grants	30000
<p>Craft Fair and Flea Market Tables – rent 20 tables during 10 concert events at \$30/table</p>	6000
<p>Coffee/Snacks/light meals at Restaurant – average \$80/day for 100 days (summer busy season) and \$20/day for 150 days (shoulder seasons)</p>	11000

Weekend Getaway Gourmet cooking class nights (e.g. vegetarian cooking for the moose hunter's partner) - 4 participant-run classes/year with 10 students at profit margin of \$25. each	1000
Weddings, Family Reunions, etc (catered and on the property) – 5/year at \$3000 each	15000
ANNUAL TOTAL REVENUE	\$367,500

Monthly Total Revenue (average) $367500/12 = \$30,600$

These calculations work out to approximately 60% of the costs – year round. This is a conservative estimate since there is potential for many other activities given the population and the property. For instance, a market stand on the property would allow the sale of excess produce, soap, crafts etc. at better-than-wholesale prices. There is potential for a very lucrative crop of mushrooms in the wooded area of the property. Partnerships with organizations such as “Habitat for Humanity” might be established to restore homes in the local community and profits would be reinvested. The restaurant is equipped to serve much more than the snacks that are included in this estimate, and as the number of visitors increases, the restaurant could generate more profit. Campsites could be created and much more.

Appendix Two: The Charter

This simple, yet powerful, charter guides our work and serves as the compass in decision making around Community Design, Training and Farming Philosophy and Community Development.

~~~~~

**Our Vision:** To enfold homeless people back into community by giving them housing, along with the training, support and tools needed to reclaim their self-worth

**Our Mission:** To provide the encouragement, method and practical skills to help them realize meaningful and productive lives

**Our Values:** Accomplishment, Honesty, Respect, Love, Loyalty, Compassion, Integrity, Honour, Dignity, Support, and Celebration

**Our Imperatives:** A hand up, not a hand-out; Respect to each individual; Acceptance, Empathy, and Understanding

---

<sup>i</sup> <http://ontario.cmha.ca/news/new-study-highlights-cost-of-homelessness/> Moncton costs per homeless individual are currently the lowest in Canada at \$30,000/year, however, homeless individuals in Moncton are **not** well-served and facilities are inadequate. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/moncton-homeless-1.4493520> . As the problem increases, costs will also increase and it is entirely possible that much higher figures, closer to the \$56,000/year seen in other Canadian cities will eventually be the norm in New Brunswick. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/opinion-jino-distasio-homelessness-housing-first-1.4341552>

<sup>ii</sup> San Patrignano program. <http://www.globaldrugpolicy.org/Issues/Vol%206%20Issue%201/Decide%20a%20Drug%20Free%20Approach%20to%20Treatment.pdf>