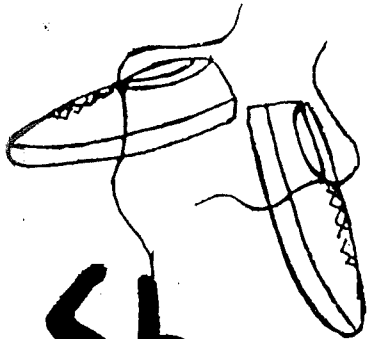
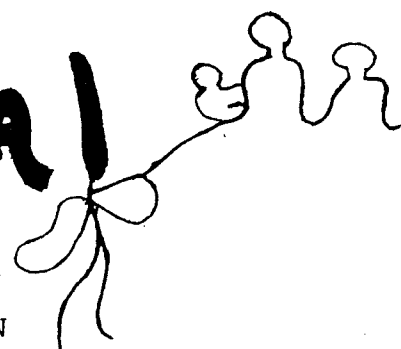




Shoestring Survival

...A PRODUCTION OF
THE ANTIGONISH SINGLE MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION



INSIDE

MANIFESTO

- 2) CHANGES TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
- 3) "MY MOM'S STORY"
QUIPS
- 4) SAVE OUR CHILDREN'S TEETH
BILL OF RIGHTS
- 5) KIDS KORNER
- 6) KIDS KORNER CON'T
- 7) LETTERS
INVITATION

We are "low-income" people. We are the women, men and children of the Antigonish area who fight a war against poverty. We are the secret service - secret because we fight this war that only we (and a few other concerned people) are aware of. Our ammunition is information, education, friendship, personal strength, and self-respect. We are not equally armed, and we are not adequately armed, but we have no choice but to go on dodging the bullets of discrimination, criticism and lack of understanding. We have no choice but to suffer encounters with the land mines of cheques not arriving in the mail and services being cut off because the bill wasn't paid on time. Worst of all is the big bomb - running out of food money - having to swallow your pride and go beg for money or food.

Why do these things happen to us? Is it unemployment? an inhumane minimum wage? men who abandon their children? childhood abuse that scars the spirit? lack of education? The reasons are many and sometimes they bog us down, but sometimes we have to take a long, hard look at them, and deal with them, if we can ever hope to rise above.

Shoestring Survival will help us to look at these issues. It will allow us to exchange information and learn from each other. It will help us to regain our self-respect and our strength. It will educate the people who are concerned about poverty and it's root causes. It will help us learn how the battle can be won when we combine our efforts.

CHANGES TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Changes have been made recently to both the provincial, (Family Benefits) and municipal, (Town & County of Antigonish & District of St. Mary's) social assistance programs. These changes affect food allowances and prescription drug costs.

As of July 1, 1991 the municipality has increased the amount of money given to social assistance recipients for food. The municipality has used 1988 Family Benefits rates as their guide. The good news about this is that now, the ages of children are considered when the food budget for the family is calculated.

Here are the new rates:

0-6 years old	\$66	per month
7-12 " "	\$82	" "
13-18 " "	\$103	" "
over 19	\$113	" "

Childrens' ages were not considered in the old policy, so that a parent of two teenagers would receive the same monthly amount as a person with very small children. That amount would have been \$165! A person with two teenagers would now receive \$319. The bad news is that according to Agriculture Canada it would actually cost \$382.92 to feed that type of family.

Family Benefits food rates have also gone up. As of August 1, 1991 the food rates are:

0-6 years old	\$83	per month
7-12 " "	\$110	" "
13-18 " "	\$131	" "
over 19	\$124	" "

Another good development in the Family Benefits program is that as of September 1, 1991, all single parents will be covered for most of their prescription drug costs. It has been a long struggle for welfare rights groups like LINC, (the Low-income Network Committee), and many people have suffered during the long wait. Also, these benefits do not apply to the working poor, or people on other low incomes.

Unfortunately, there has been no adjustment to shelter rates in Antigonish. There is still a \$400 per month maximum which is supposed to include utilities. Studies done in the past couple of years by non-profit groups in Antigonish have shown that it is just about impossible to find a two or three bedroom apartment or house for less than \$550 per month when utilities are included. Many people live in very unhealthy conditions.

Can the average person do anything about problems with the local social assistance system? Any citizen may call or write to their federal, municipal, or provincial political representatives. If you aren't sure about which level of government is responsible for whatever you wish to discuss, just contact any public representative, and they will put you on the right track. These people are your elected politicians and they are almost always very easy to talk to. Getting together with people who share your concerns is another effective way to make change. Many community agencies keep abreast of what is happening in the community in the way of support groups or action groups. Contacting these agencies is an excellent way to get up-to-date information. Don't just grumble - rumble!

WHEN YOU GET TO THE END OF YOUR ROPE...

MY MOM'S STORY!

I am a 58 year old widow and my children are all grown and out on their own. My food, heat, lights, water, taxes and phone has to come out of the \$376.00 I receive a month. I can't work anymore and I find it very hard to live on this amount of money.

Nine years ago when my husband was sick I had to quit my job to be with him. I travelled by bus to Halifax, to stay with him for 6-7 weeks at a time. I asked for help from welfare but they refused.

At one point my husband needed a heater because the floor was cold. I asked Social Services and again they refused to help. I then called the M.L.A. and my husband had a heater the same day.

I had to stay with my husband for 125 days ub Halifax while he was being treated for cancer. His ambulance ride to Halifax cost me \$50. I found it very hard. Our doctor told us about the Cancer bank and I received a little help from them.

With the help of a lawyer, I was finally allowed \$100 a month from welfare while my husband was sick. When my husband died the \$100 a month stopped. Family and friends helped moneywise, that was how I survived.

Then I had to get a lawyer to work for me again. While one of my children was in school, welfare would pay \$225 a month. Out of that I paid for my home, bills and groceries.

I was cut off of welfare when my last child finished school. I was then receiving \$180.85 C.P. or widows allowance. Again I had to get a lawyer to help me. He helped me get another \$191 a month which I recieve now.

Over the years, with the help of M.L.A. I was able to get a few grants to have repairs done to my home. I couldn't afford to keep my car so now I have to pay a taxi or depend on friends.

At Christmas time I receive some help which makes it a little easier for

When you look at the \$376 I survive on you have to sit and wonder how many other people out there live the same way. I live like this from month to month. No one can live on this kind of money. It is very hard but I do my best.

People who have good jobs don't know how lucky they are.

Thank you for listening to my story.

Anonymous

I'D RATHER BE 40 THAN PREGNANT!

I WANTED TO GO OUT AND
CHANGE THE WORLD...

BUT I COULDN'T FIND
A BABYSITTER.

Why is it that there's always so much month left
at the end of the money?

BEHIND EVERY GREAT WOMAN IS A WHOLE
COMMUNITY TELLING HER SHE'S WRONG.

Every mother is a working mother.

SAVE OUR CHILDREN'S TEETH

As of June 1, 1991 the care of our adolescents' teeth is no longer covered by MSI!! As soon as they turn 12, coverage stops. Some of our children don't even have all their permanent teeth or a well-established concern for the importance of their teeth by this age.

A checkup and cleaning alone for an adolescent runs from \$42 - \$54 and if fluoride and xrays are added - up to \$77. There is no provision in Family benefits for necessary dental care and Municipal assistance will only cover an emergency extraction!

What child can concentrate on schoolwork while suffering from toothache due to untreated dental caries?

The "powers that be" have finally come come up with a Pharmacard for Prescription Drugs. Don't our children deserve to have Basic Dental Care? at least checkups, cleanings and restorations?

An insignificant few are lucky enough to be covered under their father's dental insurance. Is it fair to all the rest not to be given the chance to take care of their teeth?

A child's self-image and self-worth is largely influenced by how she/he feels others see her/him. Their self confidence should not be undermined by lack of funds for necessary dental care.

We owe our children to push for dental care!

by Judi Johnson

MY BILL OF RIGHTS

I HAVE THE RIGHT

- TO RESPECT, TRUST AND LOYALTY
- TO MAKE DECISIONS AND CHOICES
- TO EXPRESS MY OPINION OR REMAIN SILENT
- TO BE ME
- TO PRIVACY
- TO SAY "NO" AND NOT FEEL GUILTY
- TO BE WRONG
- TO EXPECT CO-OPERATION FROM OTHERS
- TO HAVE MY NEEDS CONSIDERED
- TO CONFIDENTIALITY
- TO BE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY

" FOR EVERY RIGHT I HAVE, SOMEONE ELSE HAS THE SAME RIGHT"

"RIGHTS BRING RESPONSIBILITY"