

year-old sister and his mother joined him for the ride.

As junior chief for the day, William also received a variety of prizes including a hat, an MP3 player, a watch and firefighter bunker gear specifically made to fit him. The Grade 6 student also spent time with Chaput and other members of the department.

William said he entered the contest

"just for the fun of it." Becoming a firefighter when he is older has crossed the boy's mind and Thursday's experience helped shed some light on what the career involves, he said.

"It's been fun. I like it," he said. Dave MacMullen, senior fire prevention officer, said this is the first time the department held the contest. With 80 entries received, it proved popular among

children between the ages of eight and 12, he said.

"We can get the public fire-safety education out there and it's fun for the winner," MacMullen said.

"This might encourage someone to think about becoming a member of the service when they get older and we get good exposure."

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Meeting to address affordable housing

By Stephen Petrick

THE INTELLIGENCER

A good home is hard to find for anyone on a low income in Belleville, social workers say.

But a coming event should give community agencies and residents a better understanding of how to address the affordable housing shortage here.

The Affordable Housing Action Network is hosting its third-annual community forum Nov. 20.

The event, which coincides with National Housing Day, takes place from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Thomas' Anglican Church at 201 Church St.

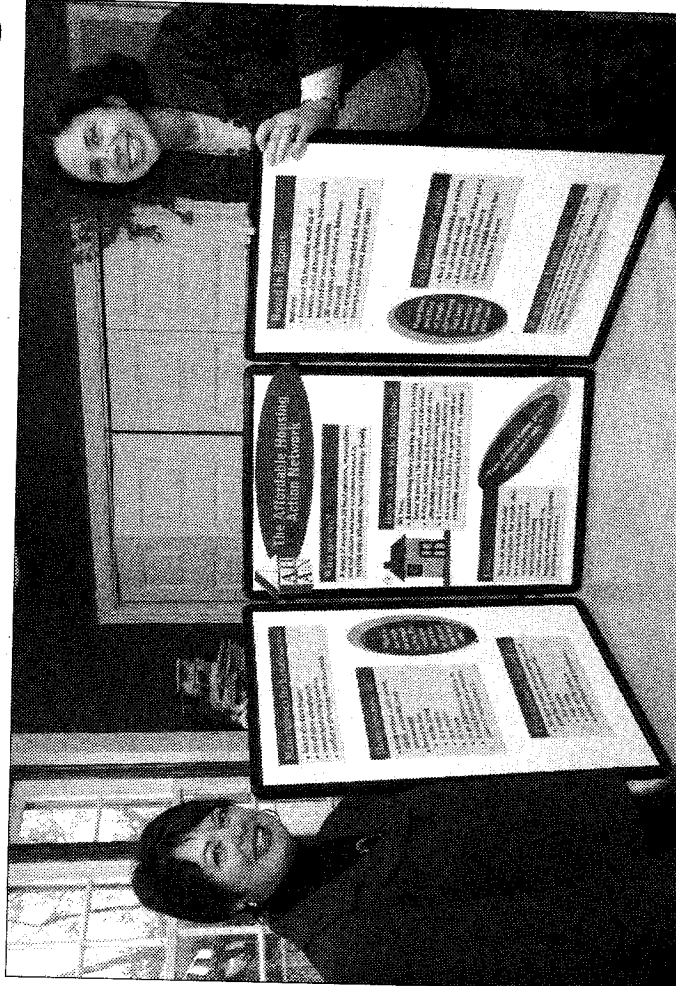
The free event features speakers from Hastings County's social service department plus keynote speaker Marvyn Novick, a retired Ryerson University professor, who founded the "25-5 blueprint for poverty reduction in Ontario."

The blueprint calls for Ontarians to reduce child poverty by 25 per cent over the next five years.

Organizers said it is ideal for tenants, landlords and generally anyone who hopes to see the housing situation in this region improve.

"There's a waiting list of over 1,000 for rent-geared-to-income housing," said Pam Murphy, the supervisor of non-profit housing at the Hastings County housing programs branch.

In fact, Reta Sheppard, a Hastings Housing Resource Centre worker, said 25 to 40 people see her every week for



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY STEPHEN PETRICK
Pam Murphy, left, and Carmela Ruberto show a display the Affordable Housing Action Network will have up at an event they are hosting Nov. 20 to raise awareness of housing issues.

help finding an affordable place.

"Market rent housing for anyone on a low income, or even a moderate income, is not affordable," she said.

Added Carmela Ruberto, a Hastings County social services programs manager, "you're either not buying food, not paying hydro or not paying rent. We've been hearing that for years."

The event, the women said, is an opportunity for social workers from various agencies to network with each other.

Those planning to attend should RSVP by Nov. 14. Call Derek McGeachy at 613-967-4734 ext. 227 or e-mail dmcgeachy@mentalhealthservices.ca. spetrick@intelligencer.ca