**Darren White, opening presenter sharing his personal story**

Darren has lived in Ontario since 1986 spending many years in Toronto before moving to Dufferin County in 2000.  Darren moved to Melancthon in 2004 where he now resides with his wife Teresa, his three kids, two daughters in law and 5 grandkids.

Darren has served on Melancthon Council and Dufferin County Council after first being elected in 2009 and has served as a councillor, Deputy Mayor, Mayor and Warden.  Additionally, Darren serves on many local boards and committees, working on initiatives such as drug awareness, County economic development, poverty reduction, anti-bullying initiatives as well as municipal collaboration among other things.

Darren also serves as a Captain in the Canadian Forces Reserves and currently holds the position of Commanding Officer of the Orangeville Cadet Corps where he tries to instill the values of positive self-image, citizenship, personal development, and fitness to local youth.  When he’s not doing all of that he works locally for a home renovations contractor.

In his spare time Darren try’s to enjoy the outdoors as much as possible camping, fishing and kayaking with his grandkids.

**Earl Phillips,** **Project Coordinator, SHIP, presenting An Example of Community Collaboration: “Working Together in Dufferin”**

Earl Phillips has a passion for community development and has worked with non-profit organizations for over 15 years.  Most recently he managed poverty reduction projects with Canadian interns in rural communities in South Africa, and coordinated a Youth Career and Community Resource Fair in Weston, Toronto.  Currently he is working at Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP) coordinating a poverty reduction project in Dufferin County, which aims to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness and other aspects of poverty.  This project is funded and supported through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Ontario Poverty Reduction Office.

Panel #1 – Reality Check on Poverty

**Darryl Wolk, Policy Analyst, OMSSA**

Darryl Wolk is the policy analyst with the Ontario Municipal Services Association (OMSSA).  Prior to working at OMSSA, he served in a policy role with United Way of Peel Region, Western GTA Summit and the Region of Peel to advocate for a fair share of social services funding for the high growth areas in the GTA/905. Darryl has experience working at Queen’s Park as a Legislative Assistant and ran twice in municipal elections in his home town of Newmarket.  He has worked on political campaigns at the municipal, provincial and federal level of government.  In 2008 he volunteered for Barack Obama’s campaign in the United States.  Darryl has ten years of government relations experience in the areas of social services, health care, energy, municipal affairs and poverty reduction.  He graduated with an MBA and undergraduate degrees in Commerce and Political Science.  He did his public relations internship with World Wrestling Entertainment at their Canadian office.  Darryl has been active in his community through Rotary, Lions, Community Living, Children’s Aid Society and the Legion.

**Katharina Wolff, Manager for Evaluation and Business Planning at the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office at the Ministry of Community and Social Services.**

Katharina is a dynamic leader in the public sector domain with a strong focus on strategic policy, government transformation, program operations, service delivery and IT development. Katharina focused much of her work on a signature $50 million Innovation Fund - Local Poverty Reduction Fund. She has spent the past 8 years specializing in performance measurement and evaluation frameworks and strives to boost evaluative thinking and capacity building within the public sector. Prior to joining the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, Katharina worked at the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and the Lawrence Centre for Policy and Management at the Richard Ivey School of Business.

**Kurtis Krepps, Ontario Works Manager, Dufferin County**

Kurtis works in Dufferin County Social Services and manages the Ontario Works program. Kurtis is passionate leader that understand the importance of poverty reduction.  Kurt addresses poverty issues on a regular basis and continues to drive social change where ever he can.

Panel #2 – Co-relates of Poverty in Dufferin County

**Cindy Harris, Community Living Dufferin**

Cindy Harris is a Direct Support Professional and has worked for Community Living Dufferin for 8 years, 5 years in the supported independent living department. Cindy supports individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities.

**Tim Smith, Canadian Mental Health Association**

Tim is a Program Manager for CMHA Peel Dufferin, responsible for services in Dufferin County. Tim is passionate about the provision of respectful, recovery oriented mental health services and equitable access to services for the people of Dufferin.

**Katherine Johnson, Manager, TeleCheck-Dufferin**

For over 20 years Katherine Johnson has supported vulnerable and marginalized women and men in the non-profit sector.

She has been a Front Line Crisis and Life Skills counsellor for women and children experiencing domestic abuse; facilitated a Drop-in Centre for Adults living with Mental Health and Addiction; and currently she is the Manager for TeleCheck-Dufferin, a daily call service that supports Adults 55+ who want to stay living in their own homes for as long as they can, with support. Her true passion is supporting people to have a voice in the system and be heard!

**Valencia Gaspard, PhD candidate and researcher**

Originally from small-town Ontario, Valencia Gaspard is a PhD candidate and researcher at the University of Guelph’s School of Environmental Design and Rural Development. Valencia’s respect for rural communities is the driving force behind her current work which is dedicated to better understanding the impacts of precarious employment in rural Ontario.

Outside of researching, Valencia can be found engaged with her local neighbourhood support coalition, cooking with seasonal ingredients, and adventuring outside.

Valencia holds a BHSc from Western University and an MSc in Rural Planning and Development from the University of Guelph.

Keynote Speaker – Ontario’s Income Security Reform

**Keith Palmer, B.A. B.ED, Director, Community Services, County of Dufferin**

Keith Palmer is the Director of Community Services in Dufferin County, and manages a portfolio consisting of Ontario Works, Social Housing, Children Services. Keith’s involvement in human services spans over two decades, originating with The Region of York in 1991. Keith has contributed to the municipal sector through a multitude of capacities.

Although Keith’s current responsibilities oversee various social programs, his roots remain well grounded in Social Assistance. Keith was selected to participate in a 12 month long project to formulate the Provincial Income Security Reform Roadmap.

Panel #3 – Supports to Lift People Out of Poverty

**Heather Hayes, Executive Director, Orangeville Food Bank**

Heather has always been closely attached to food and feeding others. From baking for farmers markets, to the raising Arctic Char as a fish farmer to managing kitchens she has enjoyed the gifts that come from bringing people to the table to share food. As her family required less of her attention she returned to her social service roots when she joined DCAFS in 2012 as a Service Coordinator for Developmental Support Services. In 2015 she had the honour of accepting the Executive Director position with the Orangeville Food Bank.

As a resident of the county for the last 25years she has worked closely with her community. Her work experience with community services and her time on municipal council has helped her understand some of the challenges faced by individuals living with inadequate resources.

**Adriana Bell, County of Dufferin, Community Services**

Adriana Bell is a Community Services Worker with the County of Dufferin, specializing in Housing.

**Nevada Roberts, Transitional Housing Manager, Choices Youth Shelter**

Nevada Roberts the Transitional Housing Manager for Choices Youth Shelter. She has been in this position for just over a year. Prior to that Nevada was the House Manager and Front Line staff for the last six years. Nevada sits on many tables and committees in the community and is an aggressive advocate for homeless and at risk youth.

**Janice Glassford, Housing and Transitional Support Counsellor, Family Transition Place**

Janice has been with the agency for 22 years, working in her current role for the last 14 years. She is also the counsellor for FTPs Second Stage Housing program.  Also a life time resident of Caledon-Dufferin. An advocate for women and their children in the areas of abuse and homelessness.  A member of CAB (Community Advisory Board) and a participant in community initiatives surrounding the issue of housing and homelessness.

**Pamela Parker-Follick,** **closing presenter sharing her personal story**

Pamela is the proud mother of 3 boys ages 19, 13 and 3. Lives in Mono and is a Social Worker that worked in Mental Health for 5 years before leaving to stay home with her youngest son.