



Berczy Park Encampment Eviction

One-year follow-up report

In September 2024, an eviction was enforced for those sheltering in a homeless encampment community established in city-owned Berczy Park in Barrie.

The County of Simcoe, as the homelessness service provider, provided resources for emergency shelters to make space to offer spots to those at Berczy Park.

Mayor Alex Nuttall, in his September 9, 2025, press conference to declare a homelessness state of emergency in the City of Barrie, indicated that of those evicted from Berczy Park, 12 “accepted help” and 9 of those are still “inside long-term housing,” noting that a “75% success rate” was “probably better than anything else we’re seeing.” The purpose of this brief follow-up report is to shed light on where those who were evicted actually are now, one year later.

In September 2024, there were approximately 25 individuals in Berczy Park. Over the last week, BHHJN asked multiple agencies and community support workers to assist with their updated status.

Current status of those 25 individuals:

Housed - 5 (Simcoe Terrace, Lucy’s Place, Paula’s Place)

Emergency shelter - 5 (one since April 2025, four accepted temporary spaces following eviction from the Mulcaster Street encampment last week)

Camping/sleeping outside - 12

Unhoused outside of the city - 1 (Orillia)

Lost contact/unknown - 2

These numbers are not static. For example, one woman returned to her family from Berczy, then spent time in a substance treatment centre, and is now back outside. One man found his own housing for a while but it was not sustainable and he is back outside.

Of the five people currently housed, one was already housed in August 2024 and was at Berczy to be with their partner (housing was for a single adult only), and four were only housed in the last six months through regular coordinated access system processes, not services offered as a result of the eviction.

When people remain outside, it is rarely because they are “too picky,” but because the alternatives offered are unviable, unsafe, or degrading: being separated from a partner, relocated away from their medical care, or placed in motels infested with bed bugs. Far from lacking standards, people weigh these limited choices carefully in the absence of safe housing.

While we recognize the challenge of offering stable housing to everyone in an encampment such as Berczy, we will hold the City of Barrie accountable for the way the “help” that is being offered is communicated to the public, to avoid further stigmatizing those experiencing homelessness.