

Displacement City

Fighting for Health and Homes in a Pandemic

Edited by Greg Cook and Cathy Crowe
Foreword by Robyn Maynard
Afterword by Shawn Micallef

What can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on the homeless population in Toronto? *Displacement City* shares the stories of frontline workers, advocates, and people living without homes during this unprecedented crisis.

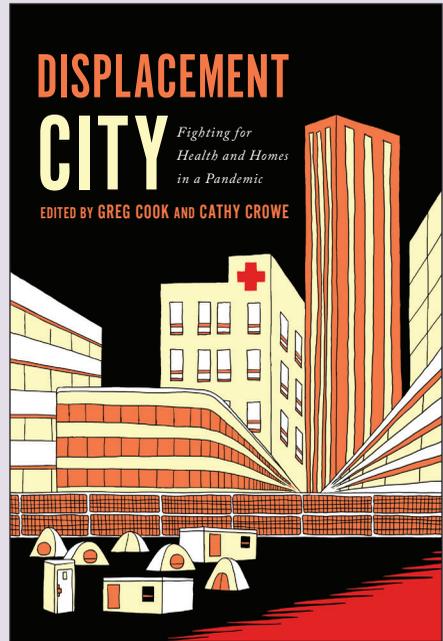
Canada's major cities have faced the humanitarian disaster of homelessness for decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare a massive deficit in social programs and widespread inattention to human rights. Are municipal public services designed to essentially produce displacement? Or can we do something to end the growing problem of urban homelessness in Canada?

In *Displacement City*, outreach worker Greg Cook and street nurse Cathy Crowe illuminate this infrastructure of displacement through prose, poetry, and photography. Contributors to the book, including those with lived experience of homelessness in Toronto, report on the realities of the situation and how people responded: by providing disaster-relief supplies and tiny shelters for encampments, by advocating for shelter-hotels where people could physically distance, by taking the city to court, and by rising up against encampment evictions. The book provides particular insight into policies affecting Indigenous peoples and how the legacy of colonialism and displacement reached a critical point during the pandemic.

This collection of first-hand accounts shows how people are fighting back for homes. It also mourns the hundreds of preventable deaths that resulted from an unjust shelter system and the lack of a national housing program. Offering rich stories of care, mutual aid, and solidarity, *Displacement City* provides a vivid account of a national tragedy.



Of related interest:
Streetlife: Urban Retail Dynamics and Prospects
Edited by Conrad Kickert and Emily Talen
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Urban Studies



the shelter crisis, and about police brutality.

Greg Cook is an outreach worker at Sanctuary Toronto. He is on the steering committee of the Shelter and Housing Justice Network and volunteers for the Toronto Homeless Memorial. He has worked on two documentaries:

Bursting at the Seams, about

What World Do You Live In,



producer of the Home Safe documentary series. Her work is the subject of the documentary *Street Nurse*, by filmmaker Shelley Saywell.

Cathy Crowe is a recipient of the Order of Canada and a pioneer of street nursing. She is currently a public affiliate in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University. She is the author of *A Knapsack Full of Dreams* and *Dying for a Home* and



Encampment at Church of the Holy Trinity, next to the offices of Toronto Urban Native Ministry and the Eaton Centre.

Photo credit: Zachary Grant



Brian Cleary's cat.

Photo credit: Brian Cleary



Dreddz in Alexandra Park.

Photo credit: Ginger Dean



Delivery of a Tiny Shelter built by Khaleel Seivwright.

Photo credit: Jeff Bierk



Encampment at Bathurst and Queens Quay.

Photo credit: Jeff Bierk



Tents along the side of Church of the Holy Trinity at Trinity Square.

Photo credit: Zachary Grant