

Harnessing Games spirit to tackle homelessness

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For all the big money boys and their obscene bonuses, there are, thankfully, those who choose to work in the trenches to help make the world a better place for folks up against it.

One of them is Rev. Ric Matthews of First United Church. Over the years, his church on the edge of the Downtown Eastside has become a sanctuary for the homeless and disadvantaged.

Now, with you-know-what a mere week away (double yikes!), Father Matthews has a dream, an Olympic dream, and it's got nothing to do with luge.

Why not harness the same energy and resources that have gone into staging the 2010 Winter Games to take on what the good reverend calls "the Olympian challenges of alienation, addiction, poverty and homelessness"?

Why not, indeed?

Father Matthews calls his campaign, and he's serious about it, Two Worlds - Share the Gold, an appeal to both pro- and anti-Olympic camps to make common cause on ending homelessness, once the Games are over.

Nearly a dozen prominent politicians, including Mayor Gregor Robertson, and leading anti-Olympic critic Chris Shaw turned up at the church Wednesday night to endorse the initiative. All wore yellow scarves, symbol of the campaign.

If you want to sign on during the Olympics, here's what the reverend would like you to do.

Wear yellow, as a collective call to government, corporations and individuals to establish a VANOC equivalent to house the homeless.

Deliberately engage in friendly conversation with international Games visitors to build common understanding.

Contribute an amount equal to 5 per cent of your Olympic spending to an end homelessness fund, organized by the worthy [Streetohome Foundation](#).

All good.

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