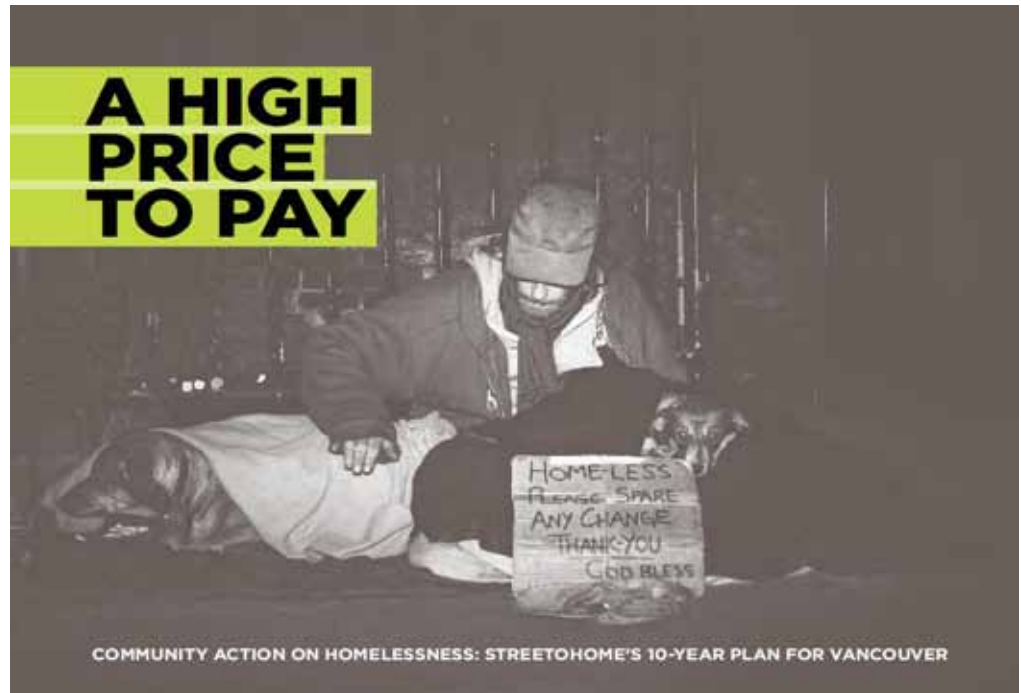




A Plan for Vancouver

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“There’s a heartfelt view that we can solve this issue, and that the community at large is ready to embrace the solution and embrace broad-based community leadership.”

A sentiment expressed by Streetohome Board member Don Fairbairn to the media on the release of [Community Action on Homelessness: Streetohome’s 10-Year Plan for Vancouver](#) on January 12.

The 10-Year Plan is the result of 18 months of intense research, analysis, collaboration and consultation with community groups, business leaders, service providers, and government representatives.

Set out in three phases, the Plan outlines the key areas for focus over the next 10 Years: provide permanent,

stable housing with appropriate support services; prevent people who are most vulnerable from becoming homeless; and build broad public support and commitment for permanent solutions to homelessness.

For the first phase of the Plan, from 2010 to 2012, our attention will be on facilitating 600 units of new housing for those in the greatest need or at the greatest risk: chronically homeless individuals, youth, and mothers with children.

We’ll also be working to try and prevent homelessness for key groups, by supporting change in public policy.

And we’ll continue to work with local and national organizations for better coordination of services, increased

funding, and government policy that will improve access to housing and quality of life.

“We now have a road map,” says Barbara Grantham, Acting President. **“Our next step is putting the strategies into action.”**

We’ll report back to the community and our stakeholders on how the Plan is progressing, with an Annual Report Card issued at the end of the year.

House of Switzerland gift helps the homeless in host city

When Xenia Schlegel, Head of Marketing & Communications for the Federal Government of Switzerland, first walked around the Downtown Eastside – the thought that popped into her mind was, “This could happen to me.”

She realized that a certain set of circumstances could potentially land her jobless, without a home, and nowhere to go. She wanted to do something to give back to the residents of Vancouver, the host city for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Brainstorming with her team, stationed in Whistler and Vancouver, they chose Streetohome shortly before the Olympics began. When they asked if the House of Switzerland could host an online charity auction for us, we were delighted.

The auction ran from February 15th to February 28th and included Lindt chocolate gift baskets, Swiss décor, fondue pots and official Swiss Olympic celebration jackets. Thanks to all the participants, including sizeable donations from Lindt as well as Bridges Restaurant, host to the House of Switzerland, the auction raised \$10,000.

The House of Switzerland pioneered the idea of giving back to host cities during the Olympics, and is responsible for a huge success. Hopefully, this idea will continue with other countries visiting future Olympic cities. In Vancouver, the legacy that the House of Switzerland leaves behind will touch the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness. That alone deserves a gold medal.

home for the games

a successful pilot project for other cities

How often does a visiting Australian couple get a chance to seek the advice from a Justice of the Peace around nuptials? Home For The Games, uniting hosts and visitors of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games, made these kinds of connections possible.

The idea originated around a kitchen table: Home For The Games would raise money for charities working to end homelessness while offering affordable accommodations during the Olympics. People from different backgrounds and cultures would have a chance to connect with local Vancouverites. Friendships would be made and new experiences created. And... it truly was a win-win-win. Tracey Axelsson, Project Manager for Home For The Games, says, “The biggest success was with the hosts and visitors. We received so much positive feedback and

‘thank yous’ for offering this innovation.”

Axelsson reports that over \$50,000 was raised through the program. The proceeds will be equally distributed between Streetohome Foundation and Covenant House.

As for the next Olympic host city, Home For The Games has already reached out to three London-based charities working to end homelessness: Centrepoin, St. Mungos and Shelter, to see if they are interested in running the project for the 2012 Games. While the project was difficult to launch due to limited volunteers and resources, Axelsson says, “I’ve really just re-learned that the power of people aligned to a positive goal will create more benefit than was initially aimed for.”

For more information, visit www.homeforthegames.com.

A day in the life of Colin Sanders

working on the front line

Every day, Colin Sanders works closely with individuals facing trauma, substance abuse, drug abuse and mental health challenges. As a member of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) At Home/Chez Soi project team, it can be hard to handle, but he has hope.

Sanders meets with his Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team each morning to debrief. Then, depending upon the day, he assists other team members with new participant intakes, shows participants available apartments, grocery shops with participants, drops off medication, problem solves with other resources and agencies, consults with other national teams and connects with other agencies who want to know about the project. It’s a busy but rewarding day.

“Witnessing how a person will make a difference within their own life, when they are prepared and comfortable with doing so, brings me hope. This transformation

never ceases to amaze me,” says Sanders.

Since an early age, Sanders has been interested in assisting others. “Over time, I learned the most effective way to bring about change is by working within existing systems, building relationships, not burning bridges, and initiating and promoting other perspectives,” he says.

Sanders continues to stay optimistic that outcomes from the MHCC research demonstration project will result in funding of more provincial ACT teams, especially within the Lower Mainland. By March 2011, Sanders and his team hope to successfully house 100 people coping with a persistent mental illness, substance use, and chronic homelessness.

For more information, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca.



Colin Sanders, ACT Team Member

a message from barbara grantham



Barbara Grantham, Acting President of Streetohome Foundation

The release of **Community Action on Homelessness: Streetohome's 10-Year Plan for Vancouver** was a significant step for Streetohome. We have worked hard to gather information, data and research, understand best practices, and provide a comprehensive approach to breaking the cycle of homelessness in Vancouver. The Plan has received positive endorsements from the City of Vancouver, the Province, service providers and other stakeholders.

It's clear that the community sees a common consensus in this Plan, as well as a touchstone document for the community to move forward with unified direction and purpose.

The 'start up' phase of Streetohome is coming to an end and we are now moving forward with implementing the 10-Year Plan. This Spring, we will focus on communications, research, fundraising and organizational readiness for the work ahead.

As we reflect on what Streetohome has accomplished in these first two years, we can be proud of what we have achieved. The leadership and dedication shown by the Board, Committee members, volunteers and staff has been inspiring.

We have provided financial support to meaningful and relevant initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to the community. We have received support from a variety of organizations, including Home For The Games, the House of Switzerland, the Dollar A Day campaign, faith organizations, individuals and organizations, all of whom want to be part of the solution.

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in the City of Vancouver's Homeless Count. **It was a strong reminder for me that everyone has a role to play in breaking the cycle of homelessness.** As citizens, we have far more in common than, at first blush, we think we do. **Each of us needs to find one 'thing' that stirs that common chord.** It's certainly those human moments that inspire and remind me once again that this is an issue that affects us all.

Barbara Grantham
Acting President

Thank you to
our community
partners
supporting
Streetohome
Foundation's
efforts:

- Home For The Games
- House of Switzerland
- Stantec Art Show
- Dollar a Day Campaign

One-to-One with the Board:

A conversation with Virginia Greene, President & CEO, Business Council of British Columbia

Q What attracted you to the Streetohome Board?

A I've lived in the heart of the city since the 1980s, so I see people on the street as a matter of course. I've always been struck by the contrast between the quality of life I lead, versus the quality of life of people on the street and thought 'there but for the grace of God go I.'

Q Where do you think Streetohome will have the most impact this coming year?

A Three key things are going to have a solid impact: we will get people inside to a warm, dry safe place; we are building understanding in the community that homelessness is not something people bring upon themselves, and that they are ill and need support; and we are building relationships between government and the business community.

Q What are you most proud of?

A The calibre of people I have had a chance to work with, both in my own business, in government, as a

volunteer, and at the BC Business Council. I've been so fortunate to work with community leaders who make my own work more relevant.

Q What would people be surprised to learn about you?

A That I went to school for anthropology at UBC. I went into it because I was interested in other cultures, and my father and grandfather had taken me travelling quite a bit. It's been very valuable in all aspects of my career, because anthropology looks at how one aspect of culture affects all others, so you learn to connect important dots in a community or a problem.

Q What gets you up in the morning, and keeps you awake at night?

A Well, I love my sleep and get a solid seven or eight hours each night! But what gets me up is the feeling that I can be relevant. I try to pick my interests where I can make a difference. What nags at me, though, is whether I have done enough. ■



Virginia Greene, President & CEO,
Business Council of British Columbia

about streetohome

Streetohome Foundation is a community organization working to ensure that all citizens of Vancouver have access to safe, decent, affordable housing.

We bring together business, government and community leaders to build resources and develop lasting solutions to homelessness.

Everyone has a role to play.

What can **you** do to help?
Be **part** of the solution.

Find out how you can be part of the solution at

www.streetohome.org

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Facebook



Twitter

contact streetohome

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