



Streetohome Foundation Opens the First of its Eight City Sites

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From L-R: John McLernon, Chair of Streetohome Board, Rob Turnbull, CEO of Streetohome, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, and B.C. Premier Christie Clark.

On November 8, 2012, Streetohome Foundation officially opened the first of eight sites that are being built to help solve homelessness in Vancouver. Fully tenanted at 2279 Fir Street, this new nine-storey building provides 62 apartments with integrated support services for individuals living with mental illness.

“Streetohome is committed to solving homelessness in Vancouver by building safe, supportive housing,” said Rob Turnbull, President and CEO of Streetohome Foundation. **“We are proud to have committed \$20 million to eight projects under a partnership between the B.C. government and the City of Vancouver - and even prouder to celebrate Sanford Apartments, the first of these to open.”**

Streetohome Foundation provides permanent stable housing with appropriate support services to address the issues of homelessness as part of its 10-Year Plan to help solve homelessness. Amongst the homeless population, over 80 percent of individuals have challenges with mental illness.

MPA offers on-site services to connect people with mental health services, on-site advocacy workers and kitchen support staff, and crisis intervention. They also operate outreach services within a community resource centre located on the first and second floors that will provide services for mental health clients. The building is managed and operated by the Katherine Sanford Housing Society.

“I’d like to thank all partners who

worked tirelessly to ensure that Sanford Apartments became a reality,” said Dave MacIntyre, Executive Director, MPA Society. **“This new supportive housing, located in Kitsilano, brings a valuable new option to people who are facing mental health challenges living in this neighbourhood.”**

“We are so excited to be celebrating the opening of this new supportive housing development,” said Bonnie Rice, Executive Director, Katherine Sanford Housing Society. **“Katherine Sanford, the society’s namesake, is thrilled that we are working hard to carry on her work of ensuring that all individuals living with mental health challenges in Vancouver have access to safe, supportive homes.”**

Streetohome Project Update: At Home/Chez Soi

“The At Home project enabled me to break my crime cycle. I’ve now been out of jail for two-and-a-half years. Without treatment for my HIV or any education, I was always returning to the drug sub-culture. Even if wanted to stay clean for a short term before, I ran into the comfort zone of addiction because it kept me warm.” – Thomas, Resident of At Home/Chez Soi Scattered Housing

The Mental Health Commission of Canada’s At Home/Chez Soi project is nearing its completion in March 2013. As Streetohome provided funding for the Bosman Community Hotel and is a key partner of At Home/Chez Soi, we thought we would provide an update on the beneficial research and outcomes of the project.

The At Home/Chez Soi project is a federally funded program working to find the best practices for housing homeless people who are living with mental illness. The project has housed over 900 participants in the cities of Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton, with the goal to see if Housing First works. A Housing First program

provides participants with their own home – a lock and a key – and then support services such as counseling, medical treatment, cooking classes and employment training to address their

challenges.

Streetohome helped establish the project here in Vancouver by providing the capital funds for remodeling the Bosman Community Hotel in 2008. The Bosman has been home to nearly 100 people over the last two-and-a-half years. In addition to a hotel suite with a bathroom, tenants are provided with the supports they need to live a more fulfilling life.

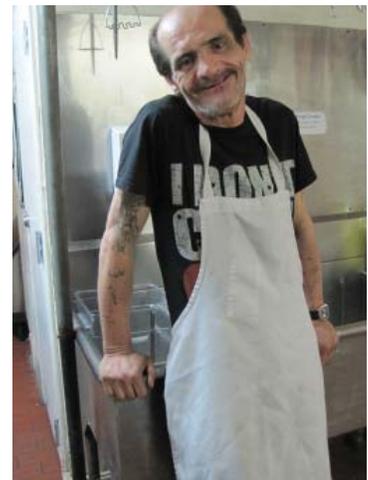
In Vancouver, an additional 150 people reside in scattered, private market rental housing where they receive supports from one of two teams, depending on their requirements. The Intensive Case Management team provides services to individuals with ‘moderate’ needs and is available 12 hours per day. The Assertive Community Treatment Team provides multi-professional intensive service for people with serious mental health issues. These services and crisis coverage are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

According to the study, people who are homeless have a higher incidence of serious mental illness, substance abuse, and challenges with stress, coping, and suicidal behaviour than the general population. Individuals who have remained homeless for years are now being successfully housed in adequate, affordable, and suitable settings. What’s more, the Housing First approach makes better use of public dollars—especially for those who are high users of health care and social service resources.

Catharine Hume, Director and Vancouver Site Coordinator of At Home/Chez Soi, is cautiously optimistic that money will be found to allow study participants to remain in their homes for a period of time beyond March 2013 when federal funding ends. The interim findings for At Home/Chez Soi suggest there is strong evidence in support of these interventions for those who are homeless and living with a

mental illness. **“We now have evidence for the cost saving for society, the increase in quality of life for the people of the project, and the ability for these people to remain stably housed. This is a great opportunity for public social investment and social innovation,”** said Catharine Hume.

On a typical day, people who were formerly homeless and now involved with the project have been less preoccupied with safety or survival concerns, and thus able to focus on new ways of being, including changes in the way they build relationships. This project has proven that the more compassionate and caring way – by providing people with a home first, and then providing the supports they need to experience change – is by far the best approach to solving homelessness.



“Having a home puts me in a better zone. I now try to keep up with all my appointments. When I was homeless, I was missing quite a few of them. It just gives me stability. If I have to make a doctor’s appointment there’s a doctor here and a nurse here.” – Mad Dog, Resident of the Bosman Hotel



Catharine Hume, Director and Vancouver Site Coordinator of At Home/Chez Soi

A Season to be Grateful

A Message from the President of Streetohome Foundation

This year has been a whirlwind of activity for Streetohome Foundation. I feel like I arrived at an important time for this organization, in the midst of making a great difference in the community. Looking back over the last couple of months, I have seen some of our efforts come to fruition; we started Vancouver's first Rent Bank, opened our first brand new building, and broke ground on an innovative social housing project that utilizes inexpensive shipping containers to create decent, affordable housing.

The progress we have made in the sector together with all of our partners, including the Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Police Department, B.C. Corrections and our donors, has been effective in lowering the homeless numbers. More importantly, we have ensured that we care for vulnerable people who may be escaping abuse, aging out of the foster care system, or suffering from mental health and addictions issues.

Of course, we really can't forget the amazing service providers who have the expertise to support this

population with counseling, personal development, youth programming, social enterprise, cooking classes, financial literacy training, outreach, and most importantly, an open heart. As I learn more about what they do, I'm in awe of their efforts and I realize that they make people who once felt as if they had disappeared, reappear and feel stronger.

There are countless stories about people who have mental health issues, people who have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, and because of a safe home and the services they receive, they've started to take their medication, attend counseling, and live a more fulfilling life. We all need a home with a lock and a key as a starting point for realizing our goals – no matter what that means for each person.

Streetohome has helped establish over 1,100 units of permanent, supportive housing across our city to help break the cycle of homelessness in our community and help prevent homelessness from happening in the first place. Now, as we continue to find creative solutions and innovations in housing, I believe it is time to use our influence to further raise community awareness and engagement on the issue. I will be working to achieve this within the greater community in 2013.

Over the next few months, I look forward to the opportunity to celebrate our successes and discuss new opportunities with you.

In the meantime, the staff and I would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year.



**Rob Turnbull, President & CEO
Streetohome Foundation**



From L-R: Christina Panagio, Communications Manager, Rob Turnbull, CEO of Streetohome, and Jenna Wray, Capital Campaign and Project Relations Coordinator.



Reflections of Home



The staff and board at Streethome were thrilled to celebrate the grand opening of the Sanford Apartments this year. With the doors of the building opening summer 2012, we hoped to get involved with the tenants and the building early on. Streethome's Communications Manager, Christina Panagio, worked with a group of very keen writers and photographers at an evening workshop documenting the life changing experience of moving into the Sanford Apartments.

Led by Alexandra Samur, a UBC Journalism instructor, the group expressed their first impressions, daily experiences and general feelings of "home" through their writing and photographs. Newly housed Anthony wrote:

This has been a BIG CHANGE! I've never had this much socialization before. Not to mention the peace of mind I've had waking up on my own every day. I've been reading a lot too. Not that I wasn't before, it's just that I'd always have small interruptions peppered throughout a sitting. For me, home is a place you can go to rest and relax.

We at Streethome had the pleasure of witnessing the inspiring and exciting groundbreaking at 7th Avenue and Fir Street in December 2010. To see a building rise up in a community that so desperately required its services has been elating. Kim too had this experience, and wrote:

From the first time my MPA one-on-one worker pointed out to me the rebar and steel rising up from the concrete beginnings of what would be the [Sanford Apartments], hope rose up in me too. Hope that I might finally get off the

housing roller-coaster and have an affordable, permanent apartment. When I got the call I'd been waiting to hear I screamed in the poor man's ear!

Apart from the extensive services provided within the building, the Sanford Apartments offers a beautiful peaceful space which 62 previously homeless people can now call home. Sandy documented her love of her new home through a series of photographs; this is the view from her apartment at sunset:



Working with Alexandra Samur and the participants of the Writing/Photography Workshop has been a rewarding experience for us at Streethome, and we are so proud to display just a handful of the positive experiences happening every day in the newly opened Sanford Apartments, at 7th Avenue and Fir Street in Vancouver.

To find out more about Alexandra's workshops in the Downtown Eastside, check out her website at: www.alexandrasamur.com.

about streethome

Streethome 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

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