



Sherry's Story: Safe, Supportive Housing Saved My Life

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Sherry's story is one of survival and perseverance. We first met Sherry in November, as one of the tenants at 1249 Howe Street. She attended the BMO Gardens opening in her building and shared her story with those present at the event. She described how hard it was to live in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and expressed her immense gratitude in being able to live in safe, decent and permanent housing. Sherry revealed that while she is grateful for this wonderful opportunity, she struggles with the knowledge that there are many others who are not as lucky as she is.

"I remember almost cancelling to move in because I just thought that it was too good for me," said Sherry. **"My support worker had me write on my bathroom mirror that 'I deserve to live here'. It was almost like letting myself know that this place is mine."** Sherry's story touched us all.

Before moving to Howe Street, Sherry had been living in the DTES for over 25 years. Addicted to drugs, living a risky lifestyle to manage her addiction and staying in unimaginable spaces infested with cockroaches and bed bugs, she knew that her life had to change. Sherry entered a drug rehabilitation program. There she found out about McLaren Housing's new Howe Street Building that houses 110 people living with HIV/AIDS. Sherry was encouraged to apply. The application process took a full year, since the building was under construction. After a long wait, Sherry was relieved to hear that her application for tenancy was approved.

Sherry has now been stably housed, outside of the DTES, since September 2013. She states that: **"I can't say enough about this place, it saved my life. Since moving in here I've started taking care of myself - I go**

to regular doctor's appointments, I started taking multi-vitamins, eating properly, buying groceries. I still use occasionally but I used to use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Living in the DTES, that's all there was to do and everything is available to you right outside your front door. I can't see ever moving back there."

Now that Sherry has a safe home, access to support and a sense of community belonging, she is thriving. She is happy in her new space. She speaks fondly of the McLaren Housing staff and appreciates having good neighbours to share meals and coffee with. **"My feelings for the future are just bright,"** said Sherry. **"I say to this place, just when I needed colour, you added in a rainbow. Every day I wake up here and I'm so grateful."**

A huge thank you to Sherry for sharing her story with us!

2014 is Streetohome's Biggest Year Yet

Since 2008, Streetohome has raised nearly **\$28 million dollars**, helped build almost **1,000 units of housing** with support services and funded programs, like the Vancouver Rent Bank, to stop homelessness before it happens. 2014 will be our biggest year yet! Nearly **600 new units of supportive housing are opening this year**, and by the end of 2014, Streetohome will have **helped approximately 2,000 vulnerable people across Vancouver**.

One of the conditions of Streetohome capital funding is that we pay out grants once construction is complete and we can verify that the tenants moving into the building

were formerly homeless and living on the street and in shelters in Vancouver. With **five buildings opening in 2014** – 1134 Burrard, 111 Princess, 2465 Fraser, Budzey Building (220 Princess) and Taylor Manor (951 Boundary) - we will be **granting out nearly \$12 million dollars this year**. This is more than all of our other years combined.

Check out what is opening and happening this year:



1134 Burrard

- 141 units, 30 for youth
- Services by The Kettle Society
- Full service youth hub
- Our funding: \$2.82 million
- Our donors: Canadian Western Bank (\$150,000), CIBC (\$100,000)
- Status: Tenanting now

111 Princess

- 139 units for people living with mental health & addictions
- Services by PHS Community Services Society
- Our funding: \$2.78 million
- Status: June 2014

2465 Fraser

- 99 units, 30 for youth
- Services by Vancouver Native Housing Society
- Full service youth hub
- Our funding: \$1.98 million
- Our donors: Coast Capital Savings (\$375,000), Face of Today (\$15,000)
- Status: August 2014

Budzey Building

- 147 units for single women & women-led families
- Services by RainCity Housing
- Our funding: \$2.94 million
- Our donors: Silver Wheaton (\$1.5 million) and Face the World Foundation (\$500,000)
- Status: November 2014

Taylor Manor

- 52 units for people living with mental illness
- Services by The Kettle Society
- Our funding: \$1.4 million
- Our donors: Vancity (\$1.2 million) and Carraresi Foundation \$200,000)
- Status: November 2014

Current Fundraising

Streetohome is now actively fundraising on a project-by-project basis, with three projects approved for donor consideration:

- [Co:Here Housing](#)
- [41 East Hastings](#)
- [Fire Hall #5](#)

We have several other new projects under consideration and invite additional grant requests that meet our funding criteria. Contact info@streetohome.org with questions about our granting process or to receive a Streetohome Foundation Grant Request Form.

A Message from Rob Turnbull

Making progress in solving homelessness



With the 2014 Homeless Count preliminary report coming out last month, there was quite a lot of chatter about whether or not we are making progress in solving homelessness in Vancouver. The recent count showed there were 538 people living on the street, almost 200 more than in 2013. This understandably caused concern, but the increase is primarily due to the loss of 200 units of interim housing last year. Many of these individuals have now moved into permanent supportive housing. We are continuing to work hard at housing people, and with nearly 600 new units of permanent supportive housing opening in 2014, these 200 people (and many more) will be housed. I am optimistic that the picture of homelessness in Vancouver will look very different in 2015 than it does now.

Other progress continues to be made by our partners as we continue to implement Streethome's 10-Year Plan to solve homelessness in Vancouver. Three new projects will provide housing and support services for an additional 200+ vulnerable people. Providing individuals who are living on the street and in shelters with immediate access to supportive housing is now an accepted best practice. Solving homelessness will also require preventing homelessness in the first place. Streethome is working closely with BC Housing, the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health to explore supportive housing opportunities for individuals exiting hospitals, corrections and foster care. Preventing homelessness may require new thinking, new models and at the very least, continued partnerships. I have no doubt that we are up to the challenge.

One final note, Vancouver is hosting the 2014 National Conference on Ending Homelessness in November. This is a great opportunity to showcase the work being done in Vancouver, and learn more about best practices happening locally, across Canada and internationally. Spaces are limited, so register early if you are interested.

You can find more information about the conference at: <http://www.caeh.ca/caeh14/registration/>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Turnbull'.

Rob Turnbull, Ph.D., CHE
President & CEO
Streethome Foundation

Welcome Tracey Harvey

Join us in welcoming Tracey Harvey, our new Administration, Donor and Project Manager. Tracey comes to Streethome from United Way Lower Mainland, and we are pleased to have her as a part of our small (3 person) team. Tracey will be working closely with our donors regarding their pledges, stewardship and recognition. She will also be working with our partners on applications, agreements and meetings. You can contact Tracey at traceyh@streethome.org or 629-2711 ext. 101.



Service Provider Spotlight: RainCity Housing Gets Ready to Open Budzey Building



RainCity Housing has been providing emergency shelter and supportive housing for over 30 years. One of the reasons they have grown is to provide new services that did not exist in any substantial way before. As well as emergency shelters, they now have five different transitional housing programs, each catering to a different demographic and six long term housing programs in a number of Vancouver neighbourhoods. RainCity also oversees an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team that provides a wide array of supports, including rent subsidies, to 100 people living throughout the city.

Later this fall, RainCity Housing will be opening the Budzey Building, located at 220 Princess (Powell Street). While the ten story building is located in a neighbourhood where they are well established and have many service connections, it is both unique to the Downtown Eastside and to RainCity Housing, with 105 units of housing for women, and 41 units for women-led families.

Why provide housing for women and women with children?

- Women experience higher rates of poverty and isolation than men (Census 2006);
- Women account for 56% of Canadians with low incomes;
- One in five families with children is led by a single woman; and
- 42% of those families experience housing affordability issues.

What will happen there?

“We want to develop this project using a gender and diversity lens that will allow a healthy, vibrant community to flourish, that will be safe for all,” Amelia Ridgway, Acting associate Director explains. “Staff will focus on activities that strengthen the community.”

Services will include:

- Access to childcare and childcare-related support services;
- Liaising with community services and partners, such as medical and mental health services;
- Peer-based programming within the building;
- Community kitchen family nights; and
- A parent resource centre and a youth recreation program.

Why is it called the Budzey Building?

Lorna Budzey was a resident of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside for many years. She became known to RainCity Housing at their first shelter, Triage, and was one of first people to challenge the organization to be inclusive and welcoming to everyone. She experienced many travesties throughout her life, but was always vibrant, charismatic and had an amazing sense of humour. Lorna died in the summer of 2000.

Special thanks to Bill Briscall of RainCity Housing for this article.

Streethome is a partner and funder in the Budzey Building. We want to thank Silver Wheaton and Face the World Foundation, whose generous gifts to Streethome made our contribution possible.

about streethome

Streethome Foundation is a community organization dedicated to ensuring that residents of our city have access to safe, decent, affordable housing and the support they need to make a difference in their lives.

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

Be **part** of the solution.

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