

The First Ten Years: Start(led) by God

MennoHomes has completed its first decade as a provider of affordable, supportive housing in Waterloo Region. To acknowledge and celebrate this journey, the MennoHomes Board commissioned Susan Fish to write a book that tells the story of God's graciousness over these ten years.

The book, titled *Start(led) by God*, is a simple telling of the story with a timeline, quotes from tenants and funders, and many photographs. We are also delighted to have a DVD produced by Jonathon Steckley and Ken Ogwasara. The DVD focuses on the philosophical underpinning of MennoHomes and shows the Elmira Build by Elmira District Secondary School with comments by happy tenants. This short DVD is a useful introduction to the need and response to affordable housing in our region.

We look forward to sharing these resources with our constituency so that the MennoHomes story is known and celebrated throughout the region. Stay tuned for an announcement about the release of the book and the DVD.

Out-spok'n for Affordable Housing

MennoHomes is holding a bike-a-thon on Saturday June 23rd, 2012 at Elmira Mennonite Church, 58 Church Street West in Elmira. Start times will be at 9am or after lunch. Put together a team or do a solo ride. Plan your ride for 5, 7, 10, 14, 21, or 28 kms. Maps will be provided for the Kissing Bridge Trail with routes to West Montrose and Wallenstein. Join us for a hotdog lunch at the church from noon until 1:30pm, either before or after your ride.

The goal is to raise \$60,000 in support of MennoHomes campaign to raise \$250,000 for affordable rental housing for five families. Contact Martin Buhr for more information and pledge forms, 519-578-5546, pama@sympatico.ca. **Be out-spok'n for affordable housing!**



MennoHomes Inc.

a response to the need for affordable housing Spring 2012

100 Units in 10 Years

MennoHomes saw its 99th and 100th affordable rental housing units completed and occupied in March on Centre Street in Elmira. Families living in these units were referred to us by Elmira Mennonite Church and St. Jacobs Family Support Centre support workers. It is wonderful to have reached the milestone of 100 units in 10 years!



Newly built semi-detached rental units on Centre Street in Elmira

An Opportunity to Provide Affordable Rental Housing for Five Families

An unusual opportunity came up in 2011 that we believe will result in five more MennoHomes affordable housing units.

When two brothers (who wish to remain anonymous) sold their property on King Street North in Waterloo to a high-rise developer, they were faced with having to remove an existing four-unit building ("fourplex") to make way for a new high-rise. Three storeys of the building are salvageable as each floor is a 1,500 square foot unit with four bedrooms and two bathrooms. These units are very suitable for the large rural families MennoHomes aims to help.

The brothers had the choice of creating rubble for landfill or creating a second life for the 10 year old fourplex. In exchange for a charitable receipt, they signed an agreement to de-construct the top three floors of the fourplex, floor by floor, and then re-construct them on a MennoHomes site.

MennoHomes Launches

\$250,000 Campaign

Having reached the milestone of 100 affordable rental units in 10 years, MennoHomes plans to purchase or build an additional five (5) rental units commencing this summer and ending on December 31, 2014. These units are particularly suited for the large rural families MennoHomes aims to help.

- 3 units on Ratz Street in Elmira
- 2 units on David Street in Wellesley

Federal and provincial government grants will partially fund these projects. Your support is needed for an additional \$250,000 to cover MennoHomes' share of the cost for the five rental units.

For \$50,000 per unit, five families will be provided with a home at an affordable rent!

Please consider making a donation or pledge to make the five rental units for five families a reality. You will find the donation and pledge form on the back of this page.

You can also support this campaign by participating in the bike-a-thon to be held on June 23rd at Elmira Mennonite Church. See the notice on the back of this newsletter.

Thank you for your support!

**Yes, I want to support
MennoHomes' campaign to
provide affordable rental
housing for five families.**

Here is my gift of _____

or

My pledge for 2012 _____

My pledge for 2013 _____

My pledge for 2014 _____

Name _____

Address _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please return this form to:
MennoHomes Inc.
50 Kent Ave.
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1

Charitable Registration #:
86304 7015 RR0001

For further information contact:
Martin Buhr - 519 578-5546,
pama@sympatico.ca

continued from page 1...

They have also pledged to handle the move and associated costs, including liability insurance, and to provide one foundation for a re-located building.

MennoHomes searched for land in order to recycle the fourplex. Two adjoining properties were found on Ratz Street in Elmira. Terms required that both properties be purchased. One had an existing bungalow. The other was vacant and zoned for a duplex. Soil tests revealed that the land was uncontaminated and stable enough for a foundation, so MennoHomes acquired the property. MennoHomes replaced the bungalow's old heating system with a new gas-fired one, replaced the windows and doors, and significantly upgraded the insulation. A single parent family in urgent need of affordable housing moved in last September. MennoHomes plans to place two of the three floors of the donated building on the vacant lot on Ratz Street this summer to create a duplex home for two large families.

That left the question of what to do with the remaining floor from the donated fourplex. Another property was located on David Street in Wellesley, zoned to permit a duplex. The brothers have agreed to cover the costs of moving the remaining one floor unit to Wellesley. MennoHomes will be responsible for the foundation and the costs of a second floor unit. Under the terms of a conditional offer to purchase the Wellesley property, MennoHomes is arranging for soil tests and exploring planning requirements. Should everything materialize as hoped, the result will be a duplex on David Street in Wellesley, near Wellesley Mennonite Church, that will provide housing for two large families. What a great outcome – five affordable homes for five families because these generous brothers looked for an alternative to creating rubble.

Federal and Ontario provincial government funds will help to support these new projects. To cover its share of the costs for the five family units, MennoHomes is launching a campaign to raise \$250,000, commencing this summer and ending on December 31, 2014. **One way of looking at this proposition is that for \$50,000 a unit, five families can be housed!**

"We are thankful to MennoHomes for the opportunity to live here. The quality of the home's construction and its energy efficiency will allow us to save for a down payment instead of paying for heat that escapes through leaky windows and doors."

- A family living in a unit on Centre Street in Elmira.

Rockway Gardens Village Now a Smoke-Free Building



*50-unit Rockway Gardens Village,
1420 King Street in Kitchener*

The concern most frequently expressed at Rockway Gardens Village, the MennoHomes 50-unit seniors housing project located at 1420 King East in Kitchener, has been about second-hand smoke. In response, MennoHomes conducted a survey of all tenants. Overwhelming support was expressed by tenants for a smoke-free policy. As a result, Rockway Gardens Village became a smoke-free building as of April 1, 2012.

MennoHomes Welcomes Three New Board Members



Gary Chard

Following a 33 year career in education, Gary worked for the House of Friendship, and then for the Palmerston and District Hospital Foundation as a development officer. Gary attends Elmira Mennonite Church.



Nick Driedger

A former special education teacher, Nick joined the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union in 1983, retiring from MSCU in 2010 after 17 years as CEO. Nick and his wife Janice attend Breslau Mennonite Church.



Nancy Regehr

A former teacher and MCC volunteer, Nancy retired in 2011 as Associate Executive Director of Project Ploughshares after more than 30 years of service. Nancy and her husband Ernie attend Rockway Mennonite Church.