



MennoHomes Inc.

a response to need for affordable housing

Fall 2018



Dan Driedger
Executive Director

Fall 2018 Update

What's new? It's a common question that is often asked when you chat with someone you haven't seen in a while. In my work with MennoHomes, I'm frequently asked what's new. People want to know. They are curious.

Over the past couple of months, I've been able to share how our old website was refreshed over the summer and is now new. Our office is still on the 2nd floor at 50 Kent Ave. in Kitchener but we moved to a slightly larger space in September. In many ways, it feels like a new beginning.

Our most recent project in Elmira has now been home to 40 people for just over a year now. The new paint smell may be gone but tenants are continuing to adjust to their new home and build new relationships with their neighbours. They are also experiencing a fresh start.

But when people ask what's new, they really want to know if we are working on a new project. With the need for new affordable housing as strong as ever, is MennoHomes doing something? Where? When?

The answers of course are "yes, here, soon"! And while we work at finalizing the details related to our next project, we remain focused on ensuring our existing tenants have quality affordable housing.

Our fall newsletter provides a glimpse into how we work to do that through our Community Support Worker. As you read the article and story, my hope is that you also sense why the creation of more affordable housing is so important. Thank you for your financial support that makes this possible. It changes lives.

An interview with Karen Lebold, MennoHomes Community Support Worker

By Nancy Regehr, Board Chair

Karen’s first training and career was in early childhood education in London, Ontario followed by social services in child care and parent support in Grey and Bruce Counties in Ontario. She also supported her late husband in his work in child and senior support institutions. On returning to Waterloo Region she decided to look for part-time work and was pleased to hear about the Community Support Worker position at MennoHomes. She started her employment with MennoHomes in the fall of 2007.



Karen Lebold
Community Support Worker

I sat down with Karen in her office at Rockway Gardens Village at 1420 King Street East in Kitchener on October 16, 2018 to talk about her role as Community Support Worker.

Nancy – What attracted you to this position?

Karen – I have always been in jobs working with people. The role of Community Support Worker gives me the opportunity to work with children, families and seniors in a part-time flexible work schedule.

Nancy – What kind of support do you provide as a Community Support Worker?

Karen – I provide a variety of supports to our tenants. This might be listening to concerns or attending an appointment with a tenant who has no other family support. Helping tenants find the appropriate community program to meet their needs is an important part of my



job. At times I will mediate conflicts between tenants. I also help with planning social functions for tenants.

Nancy – Why is it important for MennoHomes to provide this kind of support for tenants?

Karen – In addition to providing affordable housing, MennoHomes also values the well-being of its tenants. The support I provide builds community and improves the quality of life for our tenants.

Nancy – What gives you the most enjoyment?



Karen – I find the work very interesting and rewarding as I build relationships with families with children as we have on Village Road in Kitchener and with seniors as we have at Rockway Gardens Village in Kitchener. I have been known to visit with a pre-school child and a 95-year-old woman on the same day!

I enjoy being welcomed at the door with open arms by new arrivals to Canada who live in our buildings.



I enjoy sitting down with a tenant, chatting over coffee or tea, listening to concerns and helping that tenant take the next step in addressing their concerns. There are always new things to learn from each other as we share thoughts and ideas.

YES, I want to support MennoHomes projects to build affordable housing in Waterloo Region.

Here is my gift of _____

and/or

Here is my pledge of _____ for _____ years.

Name _____

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Please return this form to:

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Thank you



Out-Spok'n VIII, our annual bike-a-thon, was held on Saturday June 23rd in Elmira, raising over \$45,000 to be used for the construction of new affordable housing in Waterloo Region. With over 3,400 households currently on the waiting list, the need is as great as ever.

A special thank you to the many sponsors, volunteers, donors, and participants who helped make the day a success. **Be sure to mark Saturday June 22, 2019 on your calendar for next year.**

AGM – January 30, 2019

Join us on Wednesday January 30, 2019 for the MennoHomes AGM in the Community Room on the second floor of the MCC building at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener. The business meeting will start at 2pm, and refreshments will be provided.

A MennoHomes Tenant Story

When Sara and Cornelius arrived in Canada six years ago from Durango, Mexico, they brought with them two children, some clothes, eighty dollars, and hope for a better future for their family.

They moved to the Wellesley area at the invitation of siblings. The birth of their third child brought additional challenges. Heinrich underwent open-heart surgery at only four months of age. The two months they spent at

SickKids in Toronto was hard. They had only been in Canada for one year and now found themselves in this large city hospital, unable to work and with no one able to help with translation.



When they returned to the Wellesley area, the old cold farm house they were renting was less than ideal for young Heinrich who remained on oxygen, but it was all they could afford. Fortunately, Esther Janzen, a Community Outreach Worker with Woolwich Community Services, a partner of MennoHomes, was able to help. With Esther's support, Sara and Cornelius moved in as MennoHomes tenants in 2014.

Heinrich's health has stabilized and he is now a very active five-year-old attending the local school. Their family has grown and Cornelius works for a local manufacturing firm. When asked how affordable housing has made a difference, he is quick to respond, "There are no other places we could rent like this! The house is in good condition and we have good neighbours." Sara adds "It's not fancy, but it has everything we need."

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www.mennohomes.com



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