



GOING BEYOND

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

"Going Beyond". This past year we officially began using our new name: Beyond Housing. It was interesting to observe how often the word "beyond" snuck into our vocabulary and was part of our conversations. Was this because of our new name or had the idea of going *beyond* always been part of our organizational DNA? Had it just taken until now to fully recognize it?

Regardless, it was a year where the concept of going beyond simply providing affordable housing did more than take root. That seed of going *beyond*, planted with the vision of MennoHomes in 2001, was actively growing. The most obvious example of this was the completion of the addition at Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors in St. Jacobs.

Going *beyond* was demonstrated by ensuring that 100% of the apartments in the new addition included a barrier-free design rather than the building code requirement of only 15% and adding an additional 4 suites with upgrades appropriate for someone in a wheelchair. Designing in such a way that it is 48% more energy efficient than required with 76% less greenhouse gas emissions was a priority.

But there are other ways to go *beyond* than with the physical structure. As highlighted in our annual report, the roles of our Community Support Worker and Community Nurse are also tangible ways we live out this philosophy. The life journey someone travels that may eventually lead to their need for housing that is affordable is as unique and varied as each one of us.

We learned early that for someone to thrive in their new home, it is critical that they are living in an environment that also contributes in a positive way to their physical, mental, and social well-being. This

can sometimes be "messy" work, but it is important if we want to respond to the whole person, and go *beyond* just low rent.

Another wonderful example this past year was our volunteer-initiated Freezer Meal Project. What could be better for people trying to cope with inflation at the grocery checkout than to acquire a new skill that not only saves money but provides a healthy diet, tastes great, and builds self-esteem in the process. This was most definitely a *beyond* initiative this past year.

So thank you to our donors, community partners, and allies. Many of you have

gone above and *beyond* our expectations in your support of our work. We try to be bold as we respond to the need for affordable housing. This sometimes means taking risks or pursuing opportunities with uncertain outcomes. You have encouraged us and stood behind those words of encouragement in meaningful ways.

To our tenants, staff, volunteers, and board members, thank you for the ways you continue to surprise us, going *beyond* the minimum to ensure this most basic of human needs, housing, is developed and operated in a way that exceeds expectations. As we look forward to the year to come, we don't know how this commitment to going *beyond* will manifest itself, but we do know it is something we will continue to strive for in all our activities and interactions.

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Dan Driedger
Executive Director



Nancy Regehr
Board Chair

FREEZER MEAL PROJECT

Residents at our 544 Bridgeport Road East location in Kitchener had an opportunity to participate in a 6-month project that kicked off in late March. Through the generosity of Danby Appliances in Guelph, participants received a freezer (10 were donated, another 8 were purchased on Friends and Relatives pricing.) Red Seal chefs from The Culinary Studio in Waterloo donated 12 cooking classes, and Foodland in Ayr donated the ingredients for each class.

Tenant Quote

I now purchase foods that make me excited to cook a meal.

The objective of the Freezer Meal Project was to help participants save money on their food bills, reduce food waste, and learn new cooking skills. The project was the inspiration of one of our volunteers, Shirley Lichti. Like us, she believes we need to go beyond providing affordable rent if we truly want people to flourish in their new homes.

In the end, 19 tenants participated in the project. Most of them completed all 12 cooking classes making meals such as

Butter Chicken, Jambalaya, and Cauliflower Mac N Cheese. They learned Knife Skills and how to cut up a whole chicken - much cheaper than buying pre-cut pieces - and made homemade Chicken Fingers.



Survey research was conducted before the project started, at the midway point, and after the last class in October. Results? Food costs were reduced by more than 30%. Having a freezer allowed participants to buy

food on sale and in bulk. Food waste was dramatically reduced as leftovers could be frozen for future meals. Plus, participants got more variety in their meals, ate more nutritious meals, and saved time by cooking in larger batches. Some participants told us their health improved as well.

Tenant Quote

It has inspired me to shop for foods I know I will eat which has decreased how much I spend on take out.

Thanks to project partners Jim Estill at Danby Appliances, Jody O'Malley and Kirstie Herbstreit at The Culinary Studio, Jason Butchko at Foodland head office, Ron McGrath and Sharon VandenEnden at Foodland Ayr.

Tenant Quote

I didn't think using spices would make such a delicious difference.

SPRUCELAWN APARTMENTS FOR SENIORS UPDATE

What began as a dream of the original Sprucelawn board in 2013 became a home for 28 new households in November 2023. The addition at 33 Front St. in St. Jacobs is no longer a construction site. It is a place to call home!

It is with a heart of gratitude that we thank the original board of Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors for their perseverance in overcoming many obstacles during the early stages of the redevelopment. Despite delays and setbacks, their vision to provide additional affordable housing in a truly lovely location along the Mill Race in St. Jacobs has now been fulfilled.

We also acknowledge the trust and confidence the board of Sprucelawn placed

in Beyond Housing to continue to be good caretakers of Sprucelawn when we amalgamated in 2021. It is a responsibility that we take seriously and will do our utmost to honour.

While construction may now be complete, this redevelopment has not entirely escaped the impact of inflation the construction industry experienced over the past 2 years. At the end of 2023 we were pleased to have successfully met our original \$2 million capital campaign goal, with donations and pledges totalling \$2,216,628. Thank you to everyone who has donated to make this possible. We continue to work towards our adjusted goal of \$2.5 million to ensure this project, like all Beyond Housing locations, is financially sustainable long-term.

Completion of construction is not the end of the story. It is really just an important milestone for the community of people who live at Sprucelawn and call it their home. The following quotes and images provide just a glimpse into how Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors is making a positive difference now, and will continue to do so for decades to come.

To Donate

Please contact Laverne Brubacher or Dan Driedger to learn more about how you can be involved in this important project for seniors with low incomes in our community. Phone 226-476-2535 Email ddriedger@beyondhousing.ca

Tenant Quote

"I am thankful every morning to have such a peaceful home, and for everyone who helped to make it possible." – Raul





Tenant Quote

“Beyond Housing has not only surpassed filling their objectives of providing affordable housing to seniors but has also included amenities such as common meeting rooms, storage spaces, and parking in a well designed easily accessible home.”

– Bernice and Ty (Not pictured)



Tenant Quote

“I shudder to think where I’d be if this opportunity had passed me by. This complex and my unit are wonderful and I can continue living in an area I’ve called home for the last 50 years.” – Paul

Tenant Quote

“I don’t have to go to the foodbank anymore.”

– Joanne



GOING BEYOND HOUSING - TENANT WELLNESS AND SUPPORT

Tenants in some buildings have access to our part-time Community Nurse, Karen Ehlebracht, RN. Her Tenant Wellness Program lets people get questions answered, understand health concerns, manage chronic health issues, and check blood pressure and vital signs. She can identify and refer to community health resources, e.g., finding a doctor or therapy program. Whether providing support with diabetes, nutrition, heart health, or being there to talk through anxiety, depression, or addiction concerns, Karen has the resources, tools, and perspectives to help tenants improve their well-being.

During the first year of the Program, there were 870 nursing contacts with 100 individuals, allowing us to go beyond housing. We are grateful to be able to provide this

support through substantial funding by the Schneiders Employees' Association Community Fund and Waterloo Region Community Foundation Community Fund.

"Having a nurse here means someone connected with my apartment building knows something about my medical background, if needed."

Our Community Support Worker, Sue Martin, supports tenants across a number of buildings. She helps tenants organize exercise classes, Bingo, BBQs, Oktoberfest/Thanksgiving/Christmas meals - all opportunities to build community and strengthen their social networks. Sue lends a listening ear when tenants are down, going through a difficult time, or when they want to share good news and celebrate.

She helps with serious health concerns, hospitalizations, and offers support in the event of a death. Sue provides support for disputes and resolutions when possible. And she's a boon when tenants need support with government paperwork, tech support for phones, and other issues.

A highlight for tenant George White, at 544 Bridgeport Rd., was winning an award from the Grand River Blues Society for contributing to the growth of blues music in the region. George co-founded a youth blues music camp 14 years ago.

We are committed to creating caring communities where each person can thrive in a safe, comfortable and affordable place they'll be proud to call home.



Tenant Quote

"Having a nurse here means someone connected with my apartment building knows something about my medical background, if needed."

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Beyond Housing ended the fiscal year with a modest operational surplus. Tenant rent was sufficient to cover annual operating expenses, allowing fundraising efforts to be directed towards the construction of new affordable housing. We are thankful for donors who have continued to honour their pledges for Bridgeport at Lancaster Phase 1, as well as those who made new donations and pledges designated towards Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors in St. Jacobs.

As noted in our Sprucelawn Update, we are thankful to have received donations and pledges totaling \$2,216,628 towards our revised goal of \$2.5 million. Fundraising is ongoing to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of this location.

Our audited financial statements are available on request or can be found online by clicking here: [Beyond Housing - Audited Financial Statements 2023.](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nancy Regehr – Chair
Chip Bender – Vice Chair
Amie McPhee – Treasurer
John Oudyk – Secretary
Jennifer Horner
Jennifer Justason
Steven Reesor Rempel
Saleh Saleh
Brian Unrau

We wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of retiring directors, Nancy Regehr 2011 to 2024, and Amie McPhee 2014 to 2024. They have both provided many years of strong leadership and have been greatly appreciated in their roles as directors.

Martin Buhr – President Emeritus



ADMIN & PROGRAM STAFF

Lori Martin - Administrative Assistant
Robin Near – Bookkeeper
Karen Ehlebracht – Community Nurse
Sue Martin – Community Support Worker
Dan Driedger – Executive Director
Taylor Martin – Operations Manager

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Satellite Community Homes | Dubrick Property Management Ltd.

Alfred Rempel – 544 Bridgeport Road
Rick & Linda Brown – Rockway Gardens Village
Sean & Lisa Harkness – Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors
Helen Bartsch – The Foundry
Susan Rempel – Waterloo Mennonite Homes



VISION

Caring communities where every person can thrive in a safe and affordable place they call home.

MISSION

We create homes for people in need of affordable housing. We develop housing that is economically and environmentally sustainable and includes supportive services.

VALUES

Housing is a Human Right

We believe that adequate, safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right. We are committed to providing quality, affordable housing that is thoughtfully designed and is responsive to the needs of tenants, recognizing that stable and secure housing improves quality of life.

Equity, Integrity and Respect

We respect and value the diversity of people in our community. We adhere to high ethical and professional standards in our work and relationships. We are fair and respectful in our interactions and treat everyone with respect and dignity.

Accountability and Sustainability

We are accountable for our actions. We accept responsibility for our performance and share the results of our work in an open and transparent manner. We balance fiscal prudence with asset preservation, environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

Collaboration and Community

Through collaboration and partnerships, we work with others to achieve common goals, build communities and create places to call “home”. We provide support services to our tenants to develop communities where each person is valued and has a sense of belonging.

Creativity and Innovation

We are open to change and we continuously seek new approaches to enhance the development and operation of affordable housing.

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