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Spring Newsletter 2024

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the content of our spring newsletter, I can't help but admit that I'm inspired by the people who are associated with the ongoing work of Beyond Housing. By Martin Buhr, who led the organization during our formative years and remains actively involved. By everyone who has donated to the Sprucelawn capital campaign, helping to raise (so far) \$2.4 million of the \$2.5 million required. I'm inspired by the dedication of all the contractors and trades who were committed to the construction of a quality building at Sprucelawn.



Dan Driedger
Executive Director

I'm inspired by retiring board members who have devoted years of time to build Beyond Housing, by current board members who continue to guide our work, and by new board members who will bring new ideas, expertise and experiences to help shape our work.

Inspiration also comes from our small but mighty staff who creatively tend to a variety of issues and challenges every day to keep our things running smoothly. I'm inspired by tenants, like the ones highlighted at Sprucelawn. They have gone beyond expectations to develop an engaged community of care and support, with activities to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be involved in their new home. And of course, I'm inspired by people who can't wait to register for our annual bike-a-thon so that they can start asking others to support our work with a sponsorship.


They say it takes a village to raise a child. I believe it also takes a community to create affordable housing that people can truly call home. However you are connected to the work of Beyond Housing, thank you for the inspiration, and in many cases the perspiration, that makes our work possible.

Dan Driedger

Executive Director

Sprucelawn Update

With spring having fully arrived in Waterloo Region, the final pieces of landscaping at Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors are being tended to. Since our [2023 Year End Update](#), the new addition is now home to 35 people. Including the existing building, Sprucelawn now has a total of 58 apartments making it our largest single location.



MAY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
			10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 ARTS & CRAFTS (A.R.)	10:30 BONGO GAMES (A.R.) NEW DATE STAMP & OCT WEEK!	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.)	4	
5	COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) CHAIR YOGA 10:30 CARDS (A.R.) 2-4	10:30 LIGHT AEROBICS (A.R.) *NEW (A.R.)	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 ARTS & CRAFTS (A.R.) 200 BONGO GAMES (A.R.)	8	10:30 CORE / STRETCH (A.R.) *NEW	9	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 SPINNING (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.)
MOTHER'S DAY 12	COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) CHAIR YOGA 10:30 CARDS (A.R.) 2-4	10:30 LIGHT AEROBICS (A.R.) *NEW (A.R.)	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 ARTS & CRAFTS (A.R.) 200 BONGO GAMES (A.R.) *NEW	15	10:30 CORE / STRETCH (A.R.) *NEW	16	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.)
19	VICTORIA DAY COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) CHAIR YOGA 10:30 CARDS (A.R.) 2-4	*NEW 10:30 LIGHT AEROBICS (A.R.)	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 ARTS & CRAFTS (A.R.) 200 BONGO GAMES (A.R.)	22	10:30 CORE / STRETCH (A.R.) *NEW	23	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.)
26	COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) CHAIR YOGA 10:30 CARDS (A.R.) 2-4	*NEW 10:30 LIGHT AEROBICS (A.R.)	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 ARTS & CRAFTS (A.R.) 200 BONGO GAMES (A.R.) MOVIE NIGHT 6:30 (A.R.)	29	10:30 CORE / STRETCH (A.R.) *NEW	30	10:30 CHAIR YOGA (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.) 200 COFFEE SOCIAL (A.R.)

Holidays and Observances: 5: Cinco de Mayo, 12: Mother's Day, 20: VICTORIA DAY
 *NEW LIGHT AEROBICS - TUESDAY 10:30 (A.R.) *NEW BONGO GAMES WED 22 (A.R.) *MAY 19 - SPINNING (A.R.)
 *NEW CORE STRETCH/STRETCH - TUESDAY 10:30 (A.R.) *NEW BINGO (FRIDAY 15 (A.R.)
 *NEW DAY/TIME CARDS - MONDAY 24 (A.R.) *NEW BINGO (FRIDAY 15 (A.R.) *POTLUCK MAY 24 (A.R.) *SILVER SHEETS (A.R.)

There are currently over 8,000 households on the Community Housing waiting list in Waterloo Region. Approximately 25% of them are seniors. In 2023, the CMHC average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1,346. Accessible market vacancies are consistently advertised at over \$2,000 with the median rent in Waterloo being \$2,150. For seniors who depend on government pensions, these rents are simply unaffordable.

At Sprucelawn the story is different. Rents start at \$506/month with an overall average for the entire building at \$744.42. That's 55.3% of the CMHC average. Tenant's budgets now have room for other household necessities such as nutritious food. This helps to reduce the strain on local food banks. All of this is only possible because of the strong and generous support of people like you. **Thank you!**

In addition to the positive financial impact for tenants, the existing tenants at Sprucelawn have welcomed their new neighbours, creating a real sense of community. A tenant-led Social Club has organized activities that include games, arts & crafts, cards, bingo, movie nights and potlucks for the entire building. The attached image of the May calendar will give you a sense of what this looks like. The location along the Mill Race also provides a wonderful opportunity for tenants to walk the trail or simply sit outside and enjoy the view of birds, muskrats, and other wildlife. The positive impact on their mental and social wellbeing may not be measurable in dollars and cents, but it is certainly lifegiving.

With the completion of construction, our efforts to raise the funds required are ongoing. There remains approximately \$100,000 outstanding towards our capital

campaign goal of \$2.5 million. We continue to welcome donations and pledges to ensure Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors remains financially sustainable for decades to come.

Please contact Laverne Brubacher or Dan Driedger to learn more about how you can become involved. 226-476-2535 or sprucelawn@beyondhousing.ca

DONATE NOW



AGM Update

We were thrilled to host our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday January 30th at Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors in St. Jacobs. There were 82 guests in attendance. The business portion of the meeting included recognition of retiring directors Nancy Regehr and Amie McPhee. We will certainly miss their wisdom and insights at the board table. We were pleased to welcome Rae Sands and Fadhila Balogun as new directors. You can learn more about them here: [Board of Directors](#). The balance of the AGM was dedicated to updates on current projects and new opportunities.



The highlight this year was an engaging presentation by Markus Moos, a Registered Professional Planner and Professor in the School of Planning, Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo. His insights and thoughts related to the development of affordable housing sparked a number of thoughtful responses and questions.

For those unable to attend, the AGM was recorded and is available for viewing on our YouTube channel [here](#), with the 2023 Annual Report [here](#).

Out Spok'n Bike-a-thon June 8th

There is just one month to go until our 2024 Out-Spok'n Bike-a-thon! This year, we will be hosting a hybrid version of this event. You are welcome to join us on June 8th in Elmira for the traditional ride on the Kissing Bridge Trail, to take part in the early morning 60km ride, or to participate remotely at a location and time that is convenient for you. Click the image below to register or to sponsor someone who has already registered.

Download the event [POSTER](#)

Download the event [PLEDGE FORM](#)

All donations for this year's event will go towards our Sprucelawn Apartments for Seniors Project in St. Jacobs.



REGISTER NOW
Saturday, June 8th

www.beyondhousing.ca



Martin Buhr's 85th Birthday

Turning 85 is no small feat. And to be blessed to do so with good health was not something Martin Buhr, our founder, took for granted. As January 9th 2024 drew nearer, Martin began to ponder how he could celebrate this significant milestone while also doing something to help others. Part of the impetus was a “*call to action*” that he had read in an editorial in The Record regarding the need for affordable housing. Martin wondered “*what could he do?*”.

An avid cyclist, Martin has always participated in our annual Out-Spok'n Bike-a-thon for Affordable Housing, leading the way with his personal

fundraising efforts. For his 85th birthday however, he wanted to do something more significant.

The challenge he set himself was to cycle 850km, starting on his birthday and ending with the bike-a-thon on June 8th. He purchased a spinner that allowed him to convert his road bike into a stationary one and on a snowy winter day, began pedaling 1 rotation of the wheel, 1 km, at a time. He also challenged others to support his efforts and set up a fundraising page on Canada Helps. His fundraising goal was also ambitious; \$85,000!

Inspired by Martin's determination, people began to respond. In keeping with the theme of Martin's 85th birthday, many donations were made in multiples of 85. From \$85 to \$8,500, donors emphatically indicated their desire to take direct action, along with Martin, to create more housing. As of this writing, the total is now over \$100,000! Martin is both humbled and energized by this tremendous support. He says *"I received timely morale-raising messages and donations at critical points to boost my belief that the ambitious goal could be met, as a reward for my sweat equity contribution. When my cleaning lady, upon seeing a bike in my living room, asked if she could contribute \$85, I no longer felt I was on a fool's errand."*

While his original goal has been reached, he continues to ride, now outside with the arrival of spring weather, towards his commitment of 850km. He also continues to welcome support by echoing the original call to action that first motivated him. *"I'm 85 and riding 850km to help build new affordable housing"* he tells people. *"What can you do to help?"*

In daring to dream of an 85th birthday fundraiser of \$85,000, Martin remembered the adage to respond within one's ability and assets, in his case the accrued goodwill and support of like-minded partners in pro-active community service.

"As long as I have life and breath, I wish to participate in life-changing community enterprises. Thank you for this unique opportunity to help fund a cause near and dear to my heart" he says.

If Martin's story has also inspired you, you can visit his fundraising page to make a donation here: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/mennohomes-inc/p2p/Martins-85th/>

Martin gratefully acknowledges the support of 66 donors, including lead sponsors Bob & Judy Shantz with Larry and Marcia Shantz, Jim and Lorna Blair Charitable Foundation, Brenda and Gary Leis, Dale and Cheryl Brubacher-Cressman, GA Masonry, RBJ Schlegel Family Foundation, and 3 anonymous supporters.

See you at the

Relief Sale?

For the past number of years,
we've had the opportunity to

“pitch our tent” at the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. We will be there again this year on May 24th and 25th. Please be sure to keep an eye out for our **brand new Beyond Housing tent!**



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