

Monday, January 16, 2012

Mayor Ford and Members of the City of Toronto Executive Committee
Committee Room 1, City Hall

**Re: Proposed Disposition of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Properties
Operated by Homes First Society at 57 Brandon Avenue, 287 Jarvis Street, and 75 Northcote
Avenue (Executive Committee Agenda, Meeting 15, January 24, 2012)**

Dear Mayor Ford and Members of the City of Toronto Executive Committee:

As Chair of the Board of Directors of the Homes First Society (HFS) and on behalf of the HFS Board of Directors, management, and residents, I am writing to request that the properties at the above addresses be removed from TCHC's list of "scattered housing units" to be sold.

We understand that rooming houses are exempted from the proposed disposition, and as such, the above mentioned properties should be removed from the list.

These rooming-house style properties provide a cost-effective, critically important housing model for people who are considered to be the hardest to house and who have the fewest options available to them. It should be noted that these are not single family houses.

Disposing of these three supportive HFS Managed properties would do significant damage to the ongoing struggle to effectively address the problem of homelessness in Toronto. Every unit is essential in the effort to help people reconnect with society and stay off the streets.

Housing or shelter is a basic human need. Homelessness due to catastrophic illness, unemployment, mental health, addictions, and family breakdown is a personal crisis which can lead to a progressive downward spiral of fewer and fewer options, diminishing health, and limited social outcomes. The longer an individual is on the street, the more difficult it is to reenter housing, address the underlying reasons for the homelessness, reengage in society, and regain employment. At Home First, we believe this process of re-engagement most effectively begins with stable housing and continues with supports provided to assist with underlying issues such as mental illness, alienation, and addictions.

HFS develops and provides supportive housing (i.e. affordable, stable housing and support services) to break the cycle of homelessness for people who have the most difficulty obtaining any form of housing and who have the fewest housing options. Currently, we have a waiting list in excess of 1,000 people.



HFS operates 16 supportive housing and shelter sites providing both accommodation and support services to more than 500, seniors, single adults, children, families, and youth in the City of Toronto. We deliver these services on our own and in partnerships with others, such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto's Streets-to-Homes program, and Seaton House. True to our mandate, our work reduces the strain on more expensive alternatives, such as hospitals, addiction treatment beds, prisons, and even shelter beds.

As the operators of these three properties HFS provides accommodation that differs significantly from traditional social housing.

- **Jarvis Street** provides accommodation to 24 single, older-adult men with issues of chronic alcoholism, mental and physical health. It is located on a downtown arterial road nearby Seaton House. The residents are typically referred to HFS by Seaton House and are considered to be amongst the chronically hardest to house population in the City of Toronto.
- **57 Brandon Avenue** is a five-bedroom rooming house located in the Dupont and Dufferin area and is home to five adult men. **75 Northcote Avenue** is a six-bedroom rooming house located in the Queen and Dufferin area and is home to six adult men. Both Brandon and Northcote accommodate men that are part of the **City of Toronto's Streets-to-Homes Program**. Typically, the residents of these two buildings suffer from a combination of mental and physical health issues, acquired brain injuries, and addictions. The Streets to Homes program is a priority for the City of Toronto in its approach to housing the most vulnerable and difficult to house in the City.

These properties are maintained in good condition, given the cost-effective arrangement between TCHC and HFS, and would be difficult to replace. Replacement costs would include relocation expense, legal fees, new asset recapitalization, public and private programming disruption, and, severe tenant disruption which could result in increased institutionalization cost.

On behalf of Homes First Society, I strongly urge the Toronto City Executive Committee to remove 287 Jarvis Street, 57 Brandon Avenue, and 75 Northcote Avenue, three important supportive housing properties, from the TCHC's disposition list.

Homes First Society wants to be part of a new solution to the ongoing issue of the aging housing infrastructure challenging TCHC and other housing providers, both private and not profit.

Please see the attached files:

- Appendix A – HFS Overview
- Appendix B – HFS Homelessness to Housing Continuum

For more information about Homes First Society, please visit our website at www.homesfirst.on.ca. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me at admin@homesfirst.on.ca or at 416-395-0902.

Best Regards,
Fran Perkins, Chair, Homes First Society Board of Directors

Registered Canadian Charitable Registration No. 118962182 RR



United Way
Member Agency

Homes First Society's Mission

To achieve its Mission, Homes First Society uses its financial and human resources within an anti-oppression and anti-racist framework to work with the strengths of tenants and community partners to:

1. Support tenants in overcoming the effects of displacement, isolation from community, and dependence.
2. Provide tenants with the tools and opportunities to control their own lives while respecting the rights of others.
3. Manage Homes First Society resources in an effective, efficient, sustainable manner.

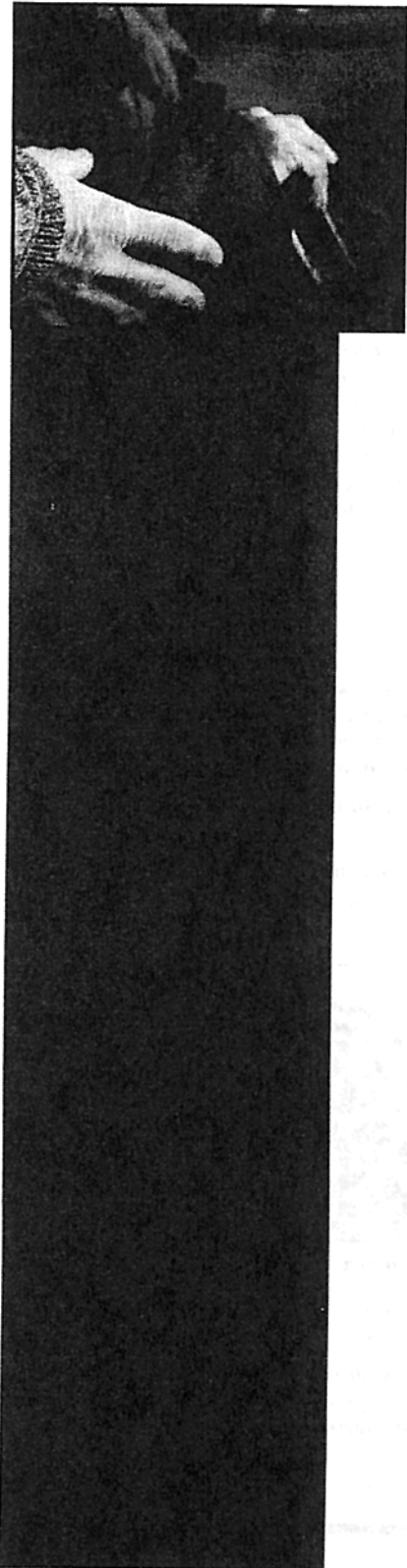
4. Develop and maintain cooperative relationships with our community.

5. Ensure a workplace environment that encourages meaningful staff participation in strategic planning and program development.

6. Ensure tenants have fair access to resources, equality of opportunity to contribute to decision-making at Homes First Society, and freedom from discrimination pursuant to the Human Rights Code of Ontario.

7. Continue to develop new approaches to ensure the right to decent affordable housing,

dignity, quality of life, and equal opportunities for individuals and families marginalized by poverty and homelessness.



Our History

Homes First Society was established in 1983 by a group of organizations working directly with the homeless on the streets of Toronto. From the beginning, our goal has been to develop and implement creative and innovative solutions to the many challenges of housing the homeless.

Homes First was founded as a new response to an old

problem. Our approach is to build and/or manage non-profit housing by organizing homeless people to identify their own housing needs and necessary support services, and to have a voice in ongoing property management decisions.

Our first project was opened on Shuter Street in the heart of downtown Toronto in 1984. A new building containing seventeen

shared accommodation apartments consisting of seventy-seven units, Shuter was the first housing project for single people in the City of Toronto. It won an Ontario Award for Outstanding Model Project during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987.

With the support of the City

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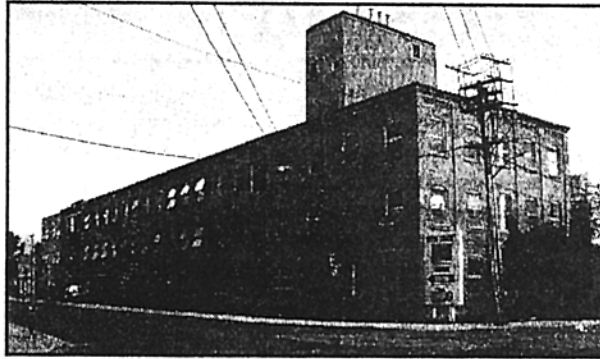
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History (continued)

of Toronto and the Province of Ontario, Homes First later converted a warehouse into 'StreetCity' which opened in 1989. Designed as a self-contained village complete with streets, housing units, a variety store, and an internally-run 'bank', StreetCity became home to seventy single men and women who had not been served by the existing emergency housing system. The first of its kind, StreetCity drew world-wide attention and became a model for other projects in Canada and the United States.

Based on StreetCity, Strachan House is a converted warehouse containing eleven 'houses', each with its own kitchen, bathroom, and common area, and connected by a network of 'streets'. There is a total of seventy-six units at Strachan, each with its



In 1999 the architects of Strachan House received the Governor General's Medal of Excellence for design.

own front door onto the 'street'. The architects of Strachan House worked closely with Homes First development staff and tenants in the design of the site, and in 1999, they received the Governor General's Medal of Excellence for the design.

Savard's is a hostel containing thirty beds for women with a long history of homelessness and mental illness. Developed by Homes First and the Women's Street Survivors Resource Group, Savard's was designed to offer a high-tolerance, low-demand environment. It was the first of its kind and remains unique in the City of Toronto. It has also been an incredible success. Many women who were too frightened to use the existing hostel system feel safe at Savard's.

Homes First currently owns and/or manages sixteen housing projects, including three hostels, consisting of 425 units and housing more than 550 men, women, and children. We were the first and remain one of the largest providers of non-profit housing for the homeless in the City of Toronto.

Our Properties

Bellevue

Bellevue is a three-story apartment building containing twenty-eight units for single people. Located on a corner lot in the heart of Kensington Market, its lush lawn, flower beds and vegetable gardens are maintained by Bellevue's active tenants.

Huron

The property on Huron Street is a rooming house with shared facilities containing ten units for single men.

Jarvis House

Located near Jarvis and Dundas, Jarvis House consists of six apartments each containing four units. These are home to twenty-four single men aged forty-five and over.

Jarvis House has a strong sense of community which is reflected in the friendly atmosphere and the large participation at house meetings and organized events.

A renovated historical building, Jarvis House is owned by the Toronto Housing Company and managed by Homes First.

Meegwetch Place

Meegwetch Place consists of sixteen townhouses and fifty apartments. Occupying a small block in the west-end of Toronto, Meegwetch Place is a diverse and vibrant community where nineteen languages are spoken.

Developed by Homes First and opened in 1991, "Meegwetch" means "thank you" in the First Nations language of the Ojibway.

Pleasant Manor

Pleasant Manor is a renovated historical building containing sixteen single-occupancy units. Originally a hotel and tavern, Homes First received a Commendation from Heritage Toronto for the re-adaptive use of this designated heritage site.

Opening in 1996, the first tenants at Pleasant Manor were referred by Seaton House and had all spent many years on

the streets and in the hostel system. The tenants were closely involved in all stages of the development of the site.

Brandon House

The property on Brandon Avenue is a rooming houses with shared facilities. Brandon contains five units.

Northcote

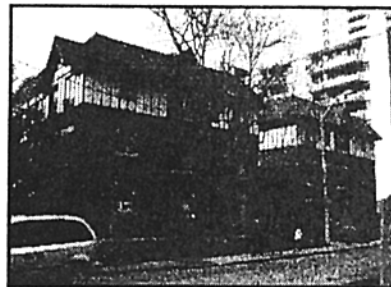
The property on Northcote Avenue is rooming houses with shared facilities. Northcote contains six units.

Savard's

Savard's is a hostel containing thirty beds and was designed for women with a long

history of homelessness and mental illness.

Developed by Homes First and a group of agencies, government programs and individuals who came together to form the



Our Vaughan Road building.

(Continued on page 3)

Our Properties (continued)

Women's Street Survivors Resource Group, Savard's was designed to offer a high-tolerance, low-demand environment. It was the first of its kind and remains unique in the City of Toronto. It has also been an incredible success: many women who were too frightened to access the existing hostel system feel safe at Savard's.

Scarborough Shelter

In early 2009, Homes First opened a sixty-bed, mixed shelter in Scarborough.

Sheila Miller Building

The Sheila Miller Building consists of twenty-two units for single women and their families. Developed through a partnership between Homes First and the Women's Housing Design Group, the project was designed to provide housing for women escaping domestic violence.

The tenants and staff work continually at building a strong and active community where women can come together to share their experiences and abilities to create a safe and supportive environment.

Shuter

Our first project was opened on Shuter Street in the heart of downtown Toronto in 1984. A new apartment building

containing seventeen shared-accommodation apartments consisting of seventy-seven units, Shuter was the first housing project for single people in the City of Toronto.



The historic Bellevue building located in the Kensington Market neighbourhood.

Spadina Houses

The two properties on Spadina Road are rooming houses with shared facilities. One contains seven units for single men. The other contains six units for single women.

Strachan House

Strachan House is a converted warehouse located in the west end of Toronto. Based on the original StreetCity, Strachan House

consists of eleven houses, each with their own kitchen, bathroom, and common area, and connected by a network of streets. There are seventy-six units for single adult men and women and is a first step off the street. At Strachan each unit has their own front door and a window onto the streets. In June 2003 a twelfth house was added with funding assistance from SCPI and the City of Toronto.

Levitt Goodman Architects worked closely with Homes First development staff and tenants in the design of Strachan House. In 1999, they were the recipient of the Governor General's Medal of Excellence for this design.

Vaughan

Built in 1929 and renovated by Homes First in 1990, Vaughan is a three-story apartment building containing twenty-nine units for single people and families. Located near Bathurst and St. Clair, Vaughan provides safe and affordable housing for a diverse community including new immigrants and refugees.

Wales Avenue

The property on Wales Avenue is a rooming house containing five units for single newcomers and refugees and their children.

The People We Serve

An individual who is considered the hardest to house may be someone who has been living on the streets, or someone who has been evicted several times for behavioural issues. Very often, an individual considered hardest to house has mental health and/or addiction issues and may be involved in criminal activities such as theft or prostitution to support their habit.

Homes First operates on the premise that people need homes *before* they can begin to work on their other issues. Homes First goes beyond the provision of basic housing by providing support to individuals so they may maintain their housing and be-

gin to work on those issues that are barriers to their integration into the community.

The residents and tenants of Homes First

are representative of all parts of our population. Although our residents are of all ages, we have noticed that our tenants and residents average and

median ages has increased. Our average resident is now in the early to mid-fifties, which is somewhat in sync with the Baby Boomers. However, individuals who have

been on the streets for many years or have been treated for mental health issues show more physical signs of aging than the general population.

"Homes First operates on the premise that people need homes before they can begin to work on their other issues."

There are many reasons and causes for homelessness. Some of our residents have become homeless because of life altering situations, such as job loss, marriage break-ups, coupled with mental health issues, and their inability to cope with these changes. HFS

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The People We Serve (continued)

also supports individuals fleeing domestic violence and refugees to Canada fleeing torture in their home country.

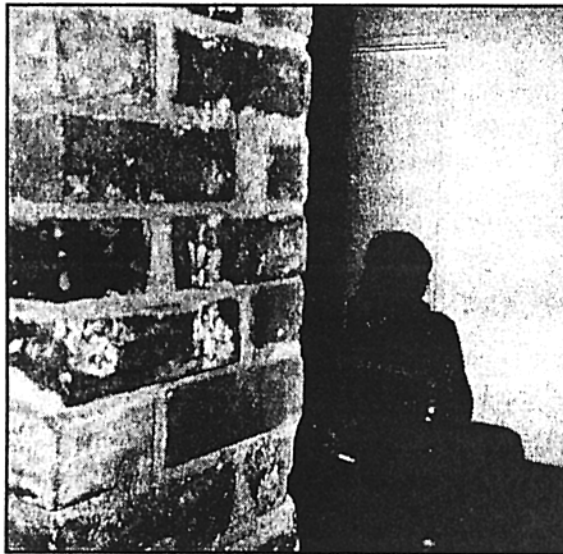
Through a Case Management approach, (the term "Case Management" sounds very clinical, so we prefer to refer to it as "Assisted Self-Help"), we work with our residents to develop goals, and put in place strategies to help them reach their goals. These goals can be as basic as obtaining identification, setting up a bank account, life skills such as personal hygiene and house-keeping, right through to employment training, education, and entering the work force.

SANDY'S STORY

Sandy grew up as a long-term foster son of a couple who were considered too old to adopt him, in a small town in south-western Ontario. Sandy had a normal childhood, doing well both socially and scholastically, and participating in local baseball and hockey teams. Everything seemed on track for Sandy until he turned seventeen. With legal maturity approaching, Sandy became more and more concerned with his status as a foster-child. He was unable to accept his foster-parents' explanation for not adopting him, and became more and more hostile until one day he struck his foster-father and tried to destroy the family car with a sledgehammer. Subsequently, Sandy was arrested and hospitalized. At this point he was diagnosed and treated for schizophrenia. At first Sandy responded well and returned home to his foster-parents. He tried to return to school, but was unable to concentrate, became depressed, and stopped attending school altogether. When Sandy's foster-mother was diagnosed with cancer and hospitalized, the increased stress led to a deterioration in the already strained relationship between he and his step-father, Sandy left home. At first Sandy was able to stay with friends, but his behaviour deteriorated further and he found himself in the local men's shelter.

Sandy isn't sure how he arrived in Toronto nine years ago. At first he was able to obtain "pick-up" work while staying in shelters, but then began taking his medica-

tions more and more sporadically. Sandy, like many other people who suffer from mental illness, found the significant physical side-effects of his medication too difficult to tolerate, and he refused to take medication altogether. Like many other homeless people with schizophrenia, Sandy had learned to self-medicate with street drugs.



At first Sandy was not addicted to any one specific drug, but was addicted to drug use itself and used substances interchangeably. Over the years Sandy used marijuana, ecstasy, heroin, crack, and alcohol as well as a variety of street-obtained prescription medications. Eventually crack and alcohol emerged as his drugs of choice. As is true for many others, for Sandy drug use seemed to be a solution on many levels. First, the immediate gratification of the high; second, long-term use tends to numb the individual, alleviating some of the effects of mental illness; and third, for many isolated and marginalized individuals, drug culture provides a level of social acceptance that mainstream culture does not. One further element to the combined mental health and addiction syndrome is that drug use is a very effective disguise for mental illness. Behaviours that may have their basis in mental illness are often ascribed to drug use and as such are dealt with through the court system. Once it is determined that mental health issues are the reasons for the illegal actions, the courts are reluctant to deal with the individual. On the other hand, the mental

health system cannot treat the individual without the person's permission, unless they are a clear danger to themselves or others, and the use of drugs is not considered to be such a danger. This unfortunate overlap of conflicting ethics mean that many people fall through the cracks and are virtually ignored by both the justice and mental health systems.

As Sandy's life became more and more chaotic, he was unable to remain in shelters and moved into the ravines around the Don Valley, as well as spending some time at Tent City.

Sandy's original contact with Homes First was through an outreach worker at Tent City. Although he did not enter housing at that time, he maintained sporadic contact while living rough, and came to Strachan House two winters ago, during an extreme cold spell.

Strachan House is a transitional housing shelter run by Homes First that provides housing for 76 men and women. The Strachan House program begins with a hostel stay that typically lasts for two weeks, but can be extended if required. During the hostel stay the individual gets their own

room, three meals a day, is allowed to have guests, and can come and go without a curfew. Residents are required to abide by Strachan House Resident Rules, (i.e., signing in guests, and behaving in a non-aggressive manner). At the end of a successful completion of the hostel stay, the person has the option of becoming a tenant.

When Sandy first came to Homes First he was reluctant to discuss his illness with staff, as he was afraid of forced hospitalization and compliance with medication.

Sandy successfully completed his hostel stay and decided to stay at Strachan House. The first year was difficult, as Sandy remained unmedicated and was generally reclusive. He found dealing with others difficult unless he was drunk or using crack. When drunk, Sandy was prone to sporadic violent outbursts — outbursts that alarmed both Strachan House residents and neighbours of Strachan House, but these outbursts never led to physical aggression.

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The People We Serve (continued)

Eventually Homes First staff were able to convince Sandy to seek addictions counselling with a doctor. Although Sandy refuses to see a psychiatrist, his doctor has been able to get him to accept the medication.

While Sandy is still struggling, considerable progress has been made. Sandy has been stable and on his medication for over a year now, and while he still occasionally uses crack, has stopped drinking and is seeing his addictions counsellor biweekly. Also, Sandy has developed life skills, such as cooking and cleaning for himself. However, while no longer socially isolated, Sandy remains reserved around people he does not know well, and is reluctant to go out into public places. One major hurdle Sandy still needs to overcome before moving on to a self-contained unit, is his fear of other people. To help Sandy accomplish this, Homes First staff are working with Sandy to develop external supports that will pull him into greater involvement in the wider community—through education, employment, volunteerism, or recreational activities.

RICO'S STORY

Rico was orphaned at the age of fifteen when his parents died in a car accident. At

that time, his older brother James, (who was twenty at the time), became his caregiver as there were no other family members available. The two brothers managed to stay together for six years, first surviving on welfare and "pick-up" work.



Rico's brother James became involved with drugs while in high school. After their parents' death, James became increasingly involved with drugs, to the point of dealing, seeing it as a easy form of income. Rico managed to finish high school and to find entry-level work in construction, while James was in and out of trouble, became entangled in gang-related activities, and eventually James was jailed on armed robbery and drug related charges.

Rico was unable to maintain the apartment he had shared with his brother on his own.

Rico moved into his work van and maintained his job for another few months, but began drinking too much and lost his job. Because Rico did not have a home address, he was unable to obtain welfare and his situation grew desperate. In desperation Rico went to the Scott Mission, where he was directed to Homes First.

Rico began living in one of Homes First Society's transitional shelters before beginning the slow movement back to social connectedness.

With the help of Homes First staff, Rico was able to establish a source of income, and became a resident of Strachan House. Rico developed stable relationships with Homes First staff, as well as with other residents, which led him to volunteer within the community.

Rico began as a volunteer with St. Christopher's as a driver for their outreach van, this experience eventually led to employment with St. Christopher's.

Once it became clear that Rico no longer required the supports of shelter staff, he was encouraged to transfer to one of Homes First's other sites, where he now lives in his own self-contained apartment.

Tenant Services

At Homes First, we understand that each of our tenants has a personal story that has led them to the streets. Our extensive tenant support services assist tenants in overcoming the effects of displacement, isolation and dependence and provide the tools and opportunities for them to take control of their lives and step back into community.

These tenant support services include:

- Individual case management;
- Individual and group counselling;
- Crisis intervention, mediation, and conflict resolution;
- Life skills training, which can include: personal hygiene and self-care, nutrition and basic cooking skills, home cleaning and basic maintenance;
- Food access programs;



- Housing supports including options counselling and referrals;
- Employment readiness counselling including skills development, resume preparation, job search, and interview techniques;
- Referrals to social services including government programs and those provided by other non-profit agencies; and
- Community development, including social and recreational activities.

Strachan House, with funding from the City of Toronto, initiated the community engagement project, "The Good Neighbours PhotoVoice Project". Residents from both Strachan House and the wider community took photographs of their daily lives, and then met once a week to discuss and share their stories of the neighbourhood.



Homes First Society's Board of Directors

- Fran Perkins, Chair
- Cathie Macdonald, Past Chair
- Patsy Russell, Treasurer
- Beate Bowron, Secretary
- David Dell, Director
- Leanne Foster, Director
- Wes Gerlee, Director
- Carroll Guen Hart, Director
- Dan Hill, Director
- Jeremy Roach, Director
- Ed Snook, Director
- Cyndi Thomas, Director
- Alexis Van Halen, Director
- Jeffrey Wood, Director

Homes First SOCIETY

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS



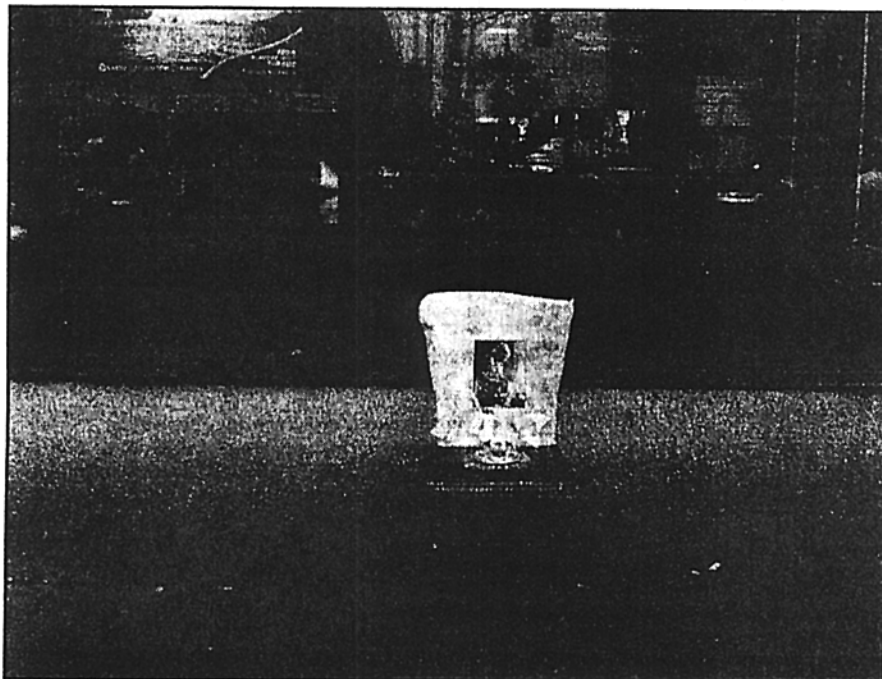
Homes First Society's Staff

Homes First Society operates with 90 staff members. The organizational structure consists of five core departments including administration, finance, property management, housing management, and shelters management.

The following individuals comprise the senior management team:

Patricia Mueller, Executive Director
Yushan Chiu, Finance Manager
Caroline Ferris, Human Resources
Edie Fisher, Housing Manager
Deena Nelson, Shelters Manager
Justin Ryan, Property Manager

For more information,
please visit our website at :
www.homesfirst.on.ca
or contact us at our
Administrative Office:
90 Shuter Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5B 2K6
Phone: 416-395-0902
Fax: 416-214-1873

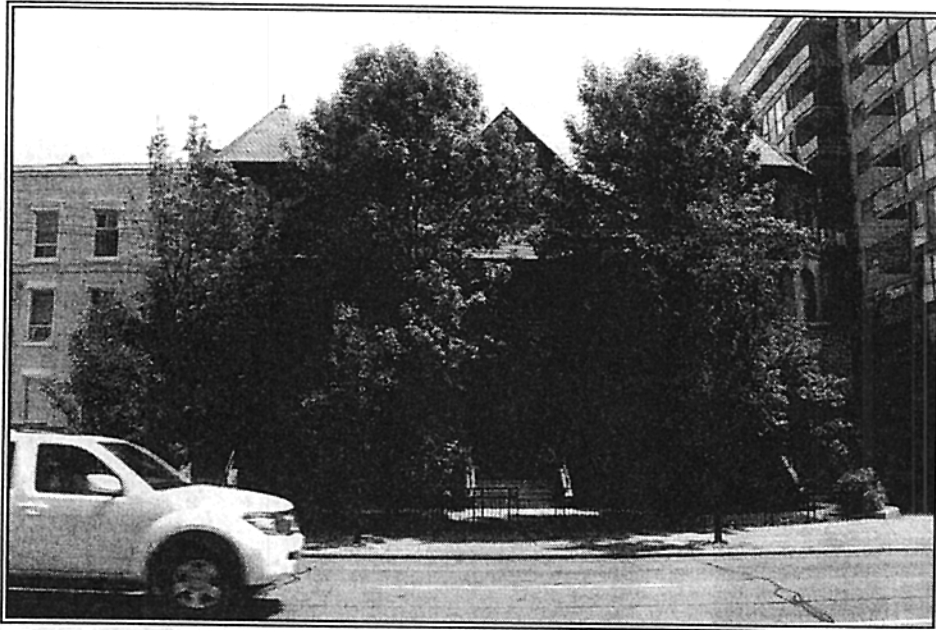


Homelessness to Housing Continuum

When you're homeless, sometimes an address is the biggest first step of them all...

When you are living on the street or in marginalised shelter, it's hard to be part of a community, or obtain a primary care physician. And it's impossible to try and find a job, receive a monthly welfare cheque, or keep in touch with your family. The challenges of being homeless can be completely overwhelming.

This forgotten slice of the homeless population, "the hardest to house" is the group Homes First prioritizes. Operating on the premise that *people need homes before they can begin to work on their other issues*, Homes First goes beyond the provision of basic housing by providing support for daily life to its residents. This support – assistance with activities of daily living, counselling, employment counselling, food access programs, and social service referrals – allows them to maintain their housing, and begin to work on those issues that are barriers to their re-integration into the community.



287 Jarvis Street Background:

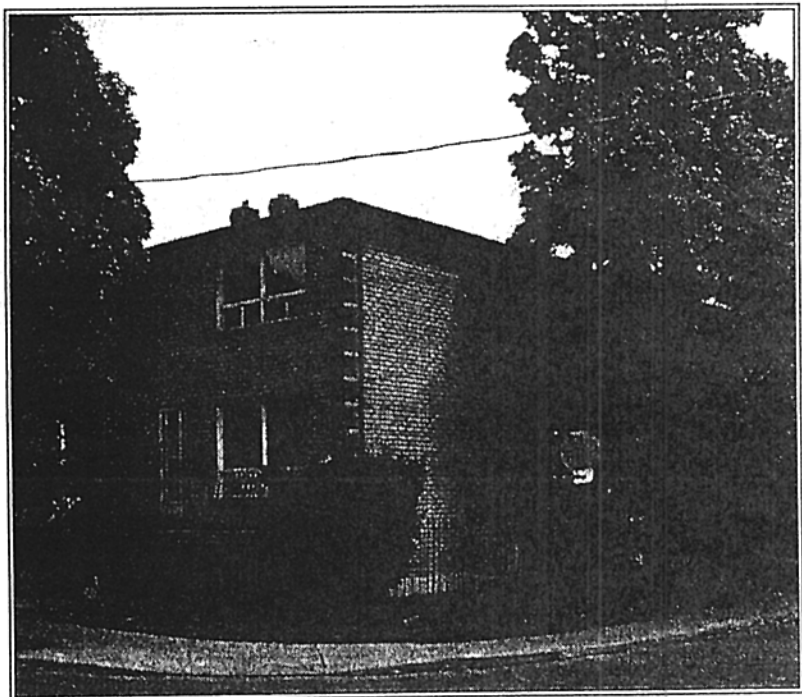
In 1990, the city's housing department approached Homes First Society to work with them to restore 287 Jarvis, "Jarvis House," and convert it into a permanent dwelling for 24 homeless men. Around the same time, a report requested by Metro Council urged sweeping changes to Seaton House, saying the massive building had become a human warehouse that offered little hope or training for residents. Since that time, Jarvis House has been home to older adult men with issues of alcoholism and mental health, who have been referred to Homes First Society by Seaton House.

Mr. C's Story:

Mr. C is amongst the 24 homeless men from Seaton House chosen to live on their own in Jarvis House, a semi-communal housing project supervised by the City of Toronto and Homes First Society. Seaton is a difficult place to live and regain independence. Everything is done for you: it's a large institution and hours are strictly regulated and meals provided. Some former Seaton House residents hadn't cooked a meal in years before coming to Jarvis house.

Like many of the former residents of Seaton House who call Jarvis House home, while Mr. C lived on the street for more than a decade, life on the street did not make him "street tough", only more vulnerable to predators. While living on the street and Seaton House, Mr. C was frequently robbed and beaten. Seaton House staff recognized that Mr. C did not have the capacity to live independently, and would need supports to help him become housed and stay off the street – supports like those provided by Homes First Society.

Mr. C has almost no life skills whatsoever – he relies heavily on staff to help him get through everyday activities. He needs prompting to do laundry, to clean, to bath, to buy groceries and eat regularly – everyday tasks that he can easily overwhelm him. Also, the semi-communal arrangement of Jarvis House has resulted in a sense of camaraderie and protectiveness with the residents – Mr. C's neighbours, also former residents of Seaton look out for Charlie and help him every day.



57 Brandon Avenue and 75 Northcote Avenue Background:

Both Northcote (above left) and Brandon (above right) houses men that are part of The City of Toronto's Streets-to-Homes Program. This program is a priority for the City of Toronto in its approach to housing the most vulnerable and difficult to house in the City.

The stories of the men who call Brandon and Northcote home are varied. Some of the residents of these houses were at one time employed, owned homes, and until becoming victims of a physical injury (i.e., acquired brain injury), enjoyed a typical family life. Others have lived on the street for many years with undiagnosed mental health issues. All of the residents of these houses have previously attempted to live independently without success, and had ended up back on the street before finding a home with Homes First Society

Brandon Resident Story:

Mr. L had lived on the streets of Toronto for many years before a “Streets to Homes” outreach worker referred him to Homes First Society just over a year ago. Mr. L suffers from a diagnosed mental health issue, but is unable to acknowledge it and refuses to take medication, and while he is not a danger to others, life on the street has taken its toll.

In the past, Mr. L had lived in various other types of shared living accommodation, but always left after a short time because he felt unsafe. Mr. L is still adjusting to living at Brandon, and staff are working with him to help him feel safe and to provide the supports he needs to stabilize him before he can begin to address his ongoing mental health problems.

Northcote Resident Story:

After suffering from a brain injury years ago, Mr. T developed a pain medication addiction, and ended up living on the streets of Toronto for many years. Mr. T has repeatedly attempted to hold down a job to support himself, but was unable to do so due to the issue of pain from his original brain injury and memory problems caused by both the injury and his medication addiction.

A City of Toronto “Streets to Homes”, Outreach Worker helped Mr. T recognize that because of his deteriorating health, he would not be able to survive on his own on the street for much longer, and helped him to find a home at Northcote.

While Mr. T is still struggling with the pain from his injury, and still battling his pain medication addiction, with the help and supports put in place by Homes First Society staff, he is working towards overcoming his addiction, and sees Northcote as a stepping stone to independent housing.