

Annual Report

OWN Housing Committee

Jan. 1, 2015 to Dec. 31, 2015

It was another extremely busy year for us all as we met monthly and worked hard to be well informed on where the money comes from, what is being built and what we, as older women, see as good future design in buildings. We met accessibility designers, architects, building developers, politicians and other housing advocates.

- **January 2015: Paul Chisholm, Executive Director and GM of Housing Connections, a subsidiary of TCH,** visited. They manage the Rent Geared to Income (RGI) Housing Wait List, which currently has 90,000 households on it. We asked him if elderly women needing housing received any kind of “priority” on the Wait List. He said they do not. The only people who receive priority are those escaping domestic violence or are terminally ill.
- **April 2015: Tom Clement, Executive Director, Co-operative Housing Federation Toronto (CHFT)** was our guest speaker. CHFT and CHFC continue to advocate with all three levels of government for additional mortgage funding for repairs to their aging co-op housing stock. They provide many RGI units. OWN supports all co-op housing.
- **May 11, 2015: Shelly Raymond, President, Soltera Co-Housing** gave a detailed and personal presentation on her affordable co-housing housing model. Being a realtor and business woman helped her overcome many difficult challenges in developing new housing. We applaud her long journey. For more info see: <http://solterraco-housing.com>.
- **June 8, 2015: OWN Housing member, Kate Chung, invited OWN members & others to the six marketing presentations made by students of Seneca College’s “Design for Social Change Program”.** OWN represented the “client” who wanted to convince a builder and/or developer that there is growing demand for barrier-free and universal design buildings to house people of all ages and abilities so they can “Age in Place”. This partnership gives OWN access and copyrights to this material.
- **Over the summer we toured Fred Victor’s new Victorian transitional housing for women.** Philanthropist David Brown purchased several Victorian homes and then partnered with Fred Victor to rebuild them to “above code” making them fire safe and soundproof. Each bedroom has a private bath and a large common dining hall in the basement. This is a shining example of how an old building can be made into safe affordable housing for lower income people. We congratulate David Brown, Fred Victor and OWN member Uli Groppler, Manager of Fred Victor’s Transitional Women’s Housing Program on their achievements.
- **OWN has established a relationship with a sister organization, Unitarian Commons** in sharing research, a needs assessment and waiting lists for purchase of units in a new universal design and affordable condo building. OWN and the BABA YAGA Place group are sharing interest in the re-development of the Mirvish properties commitment to create 1000 new affordable rental units.

In 2016 we are planning to hold a CHARRETTE.....

OWN Housing Committee: Uli Groppler, Ava Goodman, Barbara Lokach, Kate Chung, Margaret Jarvis, Norma Gamble, Erin Harris, Ronny Yaron, Sandy Prowse, Sheila Miller and Wendy Gartner. **Friends of OWN Housing Committee:** Danuta Zadorecki (Baba Yaga Toronto), Merle Alexander, Rahima Mulla, Sheilla Donohue and Sherri Russell.