



BMO Financial Group donates \$1 million to Streetohome for Howe Street project

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Dick Vollet, President and CEO and John McLernon, Chairman of Streetohome accept a cheque for \$1 million from Joanne Gassman, Senior Vice President, BC & Yukon Division at BMO Financial Group (photo Eric Dreger)

On November 28, 2011, BMO Financial Group announced a donation of \$1 million to Streetohome Foundation. The donation will support the development at 1249 Howe Street, a 12-storey building with 110 new supportive housing apartments for people living with HIV/AIDS in partnership with McLaren Housing Society. Streetohome is providing \$2.2 million to the project, \$1 million of which was donated by BMO.

“Streetohome Foundation has been an innovative force committed to finding new approaches to preventing and alleviating homelessness in Vancouver,” said Joanne Gassman, Senior Vice-President, BC & Yukon Division, BMO Bank of Montreal. **“BMO’s gift reflects our nationwide**

commitment to combat urban issues of poverty, youth unemployment and homelessness at the local level.”

1249 Howe Street is the third development to begin construction under a partnership between the Province, the City of Vancouver and Streetohome Foundation to build eight supportive housing developments on city-owned sites to help end homelessness in Vancouver.

“The combination of homelessness and HIV/AIDS can result in severe health concerns and expensive emergency services, making supportive housing a critical component for sustaining emotional and physical health,” said Dick Vollet, President of Streetohome Foundation. **“Streetohome is pleased by**

the strong commitment BMO is making to help provide safe, clean housing for people at risk of homelessness and living with HIV/AIDS.”

McLaren Housing Society will manage the building and provide supports including money management, recreational and social activities and food-related programming such as organized community dinners, cooking skills and food safety.

Streetohome, along with Minister Rich Coleman, Mayor Gregor Robertson, McLaren Housing Society and BMO gathered on November 28th to celebrate construction progress for the Howe Street project. The development broke ground in July 2011 and is expected to be complete in Spring 2013.

Streetohome supports Covenant House

Scotiabank and Bell Canada both give \$250,000 to help youth at risk of homelessness



From L-R: Krista Thompson, Executive Director, Covenant House; David Poole, Senior Vice President, BC & Yukon Region, Scotiabank; Dick Vollet, President & CEO Streetohome; and Rob Wilkins, Vice President, Downtown Vancouver & Northern BC District (photo Eric Dreger)



From L-R: George Cope, President & CEO, Bell Canada; Clara Hughes, Bell Let's Talk Spokesperson; Mary Deacon, Chair, Bell Mental Health Initiative; Dick Vollet, President & CEO Streetohome (photo Don Erhardt)

Streetohome is proud to support Covenant House Vancouver's Semi-Independent Housing Program for homeless or at-risk youth living with mental health and addictions issues. Supported by Covenant House Vancouver staff and the Inner City Youth Mental Health Team, youth are given access to a safe housing environment and supports including mental health and addictions evaluations, counseling and psychiatric support, addictions management counseling, and group activities that will help develop life skills.

“One of the most significant risk factors for homelessness is mental illness, and it’s a key risk factor in

youth homelessness,” said Dick Vollet, President of Streetohome Foundation. **“Youth are a particularly vulnerable group. Many young people leaving foster care are lacking in education, skills, and a safe place to live. Their situation can be complicated by developmental disabilities, mental health issues, and physical health problems.”**

Streetohome’s support of this innovative program is made possible through donations of \$250,000 each from Scotiabank and Bell Canada. The donations were announced at two events in November. Streetohome is very pleased to work with two companies so dedicated

to helping youth with mental health challenges.

“Covenant House Vancouver’s Semi-Independent Housing Program ensures that our youths’ mental health issues are diagnosed and treated, giving them the stability and health required to access existing housing in the community,” said Krista Thompson, Executive Director at Covenant House Vancouver. **“The support we are receiving is significant and clearly demonstrates a commitment to young people and the issue of mental health; we are proud of these partnership and the positive impact they will have for our youth.”**

Aboriginal Mother Centre opens

On December 9, 2011, Aboriginal Mother Centre officially opened its doors, providing mothers and children at risk of homelessness access to transformational homes that are linked to cultural traditions. Located at 2019 Dundas St. in Vancouver, the \$7.8-million development provides 16 suites, a shared kitchen and program and amenity space for Aboriginal women and their children.

The opening ceremony was followed by a traditional totem pole-raising ceremony with carving done by local artist Michael Dangeli. Streetohome granted \$500,000 to the reconstruction of the Aboriginal Mother Centre and attended the opening event alongside prominent leaders and members of the local and provincial Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal Mother Centre also provides a community drop-in centre, a commercial kitchen, a 25-space community day care, office and program space as well as commercial retail units for rent. The day care and transitional housing units in the building will be managed and operated by the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society in partnership with Lu'ma Native Housing Society.

A Message From Dick Vollet

Why should the non-profit sector collaborate?

In November I attended a conference at which 500 non-profit leaders gathered to discuss the topic of social innovation. The lively conversation got me thinking about collaboration and trust and what role Streetohome Foundation can play in fostering collaboration.

We all know that we would achieve more if we work together. So what's stopping us?

Just like every relationship, there must be a level of trust between all parties involved in order for true collaboration to exist. Without trust, the true work can never really begin because everyone involved spends too much time creating rules around "how" the work will be done to protect the interests of all the parties involved.

I am reminded of a lesson my mother taught me as a young boy, that trust is earned, not given. It's earned over time, by people doing what they say they will do. At Streetohome, there have been some courageous leaders committed to making a difference, and so an environment has been created where collaboration could flourish. The relationship we have built between the private sector, municipal and provincial governments and health authorities has proven that collaboration is the way forward when solving a complex issue like homelessness.

We need to experiment more, even if it is only in small ways. The only way to make something happen is to try it out, even if there's a chance for failure. Some of the most innovative projects would not have been produced if it weren't for taking chances. Two that come to mind are the Portland Hotel Society's Potluck Café and Atira's Imouto Housing for Young Women.

One of the key messages from the conference was that government, at whatever level, is looking for ways to work with us – not against us.

In the non-profit sector, there are a number of like-minded people working hard every day on issues like homelessness, mental health and addictions, housing, and food security, all of whom share common interests and goals. Collaboration, however, has been elusive for a number of reasons.

I recognize that trust is difficult to earn, in both business and personal relationships. It also takes time, something we have not always been willing to give in this age of immediate and instant gratification.



We have all had individual conversations about how the government cannot provide the resources or funding to solve all the social issues the non-profit sector is trying to service. Nor can the private sector or health authorities work independently on issues, and expect to be successful.

The only real solution to tackling the truly big issues we all face as a society is collaboration among the non-profit sector, the private sector, government and healthcare.

I look forward to working collaboratively with all our partners in the New Year.

From all of us at Streetohome to you and your family, have a safe and Merry Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dick Vollet'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial 'D'.

**Dick Vollet, President & CEO
Streetohome Foundation**

Partner Spotlight

Katherine Sanford Housing Society

The Katherine Sanford Housing Society (KSHS) began its work in 1989, and has since developed “16 licensed community residences and 3 supported apartment projects” for those in Vancouver and Richmond suffering with mental illness and addictions.

KSHS’ mission is based on the belief that all individuals with a mental illness and/or addictions have a right to decent, affordable housing that gives them dignity and independence.

Today’s Work and Focus

Since its establishment 22 years ago, KSHS has maintained its role is to:

- advocate for housing for people with a mental illness and/or addictions
- develop innovative, efficient, and cost-effective housing that is responsive to the individual needs of people with a mental illness and/or addictions
- ensure the best design and quality of construction of its houses
- manage its housing efficiently and meet the continuous needs of the people it serves

Through its multiple partnerships with a variety of organizations and individuals who have expertise in providing care, KSHS “develops a range of housing options, from community homes that are staffed 24 hours a day, to independent apartments that provide varying levels of support services”.

KSHS maintains that if individuals with mental illness and/or addictions are given secure, stable, supported housing, there



is a greater chance that they will recover and reach their potential as independent individuals.

Streethome & KSHS

Along with the Province of BC, the City of Vancouver, and KSHS, Streethome is funding the building of a new 62 unit facility at 7th Avenue and Fir Street, and a 147 unit project at 215 West 2nd Avenue.

Both facilities, which broke ground in 2010, will provide homes for individuals coping with mental illness and/or addictions and people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The two buildings will provide both housing and support services such as on-site and outreach workers for mental health treatment services, advocacy workers and support staff, along with advocacy, outreach and crisis prevention.

Streethome Foundation is proud to partner with the Katherine Sanford Society to ensure that residents of Vancouver living with mental illness have access to safe, decent, affordable housing and the support they need to make a difference in their lives.

about streethome

Streethome Foundation is a community organization working to ensure that all citizens of Vancouver have access to safe, decent, affordable housing.

We bring together business, government and community leaders to build resources and develop lasting solutions to homelessness.

Everyone has a role to play.

What can **you** do to help?
Be **part** of the solution.

Find out how you can be part of the solution at

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