

The
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NEW BRIGHTON HOUSING CO-OP

One of Canada's smallest co-ops celebrates 30 years with CHF Canada

By Leela Chinniah

At this year's AGM, CHF Canada honoured New Brighton Housing Co-op with a Member Loyalty Award. They were one of 16 co-ops that have been members of CHF Canada for 30 years straight.

New Brighton Housing Co-op started back in 1980. With only seven units, their renovated 1920s apartment building sits in the Old South part of London, Ontario.

**“It's a community.
It's the best.”**

Marion McCallum is a founding member of the co-op and still lives there. She was originally part of a food buying club and, as she describes it, “One day, one of the members said, ‘Anybody interested in starting a housing co-op?’”

CHF Canada was involved from the very start. A CHF Canada staff person attended some of the group's initial organizing retreats and provided them with the support and



expertise that they needed to carry the project through to completion.

From the beginning, social events have been an important part of keeping the small group together. McCallum recalls, “At the beginning, we ate together once a week.”

These days, people are too busy to have regular potlucks, but the sense of community is an integral part of the co-op.

McCallum, now 78, says “If I leave my groceries at the bottom of the steps, they always arrive at my door. I always called it The House.” For McCallum, the name is especially fitting. Her daughter lives in a unit upstairs from her.

For McCallum, ‘The House’ is not only her home, “It's a community. It's the best.”

 **NEW &
ONLINE**

**Beyond
Participation**



**20
VISION
20**

CHF Canada's website www.chfcanada.coop has a wide range of useful tools and guides in the Co-op Housing Resource Centre. The latest featured resource is called *Beyond Participation: building a foundation for real member involvement*.

This publication is a thought-provoking discussion of what we mean by meaningful member involvement in our housing co-ops and how we can implement new strategies that best serve the community's needs. It includes a useful discussion guide to help your co-op start a discussion about what kinds of member involvement are most meaningful in your community.



LONDON VOLUNTEERS HOST FIRST-RATE ANNUAL MEETING

CHF Canada delegates impressed by London's charm, talent and friendliness

By Kate Jones

From my perspective as the local co-ordinator of CHF Canada's 2010 Annual Meeting in London last June, this was indeed a positive event in many ways.

The planning committee, some of whom have participated for the third time, worked exceptionally hard from September of 2009 to make the conference both a positive and unique experience for the participants and they did not fail to deliver.

The biggest challenge was amassing the required army of volunteers. But we had more than enough people, many of whom had volunteered in 2006 and who were more than happy to help out again. We received a huge amount of positive feedback from participants stopping into the volunteer office at the Conference Centre to let us know what a great job we were doing and how great their experience in London was.

The planning for "A Night in the Forest City" was well worth it as it was an overwhelming success. We had so many participants let us know how much they enjoyed this social event. Whether it was the karaoke, the band, playing pool, or just sitting and talking – the people who

Members visiting London from across the country said they really appreciated the many friendly and helpful red-shirted volunteers at CHF Canada's annual meeting.



London's own Noisy Mime theatre troupe opened the annual meeting, and received a long standing ovation.

attended really had a great time. We actually had to kick people out at the end of the night, or the karaoke would still be going on!

At the Saturday business meeting, we were so pleased that delegates responded with a standing ovation for the kids from London's Noisy Mime musical theatre troupe performing the Lorax skit as part of the hat presentation to Bruce and Noreen. The audience clearly related to the message of conservation and the importance of our natural resources as well as to the fact that several of the kids lived in co-ops.

Having the group yoga break was a risky venture, but we were sure the delegates would respond and they certainly did. At one point I looked out to see hundreds of arms in the air doing some gentle stretching and getting revitalized after sitting for such a long time. It was quite a sight! Unfortunately, we were met with the very sad news that the yoga instructor, Calvin, was killed in a car crash just a few weeks after the event.

The AGM dinner was a fine way to end the week and the dancers and singers really helped showcase London talent. All in all, the planning committee could not have been more pleased. As the local co-ordinator, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of both the committee and the volunteers to host such a successful event in London.

Getting the education your co-op needs

Here are four ways you can get the necessary skills and knowledge to run a successful housing co-operative.

Regional education events are held once a year in the fall in Southwestern Ontario (see page 4). This full-day event features a selection of workshops on co-op management and governance. It's an excellent opportunity for co-op members to meet and share experiences in a relaxing and friendly environment.

Portable workshops can be brought to your own co-op for a group of your members such as the entire board or a committee. These sessions allow you to create a customized agenda to cover important topics such as board decision making or financial planning. They are very reasonably priced at \$200 for a two-hour session, \$300 for three hours, or \$500 for a full day.

Much like regional education events, **CHF Canada's annual meeting** offers at one place and time a large number of workshops on useful co-op topics. It's a perfect opportunity for co-op members from across Canada to interact and be part of CHF Canada's governance and decision making.

And the co-op housing resource centre on **CHF Canada's website** at www.chfcanada.coop contains helpful tools and guides, and will soon include online courses such as board orientations and training for co-op managers.

For more information about education opportunities, please contact Denise McGahan at 1-800-644-3949 or email dmcgahan@chfcanada.coop.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS Southwestern Ontario Fall Education Event

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2

Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 1150 Wellington Road, London

CHF Canada is hosting another Fall Education Event for housing co-op members and staff in London. Join other co-op members from Southwestern Ontario and gain valuable skills and knowledge.

This 'not to be missed' event will feature workshops on Board Basics, Workplace Violence and Harassment Legislation, Member Selection in SHRA Co-ops, Welcoming and Orienting New Members, Board of Directors Annual Calendar, Understanding your Audit and more.

Your co-op has already received brochures by mail which you can find in the Resource Centre of CHF Canada's website at www.chfcanada.coop.

Sign up today and don't miss out!

For more information, contact Denise McGahan at 1-800-644-3949 or dmcgahan@chfcanada.coop.

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