



Accessible Housing Society

Ramping Up

Spring 2011

Homeless clients to benefit from newly funded Bridge to Home initiative

People with physical disabilities and mobility issues experiencing homelessness will soon have the support services they need to find and maintain permanent housing, thanks to recent funding from the Calgary Homeless Foundation in support of a new initiative called Bridge to Home, put forward by Accessible Housing Society.

Bridge to Home is a community outreach initiative that will create new opportunities for permanent housing through the coordination of support services delivered by the program team, and through collaborations with landlords.

“The approval of funding for the Bridge to Home initiative is a first step toward creating new housing options for community clients who are experiencing homelessness,”

says AHS Executive Director Soraya Saliba. “Bridge to Home will also serve as a major boost to our current programs, and expand the number of permanent housing units that are both accessible and affordable” adds Saliba. “We are grateful for what this initiative will mean to our future clients.”

Consistent with the housing first model, Bridge to Home places the clients need for housing above all, and then integrates the necessary support to ensure housing can be sustained long-term. The team will attempt to assist 100 clients each year, and to modify 18 to 20 units for accessibility annually to 2014.

A team of Outreach Workers will take a lead in working with clients to address their immediate needs and to find housing options in the

community. Given that the need for accessibility is vital to sustain housing for clients, a key aspect of Bridge to Home is the role of an Occupational Therapist who will facilitate assessments and offer recommendations to assist the team Technical Advisor with developing design solutions that will maximize independence for clients in their new home setting. A Health Care Aid will complete the team and assist clients with activities related to daily living.

“Bridge to Home responds to our clients who are most vulnerable,” says Saliba. “With expertise and specific experience in accessible housing, Bridge to Home will be a natural fit for AHS, and by that measure a program that makes logical sense for us to take on.”



Bridge to Home will assist individuals and families to find permanent housing

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Diverse client base shows the value and range of AHS housing programs

Established more than 37 years ago, Accessible Housing Society was created when it initiated and developed Calgary's first shared living accommodation for people with various physical disabilities.

Since then, the Society and its core programs and services have expanded considerably. Through two key service areas, we provide housing and a range of supports, we locate and obtain accessible and affordable housing options, and we keep people in their homes and community.

The growth of the Society is a function of the growing demand for our services from community. As our work evolves and changes to keep up to community need, so does the range and complexity of clients who seek our assistance.

At Foundation Place, our newest shared living accommodation, we provide a dynamic and integrated

housing opportunity for people like TJ, who speaks about his housing experience before and after moving into Foundation Place. He says, "I'd be on the streets if I hadn't come to Foundation Place. I like living there because the staff are helping me to overcome my shyness and anxiety. I like talking with the staff because they help me solve my problems in different ways and they help with my learning disability," adds TJ.

While clients like TJ are being supported through our residential programs, our outreach work takes us to the homes of people like Dan who has a brain tumor and is living with his mother who also serves as his primary caregiver. They enlisted the support of our outreach team to provide drawings and to coordinate the installation of a porch lift that would allow Dan to access his home independently.

Dan's mother talked about the support they received saying, "It

(the support and porch lift) gave us peace of mind and we are not anxious about going to doctors appointments for Dan."

Sometimes our outreach efforts take us beyond the home and to those who are living on the edge of homelessness. A client named Pamela was recently in this type of worst case scenario. She was "evicted and living in shacks and other bad spots," says Pamela. "I started talking to AHS in October and was housed by November 5," adds Pamela. "I lived outside and now I'm able to shower and eat. I can't say enough about AHS and what this help has done for me."

The Society supports more than 300 clients annually in situations like the ones that were faced by TJ, Dan, and Pamela. With the generosity of community donors and funders, we have the ability to operate at full capacity and to assist clients who need us most.

Try giving in-kind

In-kind donations are a wonderful way to give. As an owner and operator of residential care accommodations, our Society is always in need of various items and furnishings that will keep our sites at there best. Here are some things we are seeking for our sites now:

- Beds, dressers, night tables, kitchen tables, couches, cups, dishes, pots/pans, lamps, etc.
- Fridges x7, stove tops x6, wall oven x5, washer x6, dryer x6, Microwave x6.

Please call 403-735-2427 or email to rcss@ahscalgary.ca and make an in-kind donation to AHS today.

REGISTER EARLY AND YOU COULD WIN



Register for the second annual AHS Walk'n Roll-a-thon at www.ahscalgary.ca and you will be entered into a draw for two tickets to the last "Battle of Alberta" in 2011, between the Calgary Flames and the Edmonton Oilers, on Wednesday, April 6.

The deadline for the draw is April 4, 2011 and the tickets are valued at \$320. Please note the winner will be required to pick up the tickets on April 5 or 6 at the Society's main office at #215 1212— 31st Ave NE, before 5:00 p.m.

More information is available on our website. When you register, please also print a donation pledge form. Good luck!



Visit www.ahscalgary.ca and register today

Barrier-free assessment and design available at low fee-for-service rates

Are you considering barrier-free design for a residential or commercial property? Do you need an assessment or drawings that will allow you to adapt your living or working space so that people of all abilities can function more independently. If so, Accessible Housing Society can help.

For nearly 15 years, the Society has provided barrier-free design solutions for persons living with physical disabilities and mobility issues with the specific purpose of creating more functional living environments that allow people to stay in their homes and community for as long as possible.

This service is provided by one of the Society's programs called the Residential Assessment and Design (RAD) program. Through the combined expertise of Occupational Therapists and a Technical Advisor, the RAD team as-

sesses new or existing homes or commercial properties, and offers barrier-free design solutions, drawings, and review of floor plans for new construction, along with assistance in finding a contractor to complete the proposed modifications.

For private businesses, the cost is \$200 for an initial assessment and recommendations. Drawing fees are \$75 per hour. For non-profits or other group home operators, the cost is \$150 for the initial assessment and drawings are \$50 per hour. For individual home owners, the base cost for an initial assessment is only \$50 and \$50 per hour for drawings.

Check out some of the before and after photos to the right to see results of working with our RAD program. Please call 403-735-2428 for more information, or email at ot@ahscalgary.ca.

RAD creates accessibility: before and after photos



Services: Accessible Housing Society

Housing Registry - To help you find affordable and accessible rental housing in the city, please call 282-1872 (ext: 242).

Residential Assessment and Design Program - To have your new or current housing situation evaluated for plans or renovations to achieve greater mobility, please call 735-2428 or 735-2430.

Residential Care and Support - To access the personal care provided at three locations in Calgary, please call 735-2427.

Resource Materials - To research a mobility solution, please feel free to browse our resource materials at our main office.

Barrier-Free Design Workshops - Call AHS at 735-2428 to arrange a workshop for your group.

Funding opportunities available

Did you know that there are programs out there that may assist you financially if you need to renovate your home to improve accessibility? Each of the following programs has specific eligibility requirements. To determine your eligibility, call the individual program or call AHS at 282-1872.

- ◆ **Residential Access Modification Program (RAMP)**: through Alberta Seniors, 310-0000, then enter (780) 427-5760
- ◆ **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)**: through CMHC, (403) 515-3000
- ◆ **Home Adaptation for Senior's Independence (HASI)**: through CMHC, (403) 515-3000
- ◆ **Alberta Easter Seals**: equipment only, (403) 235-5662



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Registered Charity Number:
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"Creating safe, affordable, barrier-free housing"

RAMPING UP

Jason Yule—Editor

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In November 2010, delegates from social service organizations, the private and public sector, came together for "Creating Through Design"— a symposium on barrier-free design practices and principles coordinated by the Accessible and Affordable Housing Working Group (AAHWG).

OUR SPONSORS

1,000 copies of this issue will be delivered to and read by as many as 4,500 Albertans from the disabled community, health services sector and housing renovations industry. Do you have a product or service they should know about?

One issue—\$200; 3 issues—\$500

Contact the Ramping Up team by email at development@ahscalgary.ca, or phone at 403-735-2426



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Walk 'n Roll-a-thon
in support of *Accessible Housing Society*