

St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society



Annual Report

1999



St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

194 Crawford Street Toronto, Ontario M6J 2V6

Phone/fax (416) 539-7062

e-mail jonharstone@myna.com

Charitable Registration Number: 87305-8192

June 15, 2000

To the Members and Supporters of St. Clare's

Please find attached a copy of St. Clare's Annual report.

1999 was a very busy and exciting year for St. Clare's. In the spring we reviewed our vision and mandate and agreed to significantly expand our activities. In particular, I am pleased that we are forming partnerships with private and non-profit groups to develop housing for the homeless. Our partnership with the Alternative Housing Corporation Ltd. to develop 519-525 Coxwell Ave. provides an example of the kind of projects we hope to do in future. It is interesting to note that within a month of the City's decision not to proceed with our proposal on the Coxwell site we established a partnership with Kensington Community Housing convert 25 Leonard Ave. into 51 units of housing of affordable housing.

We are breaking new ground. I hope you will continue to support our efforts to build housing for the homeless and the most vulnerable of our society.

St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

Rev. Brian Burch
President

St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

Annual Report 1999

A New Vision

In the spring of 1999 the members of St. Clare's examined our vision and mandate. The impetus for this examination was the opening of Eve's Place on Ordnance Street. It is a testimony to our vision of working with groups of self-identified youth that this approach was successfully put into practice at Eve's Place.

The members agreed that our vision should be become broader and to encompass providing housing and support for anyone who is homeless or who is at risk of becoming homeless.

The members adopted the following vision for St. Clare's:

MISSION STATEMENT

To support the efforts of the homeless to access appropriate permanent housing and to acquire the skills they need to survive in today's society.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The members of St. Clare's have lengthy discussions with people living on the streets. The following program initiatives is based on these discussions.

1. Housing

St. Clare's will encourage and assist the development of permanent housing that respects the self-identified communities which exist on the street.

Many homeless people prefer to live in a squat rather than in a hostel or a shelter run by an agency. The sense of community and mutual support provided by their friends in the squat is more important than food and shelter. Any permanent housing solution for the homeless must recognize and accept this self-identified community. The members of St. Clare's are working with the self-identified groups of homeless people to find appropriate housing solutions.

2. Partnerships

St. Clare's will work in partnership with other community-based organizations that share our goals and vision.

St. Clare's will enter into strategic alliances to facilitate the creation of housing for the homeless and vulnerable in our society. The lack of appropriate government support for subsidized rental housing requires housing advocates to work together to find creative ways to develop affordable housing.

3. Revolving Loan Fund

St. Clare's will establish a Revolving Loan Fund to facilitate the development of non-profit housing by community-based groups.

One of the greatest challenges facing the development of housing for the homeless and vulnerable in our society is the lack of funds needed to get a project off the ground. St. Clare's intends to establish a revolving loan fund to lend money to community-based groups for refundable deposits and to cover some of the essential upfront costs for work such as environmental studies and soil tests. There are many community-based housing loan funds in the United States that play an important role in the development of affordable housing in that country. St. Clare's believes that the creation of a Revolving Loan Fund will facilitate the creation of non-profit housing by community-based groups in Canada.

4. Skills Development

St. Clare's will deliver an educational program designed to give the homeless the skills they need to survive in today's society.

The lack of appropriate life skills and job readiness marginalizes the homeless. The longer they are on the streets, the more alienated they are from society, and the more likely they are to spend the rest of their life as an outcast. The homeless do not have the life skills or job training necessary to be successful in our society. St. Clare's will operate an educational program that meets the needs of street kids. It will not be a structured traditional program. It will be delivered in the squats and on the streets, and will meet the individual educational needs of the individuals involved in the program.

5. Promotion

St. Clare's will advocate on behalf of the homeless to ensure that there is adequate financial support to build and operate affordable housing.

Adequate housing is a human right. Affordable housing for the homeless and the vulnerable in our society requires the financial and conscientious support by the community and all levels of government. St. Clare's will work with community-based groups to ensure that appropriate financial support is available to develop housing for the homeless.

Projects

Coxwell

In the fall of 1999, St. Clare's submitted a proposal to the City of Toronto's *Let's Build* Proposal Call to develop 103 units of affordable housing at 519-525 Coxwell Ave. in the Riverdale area of Toronto.

Our proposal was one of the three that the City selected to go into the second round. Although our proposal was not chosen by the City, we were able to demonstrate that affordable housing for the homeless can be built in a cost-effective manner. Our proposal incorporated a number of innovative design and financing techniques that generated wide-spread interest.

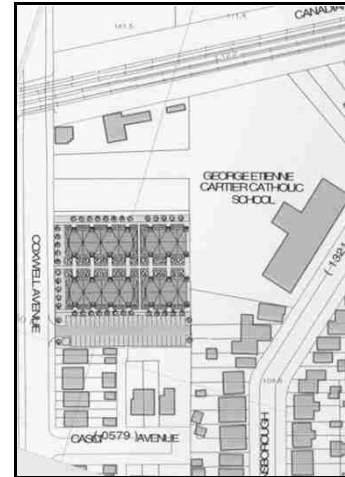
The proposal was developed in partnership with the Alternative Housing Company Ltd. (AHCL). The principal of AHCL is Lloyd Alter, a progressive private developer with extensive experience developing housing in the inner city. 519-525 Coxwell is a vacant four acre site owned by the City of Toronto. The site is adjacent to a school and a public park. The support available from the *Let's Build* Program included free land, a \$10,000 a unit capital grant, and a \$25,000 interest-free second mortgage. AHCL agreed to build 103 housing units and a small community space for a fixed price of \$48,750 per unit. This price included all design and rezoning costs, interim financing, appliances and construction. AHCL's price worked out to just over \$100 per square foot.

The project was designed by the innovative architectural firm of Sterling Finlayson. Our proposal was to build stacked townhouses. The design called for 51 studio apartments (330 ft²) on the ground floor, and 51 two-storey 2 bedroom apartments (627 ft²) above each studio apartment. In addition, there was an apartment for a live-in super and common space.



Partial elevation of St. Clare's proposed development at 519-525 Coxwell Ave.

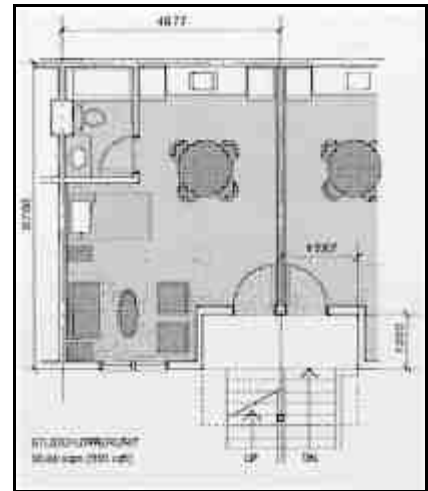
The rents in the projects were set at the shelter component of welfare. The rent for a bachelor apartment was \$325 per month including all utilities except cable. The rent in a two-bedroom apartment was set at \$515 for a two-person family and \$602 for a three-person family. These rents would allow individuals and families currently living in shelters or at risk of becoming homeless to find affordable housing.



Site Plan showing our proposed development at 519-525 Coxwell Ave.

One of the most innovative features of the proposal was AHCL intention to build the project using pre-fabricated components. Using manufactured housing system would keep costs under control and to speed up construction. Once construction started the project would be finished within two months. We were hoping to have houses occupied before Christmas .

Although we were unsuccessful in developing this project, we learned a great deal about the technical issues facing the development of affordable housing. We will build on our experience at 519-525 Coxwell Ave. as we continue to look for opportunities to develop affordable housing for the homeless.



Layout of a typical bachelor unit

Homegrown Solutions

In 1998, St. Clare's received a grant from Homegrown Solutions to undertake feasibility studies required to develop affordable housing for homeless youth. During 1999, members of St. Clare's continued to work with youth, but we were unable to find a suitable site for a housing project. We are hoping that a youth housing component can be included in one of the partnership projects that we hope to develop.

Rittenhouse

Rittenhouse is a charitable organization based in Toronto that is dedicated to bringing transformative justice instead of retributive justice to our criminal justice system. Many of Rittenhouse's programs are complementary with the goals of St. Clare's. In particular, Rittenhouse's work for deinstitutionalization of the justice system, and their education program that links family violence with juvenile delinquency should be supported. St. Clare's supported Rittenhouse's activities in 1999.

Toronto Action for Social Change

St. Clare's supported the activities of Toronto Action for Social Change in their efforts to get the federal and provincial governments to restore funding for affordable housing, and their linking of housing with peace and social justice issues through the Homes Not Bombs campaign.