

**VETERANS'
HOUSE CANADA**
HELPING HOMELESS VETERANS



**MAISON DU
VÉTÉRAN CANADA**
SECOURIR NOS VÉTÉRANS SANS ABRI

November 8, 2023

Veterans' House: the Andy Carswell Building Lessons Learned

**Presented to the Canadian Alliance to End
Homelessness National Conference**



Agenda



- Who is Veterans' House Canada?
- The Andy Carswell Building
- Lessons Learned/Observations
- Challenges of National Expansion



Who is Veterans' House Canada?

- Mission: To help homeless Veterans build a better future by providing permanent, affordable, supportive housing.
- Uses a Housing First/Supportive and Affordable Housing approach – the provision of housing gives stability to work on underlying causes of homelessness.
- Provides a unique veterans-only setting, where residents live within a supportive community of military peers in a recognizable military environment.
- Intentionality of design – wide consultations to ensure design geared for specific needs of veterans.
- Supportive housing as long as the veteran needs.

The Pilot Project in Ottawa

The Andy Carswell Building



The Building

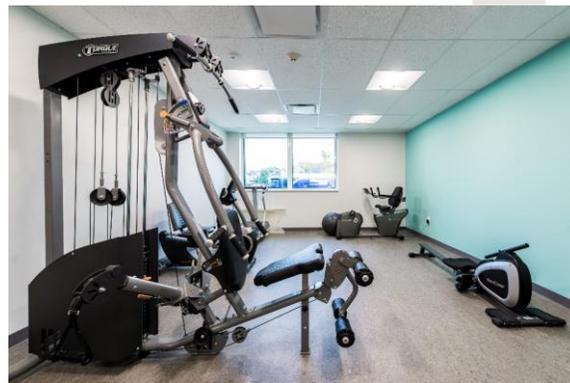
40 bachelor units, fully equipped and furnished with 9 x fully accessible (remainder built to Universal design standards)

- Built to Passive House standards for energy efficiency
- Built with wide hallways and doors to accommodate mobility
- Template for future builds

Common Areas

Inside: Great room concept including kitchen, eating area, TV/games area; gym; library and laundry

Outside: service dog area, parking/basketball court, community gardening, quiet area/meditative gardens, BBQ area, Canso nose art and flag pole/future cenotaph







Miscellaneous Facts

- The Andy Carswell Building was opened on 1 February 2021:
 - Built on the former CFB Rockcliffe
 - Total construction cost (less land) was \$11.5M
- Prospective tenants get referred to us from outside organizations:
 - Ottawa shelter system, Royal Canadian Legion, VAC etc...
- Veteran Tenants:
 - Service is confirmed through the Royal Canadian Legion
 - 60 homeless Veterans housed since opening
 - Current wait list is more than 30
 - Not all are from Ottawa
 - Demographic snapshot

It is more than just a building...



- A safe & stable place to access support, e.g. VAC Case Manager, Royal Canadian Legion Veteran Services Officer
- On site Building Manager, Community Developer/Social Worker and Program Facilitator
- In House Programing (ongoing fundraising efforts)
 - Peer support with Soldiers Helping Soldiers and Operational Stress Injury Social Support
 - Addiction and Mental Health Support Services
 - Personal Trainer/yoga/healthy living
 - Smoking Cessation
 - Mediation Counselling
 - Art therapy/community gardening
 - Financial and computer literacy
 - Support animal services
 - +++



Lessons Learned/Observations

- The Building
 - The need for more office space, flexible program space and more private meeting areas.
 - Access to laundry room in the wrong location.
- Staffing – the right mix?
 - Hiring of a Veteran as the Program Facilitator
 - How to best coordinate third party service providers and volunteers
 - Mix between Community Development and Case Management
- Programming
 - Finding the right providers – internal vs external
 - Finding out what resonates with the tenants
 - Great financial support from local organizations
- Tenants
 - Ensuring the right fit for us and them
 - Independent living to what point? What are the next step options?

Next Steps - Expansion



4 in the Next 5 Years

% of Veterans in Homeless Population

Halifax	7%
Montreal	4.6%
Ottawa	4.6%
Toronto	5%
Winnipeg	6%
Alberta	7%
Vancouver	4%
Victoria	6.8%

Source: 2018 ESDC Point in Time Count





Expansion Challenges

- Land
 - Always a challenge. Usefulness of the Federal Lands Initiative?
- Money
 - Dedicated stream of funding for veterans? Future RHI stream?
 - CMHC programs challenges, Co-Investment restrictions.
 - Veteran Homelessness Program unknowns.
 - one-off or dedicated funding stream for the future?
- Partners
 - New ones need to be found in each new location.
 - Use of the Respect Forum for networking is valuable.
 - The Royal Canadian Legion is across the country.
- Responsibilities
 - Federal/Provincial/Municipal

Contact Us

Executive Director

BGen (Ret'd) Alan Mulawyshyn

exec.director@veteranshousecanada.ca

613-686-1825

Fundraising

Karen I. Miller

kim.inc@kimfundraising.com

416-224-9990

www.veteranshousecanada.ca