



# Building for those who need it most

by Neil Sharma 22 Jan 2018

This winter has been one of the coldest in recent memory, and, unfortunately, that's exposed some of the most vulnerable to even greater hardships than the many they already endure.

Collaboration between Toronto developers through the **Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)** and St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society will yield 22 apartment units for Toronto's homeless that will become their permanent homes.

St. Clare's has already built 413 units across Toronto in a bid to provide Toronto's homeless with clean, private quarters. Having provided the land, RESCON secured \$50,000 donations from members to raise \$1mIn towards the \$3mIn project.

"I'd say a key to the success of this project—a key to house people currently living in shelters and on the streets—is to provide micro units," said St. Clare's operations manager Andrea Adams. "These apartments are roughly 220 square feet. Some people consider this small, but to look at it in the spectrum of housing and entry-level to ground-related, we're addressing the entry-level. By providing small units we can build them affordably and in a large enough number for economy of scale to bring operating costs down."

While Adams lauds recent efforts to address affordable housing in Toronto, where prices rise astronomically by the month, she laments homelessness being once again overlooked.

"Right now, there's a lot of talk about affordable housing, and that's great, but it only addresses people with working-class incomes," said Adams. "It doesn't address homelessness."

**Phil Rubinoff of RESCON—which represents over 200 builders in the province—says the organization had been enquiring for some time about giving back to the community, and after stumbling upon St. Clare's his one and only query had been answered.**

"When we went into this with St. Clare's, the question I asked is 'If we contribute these funds, you can assure me there are 22 people living on streets that will come off the streets?'" said the RESCON chairman emeritus. "That's what we wanted and that was our goal—to try and help people who are out there living on the streets and who should have a place to live. A lot of these people don't want to go to these various other places, the temporary accommodations where they have come in and have to leave, making them transient. This is a permanent residence for them. They need a thousand types of these units, but it's a start."