



RESCON campaign raised \$1 million to help build 22 affordable housing units in Toronto

July 10, 2020, Vaughan, Ont. - Twenty-two brand new, purpose-built affordable apartments for homeless people have opened in Kensington Market in downtown Toronto thanks to a collaborative effort between the [Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#), St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society, and the City of Toronto.

The apartments are part of an intensification project next to an existing 77-unit building at 25 Leonard Ave. owned and managed by St. Clare's. Tenants are moving in this month.

RESCON, which represents more than 200 residential builders in Ontario, spearheaded a campaign that raised \$1 million for the \$5.4-million project from 21 donors in the construction and infrastructure sectors. The City of Toronto also assisted with a \$500,000 capital grant through its Open Door Program, and a \$150,000 development grant, and St. Clare's is contributing \$3.8 million through equity and mortgage financing.

It's the first purpose-built affordable homes project for populations experiencing chronic homelessness in Toronto in more than 10 years and is a prime example of what can happen when the private and public sectors and a non-profit team-up for a good cause. Construction on the building was challenging but continued despite COVID-19.

"I am delighted to see this project come to fruition and I am especially proud that residential builders and developers, construction associations and labour unions were able to come together with St. Clare's to make this work and help tackle homelessness in Toronto," said Phil Rubinoff, chairman emeritus of RESCON who spearheaded the fundraising initiative.

Members of RESCON were looking to give back to the community and were partnered with St. Clare's by longtime housing advocate Simon Liston. St. Clare's track record in assisted housing is known throughout the city as is their compassionate, caring, and effective approach to housing those in need.

"By contributing to this project, we are helping 22 people living on the streets get into appropriate affordable housing," said Rubinoff. "Often, people living on the streets can only find temporary congregate shelter, but this will provide a permanent residence for people who have experienced long term chronic homelessness."

RESCON president Richard Lyall said the project is important because it helps to address the housing crisis.

“The success of this project demonstrates what can be achieved when the non-profit, private and public sectors come together to address the crisis of homelessness in our city. This project will change the lives of 22 people, giving them safe and permanent homes. It is certainly a step in the right direction.”

St. Clare’s executive director Andrea Adams said the project would not have been possible without the support of the private sector donors.

“We appreciate the support and trust of RESCON and the contractors and unions for contributing to a tangible response to homelessness, and we hope this sets the stage for future collaborations. Homelessness is a solvable problem, and we can do this together. We are relieved that our construction team was able to get the structure finished in spite of the COVID crisis. This is a time when it is particularly clear just how important housing is for vulnerable populations.”

The three-storey structure has been erected on a small strip of land just east of Bathurst Street and across from Toronto Western Hospital that was formerly a parking lot. Excavation for the building began in 2018.

“This is a stunning building that we are proud to contribute to the Kensington neighbourhood,” said Adams. “It reflects the flavour of its thoughtful, welcoming and artistic community.”

The St. Clare’s venture is now inspiring developers and landlords in other communities. The model has been replicated by housing providers in Vancouver and Belleville, Ont.

Donors to the project included: Aspen Ridge; Brown Group; Carpenters Local 27; Carpenters Local 675; Empire; Great Gulf; Greenpark Homes; Heavy Construction Association of Toronto; Hullmark; Laurier Homes; Liberty Development; Lifetime; Lindvest; LiUNA Local 183; LiUNA Ontario Provincial District Council; Mattamy Homes; Menkes; Ontario Formwork Association; RESCON; Silvercore Properties; Sorbara Group; Tridel; and Yorkwood.

High resolution images and b-roll of the new housing can be found in the City of Toronto’s online media room at <https://www.toronto.ca/home/media-room/video-b-roll-images/25-leonard-ave-b-roll-images/>

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