

You Are Invited!

*The Rockway Gardens Village
Dedication Ceremony*

1420 King St. E. Kitchener, ON

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Dedication Ceremony 6:00 P.M.

Community Room

*Please join us to celebrate the opening of
The Rockway Gardens Village!*

MennoHomes Inc. Board of Directors

Martin Buhr, Chair
Rick Cober Bauman, Vice Chair
Gerald Morrison, Treasurer
Elizabeth Klassen, Secretary
Dave Bechtel
David Erb
Murray Leis
Margaret Nally
Dorene Rudy-Snyder
Mike Strathdee Ex-officio

For more information, please
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Community Worker
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“Land or house donations are a great way to help MennoHomes do new projects and provide more affordable rental housing. Consider gifting property to MennoHomes, now or in your will.”

MennoHomes Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 2001 under the sponsorship of MCC Ontario as a response to the need for affordable housing.



MennoHomes Inc.

a response to need for affordable housing

May 2007

The Rockway Gardens Village

MennoHomes is happy to report that the construction phase ended on time. An occupancy permit was issued on February 16, 2007. By the end of March 22 tenants had moved in. Eighteen more are expected by April 30. Further move-ins will take place in May and June.

All 50 units are spoken for. To inquire regarding future vacancies, please contact Pauline Beltrami: 519-741-1729.

The majority of tenants are single women. For them the most common range of annual income falls between

\$15,000 to \$25,000. We also have 10 senior couples.

It is thrilling indeed to see the building up and filling so quickly — evidence of the need for affordable housing for seniors.

Site work is to be completed this Spring. It involves landscaping and the final coat of asphalt. We hope to see the outside work done in time for our Open House, June 20.

Martin Buhr
President
MennoHomes Inc.



1420 King St. E.
Kitchener



Pauline Beltrami
Our “Super” superintendent

Celebrating Large and Small Gifts!

It is with deep thankfulness that we celebrate the overwhelming response to our fundraising request! We wish to recognize the following Foundations who so generously gave to our MennoHomes’ project at 1420 King St. East – The Rockway Gardens Village.

*K-W Community Foundation
Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
Mersynergy Charitable Foundation
Motz Family Foundation
Wallenstein Feed Mills Charitable Foundation*

To 44 individuals who donated \$1000 each towards our “Green Appliance” Challenge = \$44,000. We also thank everyone else who donated!

Special thanks to our Fund-Raising Team:

Terry Ballantyne, Martin Buhr, David Erb, Larry Martin, Marvin Rempel, and Dorene Rudy-Snyder.

To-date we’ve received \$740,000 in cash and pledges. Our goal was \$675,000. We are happy to apply the additional amounts raised towards our mortgage which will immediately reduce the long term debt! The more equity we contribute to this project, the lower the mortgage financing costs. The lower the mortgage financing costs, the lower the rents can be now and in the future.

Thank you, as we celebrate the goodness and generosity of everyone who helped!

From Mechanic to School Buses to Web Designer – Larry Shantz!

After high school, Larry took an apprenticeship for auto mechanics, which he successfully completed, receiving his Class “A” Inter-Provincial License. Working locally as a mechanic upon graduation, he then integrated into the family school bus business for over 30 years, starting out as a mechanic and then into the service manager position. After his father, Elmer, retired (kind of) in 1990, Larry moved into this administration position helping to coordinate the milieu of daily business tasks associated with operating school buses along with his brother, Bob.

A few years ago, Larry found himself selling his job. Much too young to retire fully, Larry decided to go back to school (Conestoga College) and took a full-time certified course in Web Design. He then started a small business called Web D Zines Inc. With only a handful of customers, he once again decided to expand his knowledge in the computer world and returned to Conestoga College, this time to take another full-time certified course in Digital Media.

Using his family’s business motto, “to provide personalized service” and knowing that it’s that personal touch that is sometimes missing in big business, Larry is developing his business to help small businesses, individual professionals and not-for-profit organizations develop the increasing consumer demand for a web presence. Visit Larry at www.webdzines.com.

MennoHomes Inc. a non-profit charitable organization, has been a very happy beneficiary of Larry’s web design expertise. Larry created and maintains the website of MennoHomes at www.MennoHomes.ca. Thank you, Larry, for donating so generously of your services!

MennoHomes Has Made a Difference!

Three years ago, I moved from another city and was in need of housing. I was driving down Village Road and saw a huge sign saying Affordable Housing. Although the sign was up, the houses were only beginning to take shape. I watched these houses being built from my place close by. I had looked at many housing units before The Village. This was considerably frustrating due to the lack of well maintained, safe, affordable houses in the K-W area. I was looking for an open, environmentally pleasing setting. We all need a little bit of our former homes in our new lives.

Priorities were a backyard for BBQ and outdoor activities, storage space, pets accepted, appliances, three bedrooms, and of course, affordable. I felt I had found just what I wanted. We instantly knew that this would be our new home. With the open setting, quiet atmosphere and close access to buses, stores and schools everything was a checkmark. So I signed up that day.

We moved into a spotless, brand new duplex a month later. At first, our new homes were surrounded by mud and dirt. It was frustrating but we prevailed. I will never forget the day the grass was laid. Suddenly everyone was outside. We were all so happy and went around introducing ourselves to one another. I was amazed at the different cities, and countries that my new neighbours came from. We watched as the patios and front flower/plant boxes were built, and trees and shrubs were added. Every day brought something new and elegant. One day a woman came to my door with a gift of two quilts – one for me and one for my child. Later we found out that everyone received a quilt! This

made us feel so welcomed and cozy! This was no small feat. It took many people, many hours of work to make those quilts for us. To say the least, it was a beautiful, kind gift from people offering their love to newcomers. Quite literally, it was a big hug! I want to say thank you and I appreciate every hour, every stitch and every thought that was put into those blankets. I will cherish them for the rest of my life.

Another welcoming surprise was that we had a Community Worker. I had never lived in housing where I had access to this benefit before. MennoHomes knew exactly what they were doing when they provided a Community Worker for The Village residents. Dorene Rudy-Snyder is the glue that holds us all together. She is the most empathetic and hilarious person I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. No matter what the need, whether it be a ride, food, clothing, community information, or simply a shoulder to cry on, she is there. Because many of us have been isolated from our families and hometowns, every bit of inclusion and support is meaningful. Our CW ensures that we feel less alone and arranges events to bring us all together. MennoHomes Inc. and its representatives have all made a difference for us! The “difference”, simply yet all importantly, being we truly have found a Community and not just a place to lay our hats. We are the residents of “The Village” and we are proud!

K. S.
Resident
The Village

Twins at The Village!

One of our families at The Village has doubled its size! Instead of two children there are now four! New immigrants to Canada, already struggling with upgrading an Engineers’ degree to Canadian Standards, living on an OSAP grant and Housing assistance and now expecting twins – resulted in a lot of pressure and stress. When I sat down with them back in January, I soon realized one month before the due date of their babies, that they had nothing for these little ones, except an unstable bassinette! Their four year old and seven year old had very few toys or educational books or puzzles. Yet they were a very happy and satisfied family – enjoying being so close to schools, transportation and stores near The Village.

When I was able to offer support through Mennonite Central Committee, MennoHomes’ Special Needs Fund, and various young families in the Waterloo area they smiled and quietly said, *“This is just like back home in our farming community. The state didn’t help us, the government didn’t help us, so we shared and helped each other. Now*



Aqsa and Iqra

people in Canada are helping us!” We discussed how similar their Muslim beliefs and our Christian beliefs were in terms of caring for each other in times of need.

It didn’t take long for donations of baby equipment, and clothing to start pouring in for the babies. People realized the importance of recognizing the older children so gifts of puzzles, books, and clothing for them came in, too!

Many trips to a specialist in Hamilton resulted in huge gas bills. Our Special Needs fund was willing to help. When I shared our family’s story with a couple from our church who just had a new baby of their own, and had been thinking of giving some money to a needy family, they immediately asked if they could donate to this couple. One item that we weren’t able to find was a double stroller – the family was so thrilled that they could use some of this money for the purchase of a new stroller.

Special thanks to everyone who so generously opened their hearts and hands to this young couple!

Dorene Rudy-Snyder
Community Worker

Editor’s note: They have moved up north to a great job with Ministry of Transport. We will miss them but are so grateful to see this family move out of Affordable Housing and on to a future where they can be self supporting. We are hoping we can keep in touch!