

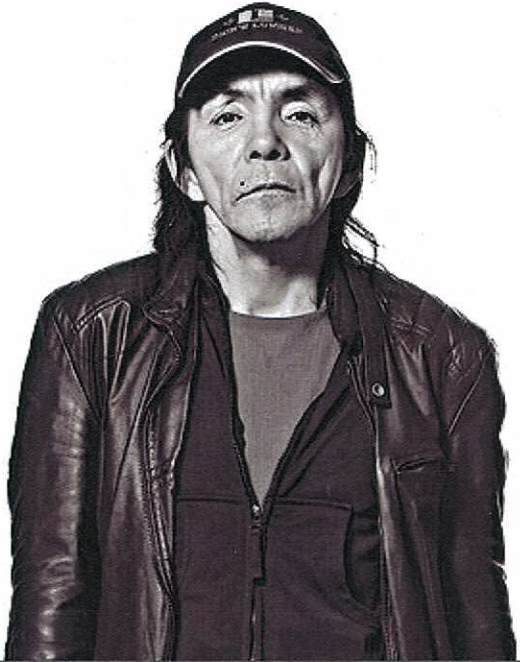


Homelessness is a community challenge... and a community responsibility

Streetohome Foundation is the first, broad community-based initiative designed to address homelessness in Vancouver. Our work brings together people from all sectors of our community: non-profits, community groups, business, governments and citizens.

Our goal at Streetohome is to build bridges and leverage the time, resources, expertise and funds of our entire community to ensure that all people in Vancouver have access to safe, decent, affordable housing by 2015.

Because we know that solving homelessness is not just about common decency, it is also about common sense.



What can you do to help?
Be a part of the solution.

[learn](#) [give](#) [act](#) [join](#)

It costs \$55,000 to \$135,000 a year to leave a homeless person on the street compared to only \$37,000 a year to provide housing with support services
- CARMHA study and Calgary study



Streetohome video: We all hold the key to solving homelessness

It's about people and economics. Economically we can provide housing and support with less than we're currently spending... And it's about people, because it's simply the right thing to do.

news

02.02.09 Streetohome Foundation
contributes \$750,000 | [more](#)

homelessness in vancouver

homelessness in vancouver

Approximately 1,700 people are homeless in Vancouver.

The lack of affordable housing in our city is one reason we have this tragically high number. Even families and citizens who may hold a regular job can find themselves technically "homeless" because they are unable to find a place they can afford.

These residents of our city often have no choice but to stay in crowded shelters overnight. Others may couch surf, live in their cars, pitch a tent beneath an underpass, or find some cold alcove outside a building to sleep each night.



87% of British Columbians recognize that people who have been chronically homeless need on-site support services with their housing
- Streetohome / Angus Reid survey

When homelessness becomes chronic

A person is considered chronically homeless when they are on the streets or in temporary shelters for over a year, or when they regularly end up on the streets over a period of several years.

More than half of the homeless people in Vancouver have been on the streets for over a year. And that number is growing.

Addictions, mental illness and other physical and developmental disabilities often complicate the situation for these individuals. In fact, these conditions are often the reason they are homeless in the first place. As well, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis and/or malnutrition make the lives of many people who are chronically homeless even more challenging.

A solution that offers hope and saves money

It is expensive for a community to do nothing about chronic homelessness. That's because many chronically homeless people use a disproportionate amount of public services.

The high cost of homelessness

One contact with police: **\$90**
An ambulance ride: **\$400**
One day in the hospital: **\$800**
(all costs are approximate)

When we don't address the underlying needs of a person who is chronically homeless, we pay higher costs for policing, emergency medical services, the courts, prisons and more. The total amount per year can be staggering.

Studies show that costs range from **\$55,000** to **\$135,000** a year for every person on the street without a home.

Providing housing with support services for that person would cost about **\$37,000** a year.

We can actually save money in the end by providing resources to address the underlying needs of chronically homeless people instead of what we are doing now, which is crisis intervention. The money we save can be diverted to other important community needs.

"The irony of all this is that it actually costs more to leave these people on the street than to provide homes for them. It's amazing, and it is a very dramatic cost."

Frank Giustra, Streetohome Board Member
President and CEO, Fiore Financial Corporation

Our experience shows that simply providing a roof over the head of someone who has been chronically homeless is not enough. To be successful in the long-term and keep these individuals from going back onto the streets, their housing must include on-site support services such as counselling, addiction and clinical services.

Ending homelessness is as much about common sense as it is about common decency.

Streetohome approach

Streetohome Foundation has both a **short and long-term strategy** to tackle homelessness... and engage the entire community in this important work.

We bring new partners, new funding sources, business acumen and a community-wide commitment to this challenge. Our efforts are designed to help strengthen and complement the work already being done on homelessness by many non-profit groups and governments. Collaboration is the key to our success.

- about streetohome
- the streetohome plan**
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our work plan

Streetohome Foundation envisions access to safe, clean and affordable housing for everyone in Vancouver. See our [Mission and Vision](#) statement.

There are some aspects of homelessness that need to be addressed immediately if we are to save lives. And then there are long-term plans that will focus on addressing policy and systemic challenges for sustainable change.



Vancouver Foundation, the BC Government and the City of Vancouver provided start-up funding for Streetohome

Streetohome took immediate action to tackle some of the urgent homelessness issues this winter:

- Streetohome Foundation joined the City of Vancouver's [Homeless Emergency Action team](#) (HEAT) on December 9, 2008.
- Streetohome donors gave \$500,000 to a [BC Government/City of Vancouver program](#) that would create 200 more temporary shelter beds in Vancouver, announced December 16, 2008.

Our short-term focus is also on implementing our [QuickStart](#) Program. This program will secure housing with supports for some of our city's most chronically homeless individuals.

Our [long-term](#) work will be guided by a 6-year strategy that will not only help people break out of the cycle of homelessness, but also prevent people from falling into it.

It's about common sense and common decency.

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quickstart

Housing alone will not be enough for many of the people who are chronically homeless. That's because their lives are often complicated by mental health issues, as well as addiction and physical illness. These additional challenges are often why these individuals are homeless in the first place.

Approximately half of the people who are homeless in Vancouver are chronically homeless, which means they have been homeless for longer than a year or regularly end up on the streets.



Half of Vancouver's homeless population has been on the streets for over a year

Streetohome Foundation's first priority – our QuickStart Program – will help create new housing in the next year for those who are chronically homeless in Vancouver. This housing will offer the on-site social services these individuals will need to stay off the streets. We feel it is critical that these services be provided on-site. The advantage of on-site support services is that it enables residents to easily access assistance any time they need it.

85% success rate

Supportive housing – which combines housing with on-site supports – has been successfully implemented in other cities such as Calgary, Toronto, Portland and New York. Research has shown this approach has an 85% track record of success.

Housing where it helps the most

Housing people who are chronically homeless will have the most impact on our community. It will address the underlying issues and needs of these individuals who are chronically homeless. It will also help the community by reducing the costs of policing, emergency services, incarceration, etc. that are often related to chronically homeless people.

Studies show that a small group of chronically homeless people are major users of our most expensive public services.

87% of British Columbians recognize the importance of providing housing that includes on-site supports for those people who have been chronically homeless.

– Streetohome/
Angus Reid survey

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long-term strategy to tackle homelessness

Streetohome's long-term strategy will involve initiatives to help all residents in our community have access to safe, decent and affordable housing by 2015.

Our 6-year strategy will draw on the expertise and resources of our committee members, who are leaders in their respective fields.



87% of British Columbians recognize that people who have been chronically homeless need on-site support services with their housing

– Streetohome / Angus Reid survey

Currently under development, our strategy will:

- Identify and recommend policies and initiatives that help prevent people from falling into the cycle of chronic homelessness.
- Determine our city's supply of supportive housing, assess the demand for housing and the gaps in services.
- Forecast the number and type of housing and services needed to achieve our goal by 2015.
- Set measurable benchmarks to track our progress.

Streetohome will provide capital funding for housing projects that meet the goals of the 6-year strategy.

Most importantly, Streetohome's 6-year strategy will engage and encourage people like you to contribute your time, energy and resources to addressing this community problem.

"Well I'm very optimistic about Streetohome being successful because instead of just relying on government funding, here's an opportunity to involve the community. The business community as well as private citizens, all those groups can get together and help solve this homeless problem for our city."

Jim Chu, Streetohome Board Member
Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department

After all, ending homelessness is a community challenge... and a community responsibility.

78% of BC residents believe society has a moral obligation to help homeless people.

– Streetohome/
Angus Reid survey

success stories

what it means to have a home

The gift of a home with support services can make a world of difference for people who have been living on the streets. For some people, a home provides the opportunity for a new beginning. For others it provides a safe place to deal with health and addictions issues. Having a home allows people to face life with dignity and respect.

Here are some stories from people who have been helped with supportive housing run by organizations that are now involved with Streetohome. Check back soon to hear our own success stories.



Vancouver would save \$18,000 per year for each person given housing with support services
- CARMHA study

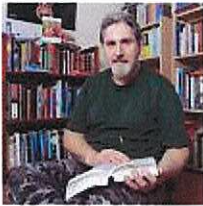
Success Stories



Stay clean
And do one good thing
[More](#)



Staying alive
Supportive housing helps women find stability on the Downtown East Side
[More](#)



Home is where the health is
Having a home makes a crucial difference when facing health issues
[More](#)



A new brew
Key to supportive housing is building community and providing support
[More](#)



“Streetohome will not only connect people on the street with homes, it will connect people in homes to the street.”
*John McLernon,
Streetohome Foundation
Board Chair*

success stories

[back to success stories](#)

stay clean

June's space at the Princess Rooms is small, one alcove for her bed and another for a basic kitchen, but it's hers.

"For people that don't have anything, it's really nice to come home to this..." June's sea-green eyes survey the room under a fringe of pale-blond hair, her wheelchair beside her as she stands on shaky legs. June is a pseudonym; she asked that we not use her real name for this story.

She continues: "...Just to be able to have somewhere I can go into and close the door behind me where nobody's going to bug me and the choice is mine where there's dope there or not and it's not being forced on me and I'm not being laughed at when I don't use it. My space is my space."

Operated by RainCity Housing, the Princess Rooms provide housing and 24-hour Housing First Support Workers for its male and female residents, many of whom are waging a daily battle with drug addictions and mental illnesses. RainCity Housing, formerly known as Triage, operates six Vancouver housing projects, partners in three more, offers food services and outreach, all focusing on people who are chronically homeless with mental illnesses, addictions and other challenges.

For June, the RainCity Housing employees are a lifeline that helps her stay off crack. She says: "I feel I can talk to Jaime (one of the support workers) about anything. And she comes and talks to me if she knows I can help someone. She knows I'm trying to find clean things to do with my time."

June has been clean since January 2 of this year, and last year she was clean for six months, but temptation is never far away.

"Recovery is not a one-way linear line," says Bill Briscall, RainCity Housing's Manager of Communications. "We have successes but someone could gain ground and then have a lapse," adding that, "For some people, just getting up and making an egg for breakfast is a huge success."

A Housing First Program, the Princess Rooms takes people who are the hardest to house, and tries to help them on their own terms. They recognize people need housing to be able to start dealing with addictions or mental health issues. Their goal is to help people stabilize and move on to more permanent housing, but that takes time and varies from person to person.

"You wait and build rapport and when a person says, 'I'm really now thinking about treatment,' you suggest some things for them to do rather than having an agenda and pushing the person... We try to emphasize the strengths that people have," says Briscall, who previously managed the Princess Rooms.

Some of June's strengths are her gregarious personality and desire to help people. "I try to help one person at least a day so if I've gone to bed and I haven't helped anybody I toss and I turn," says June. "Even if it's just something small, I feel better when I've helped at least one person each day."

She volunteers with many Downtown Eastside organizations, including the Positive Women's Network (she is HIV-positive) women and children's drop-in on Wednesday afternoons, which conveniently keeps her occupied on Welfare Wednesday, the most tempting day of the month to give in to crack.

June also tries to call her mother every day. Even though walking is difficult, she cycles quite well and enjoys swimming. She is also an avid photographer.

Her path to this life began after her partner of 19 years pushed her down the stairs because she wouldn't sell drugs, but she had already picked up the dangerous habit of crack. When she going to be released from the hospital, she says they asked her: "If we can get you a place away from him, will you go?"

She said yes, right away.

Unfortunately, the hotel they found made it easy for her to get further mired in the crack habit. A few homes and shelters later, she was taken in by the Princess Rooms, after losing almost everything in a fire.

She shows a radiant picture of herself from 10 years ago in a blue leather dress, standing with her former partner in front of a glowing fireplace.

"Those are some of the best pictures of me ever taken," she says. Then she pulls out another picture. "There's June in the life before, and here's June on crack. It doesn't even look like the same person."

When June feels she might give in and start using, the staff at the Princess Rooms are there to listen. "They help just by giving you a hug when you need one. They help by just being there to talk. They help with my room, to fold up laundry, and things like going to the doctor and food."

June's room is small, but it is her home. "I've made my bed into a cloud. I've put a really thick mattress pad on it and two sleeping bags so when you jump on my bed it's nice and soft and I've problems getting out of it sometimes."

Please note that the Princess Rooms is not a Streetohome Housing Project, but an example of how supportive housing works to help people live a more stable life off the streets.



you can help

[volunteer opportunities](#)

[volunteer form](#)

[share your story](#)

[join our pledge wall](#)

[join our community](#)

you can help

Join us and become part of the solution.

We have people from all walks of life and organizations from many different sectors dedicating their time, energy and money to ending homelessness in Vancouver.

You too can get involved and make a contribution toward solving homelessness in our city.

Together we can work towards the solution to resolve homelessness.



Homelessness in our region jumped 22% since 2005

Ways you can help:

1. [Give financial support](#)
2. [Give your time](#)
3. [Give items, services or food](#)

1. Give financial support

Your donations are needed to help make Streetohome a success.

We are financing the purchase and renovation of buildings with the goal of creating safe, decent, affordable housing for everyone in our community.

Many business and community leaders have already made substantial contributions to get Streetohome off the ground, but more support is needed.

Your gift will be used to support the work of Streetohome, and to create homes with support services, directly helping people move from the street to a home. It's a tangible plan that is proven to work.

You can donate directly [online](#). Or call us at 604.629.2711.

Or, you can join the [BMO Bank of Montreal Streetohome Savings Program](#). The interest you earn goes directly to support people who are homeless. You'll be issued a charitable tax receipt for your ongoing donations.

Please note that we do not wish to compete with other non-profits working in this field. If you already support a non-profit that provides housing and services to the homeless, please continue to provide your valuable support to them.

2. Give your time

Volunteers like you are essential in making Streetohome a community collaboration.

Whether you are interested in working with people who are homeless or providing your expertise behind the scenes, there's a role for you. We can help connect you to agencies and organizations that work with people who are homeless.

Please fill out our [volunteer form](#) or browse our current [volunteer opportunities](#).

If you have an idea about how you can help, we want to know. We want to harness the ideas of the entire community to make Streetohome a success.

[Contact us](#) to discuss volunteering.

3. Give items, services or food

If you have something to give, Streetohome can help.

People who are homeless need:

- Things, for example clothing or linens
- Food
- Services, for example haircuts or laundry services

Streetohome will connect your donations to the people who need them.

There are many ways to help. Does your restaurant have leftovers at the end

"Some feel society has a moral obligation to help people who are homeless, some want to house people because it costs the taxpayer less than keeping them homeless... Whatever the reason, what matters is that they want something done and they want to help."

*Faye Wightman,
Streetohome Board Member
President and CEO,
Vancouver Foundation*