

SCOOP

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES IN BC

On January 23

**Keep co-op
housing working
for Canadians**



Inside:

Federal election, AGM report, and
Mitraniketan Co-op



Plus Commercial Services News and more...

WINTER 2005 \$3.00

The road ahead

In September I had the good fortune to be appointed as CHF Canada's new executive director. It's an honour to be asked to lead an organization with such a remarkable history. It also serves to focus the mind quite keenly on what the future holds for the Canadian co-operative housing movement.

The immediate priorities for housing co-ops are pretty clear to all of us. Section 95 co-ops and their members are still struggling under the burden of disappearing subsidies, and we've launched a national campaign to get their subsidy put back. Ontario co-ops are busy fighting for legislative changes that will once again allow them the autonomy they need to operate as co-operative communities. Meanwhile, in B.C. the leaky co-op crisis is still with us, and we have a lot of work to do yet if we are going to see these co-ops restored to healthy, livable housing. And generally we need to work as a movement on good governance and management and on looking after our properties as they grow older.

Housing co-ops in BC are highly engaged in these national issues.

A huge boost to our efforts comes from the close partnership that exists between CHF Canada and CHF BC as we work together to get results for our members. It's a partnership we're going to put to good use as we begin to take on what I see as the greatest challenge of all—securing the future of our co-ops when their government operating agreements come to an end.

Because with resolve we can win the solutions our members need for today's challenges; but in the long run these victories won't mean much if we cannot preserve the legacy and values of affordable co-op housing.

Over the next year we will begin to deliver the first of the resources co-ops will need to prepare for the end of their government agreements – resources that will help them set a clear vision for the future of their communities and give them the tools they need to get there. This is the strategic goal for our movement, and once again we're going to be partnering with CHF BC to achieve it, jointly producing the materials we need to guide our members.

It seems almost unnecessary to say it, but more and more we have to work together nationally as a sector, pooling our talents and resources to achieve our common purposes. I'm committed to a close collaboration with CHF Canada's partners across the country, and I'm pleased to say that CHF BC – the federation my first housing co-op helped form – is one of the most valuable partners we have.

Nicholas Gazzard is CHF Canada's new executive director.

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hot dates Mark your calendars for upcoming co-op housing events you don't want to miss. Mainland **5** Vancouver Island **11**.

Co-op notices are published separately.

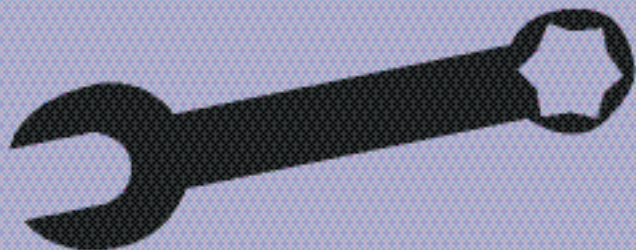
Co-op notices are available at www.chf.bc.ca (in the 'Co-op Directory'), by calling 604.879.5111 (toll-free 1.866.879.5111) or by email to sevans@CHF.bc.ca. You can get a free printed copy by visiting our offices at 200-5550 Fraser Street in Vancouver or 410-1105 Pandora Avenue in Victoria.

ON THE COVER: Canadians go to the polls on January 23. See page 6 for details on our fight to keep co-operative housing working for Canadians.

Correction notice: In the View Court profile in the previous issue of SCOOP (Fall 2005) the last words of the story were cut off on page 19. The missing words at the end of the third column were "big issue."

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up front

LETTERS

Guidelines for housing in child custody situations

We are working on our membership policies. How do other co-ops decide how many bedrooms to allow single, divorced or separated parents who have their children living with them on a part-time basis? Does CHF BC have any information or sample policies?

Name and co-op withheld

Many co-ops allow single parents who do not have full custody of their children to live in units with enough bedrooms for those children. This is important to single parents, since custody decisions are based, in part, on a parent's ability to provide proper housing.

Some government programs require co-ops to follow the National Occupancy Standards when deciding the right size of unit for each household. Other co-ops may choose to follow the National Occupancy Standards even if their operating agreement doesn't require it.

Life is complicated, so there'll be exceptions to every rule. You will want to think about the situations that might come up when you re-write your co-op's policy.

CHF BC's Co-op Policy Manual includes a sample member selection policy and over- and under-housing policy. You'll find the sample policies at www.chf.bc.ca/pages/policies.asp



hot dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing at these mainland events:

Jan	9	Delegates Potluck
	23	Federal Election
Feb	13	Delegates Forum
	16	Membership terminations workshop
Mar	13	Delegates Forum
Apr	1	Spring Education Conference

chip rates

Rates effective December 1, 2005, and subject to change.

CCEC – variable	2.2%
CCEC – fixed 12-month	2.75%
Coast Capital (Vancouver Island)	2.75%
Prospera (formerly Fraser Valley)	1.75%
VanCity	2.943%

WANTED

SCOOP – YOUR CO-OP MAGAZINE – WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

All letters, stories, pictures and questions qualify you for our prize draw. This issue's winning contributor is Lucas Petter from Marina Co-op in Vancouver.

Send photos, stories, questions, anything to CHF BC, attention:
SCOOP, 200 – 5550 Fraser Street, Vancouver BC V5W 2Z4 or
email scoop@chf.bc.ca.

Let's keep co-op housing working for Canadians



The January 23 federal election is just around the corner. We hope you've received our election packages and talked to your local candidates about co-op housing. Maybe you've even attended some of our meet and greet events in several ridings in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island.

Our main campaign goals are:

- Solve the Section 95 subsidy crisis once and for all
- Fix every leaky co-op without further delay, and
- Set aside funds to make new co-op housing a reality.


We have been asking candidates and parties to make firm commitments to help us achieve these goals. In the case of the section 95 subsidy issue, we will gain back about 10,000 affordable homes across Canada that were taken away over the years because of the government's subsidy cuts. For leaky co-ops, we will save almost 4,000 homes threatened by building envelope failure. We

are also asking that candidates and parties support the development of new housing co-ops. Four million Canadians need affordable housing and co-ops are a great way to provide it.

You can check up on the candidates and parties on our election website at www.chf.bc.ca/pages/election.asp. Check out our campaign blog and links to

the main political parties, Elections Canada, and CHF Canada. Use the links to find out which riding you live in, who the candidates are and where you can go to vote on January 23.

Co-op votes can make a difference in this election, so on January 23 make sure you cast your vote to keep co-op housing working for Canadians.



election on THE NET

www.chf.bc.ca/pages/election.asp CHF BC's online election campaign. Check out campaign news and events, party positions on housing and Darren Kitchen's election blog.

www.chra-achru.ca The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) site has more news and info to help promote affordable housing during the federal election.

www.nodice.ca/elections/canada/polls.php Canada Election 2006 daily polling results. If you who want to know which way the wind is blowing every single day of the campaign.



Leaky co-op update

As we reported in the last issue of SCOOP, a number of leaky co-ops can no longer be repaired under the existing CMHC remediation framework because of rapidly rising construction costs.

CHF BC and CHF Canada have been working hard over the past few months to develop a new lending framework that will allow the repair of these co-ops. The new framework is more affordable for co-ops and for CMHC. By the time you read this, CHF BC and CHF Canada staff will have presented the new framework

to senior CMHC officials in Ottawa. Stay tuned to www.chf.bc.ca for further developments.

New loan maximums

Maximum loans for the Disability Trust and the Domestic Violence Relief Fund have doubled, to \$2,000. Both programs provide interest-free loans to help people with low incomes to pay for shares when joining a housing co-op. The Disability Trust gives loans to people with permanent disabilities, and the Relief Fund provides loans to women leaving abusive relationships.

Since its beginning in 1982, the Disability Trust has helped 194 recipients enjoy the benefits of co-op housing by providing over \$156,000 in loans. The Relief Fund, started in the fall of 2004, has already helped 10 women with \$7,250 in loans, and take-up in the program is on the rise.

For more information on the Disability Trust and the Domestic Violence Relief Fund, to get an application form or to find out how you can make a tax-deductible donation, contact Mary Boles at 604.879.5111 ext 141 (toll-free at 1-866-879-5111) or mboles@chf.bc.ca.

2005 AGM

CHF BC held its annual general meeting on Saturday, November 26 in Burnaby's Executive Hotel. There were 89 people in attendance at the meeting, ably chaired by Jennifer Gray-Grant.

Executive director Thom Armstrong reported the good news that CHF BC's membership has grown to 223 housing co-ops and 11,694 co-op homes. Federation services are more popular than ever among members.

The board of directors reported on efforts to repair leaky co-ops (page 7), progress toward solving the section 95 subsidy crisis and plans for the federal election (page 6).

The board also launched the Aaron Webster Memorial

Fund (page 9) to provide grants to youth for projects promoting respect and diversity in housing co-ops and the community. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto got things started with a generous donation of \$1,000. By the end of the meeting, other donations included \$2,500 from CHF Canada and \$500 from COHO Management Services.

Delegates held a member forum on meeting the challenges co-ops face in 2006. They discussed how to get the best results for co-ops and for more affordable co-op housing during the federal election. As usual, delegates had plenty of good ideas. Treasurer Suzann Zimmering and auditor Richard Marsh brought more good news about the Federation's financial

picture. The year ending July 31, 2005 produced a fifth consecutive operating surplus, and CHF BC's reserves are now more than halfway to the members' target of six months' operating expenses.

Delegates re-elected four directors: Gino Gamboa, Wes Hosler, Suzann Zimmering and James Quaife (Vancouver Island). We welcome two new directors to the board: Marty Norgren and Carolyn Withrow.

Retiring from the board are Diane Winkler and CHF BC president Mike Alsop. Later in the meeting, Mike Alsop was elected to serve on the finance committee.

Mark your calendar for our semi-annual general meeting on April 29, 2006. ■



Left: Diane Winkler (right), presents Marlene Deacon with CHF BC's 2005 Lifetime Volunteer Achievement Award. Below: Your new board of directors (from left): Georgia Andrews, Gino Gamboa, Dianne Cook, Wes Hosler, Candice Bunting, Marty Norgren, Doreen Aquino, Glen Armstrong, Suzann Zimmering, James Quaife, Carolyn Withrow and Victor Mogollon.



diversity in action

The president of Aaron Webster Housing Co-op, Olive Dempsey, receives a framed portrait of Aaron to celebrate the launch of the Aaron Webster Memorial Fund. Presenting the portrait is CHF BC director and diversity committee member, Gino Gamboa.



Fund honours memory of Aaron Webster

CHF BC has launched the Aaron Webster Memorial Fund, dedicated to the memory of a Vancouver man killed because of his sexual orientation.

Aaron Webster was brutally murdered in Stanley Park in the early morning hours of November 17, 2001. Several males were involved in the killing. They didn't know him. They bludgeoned Aaron to death with a baseball bat because he was a gay man. At the time of his death, Aaron was the president of Cityview Housing Co-op in Vancouver. Cityview has since changed its name to Aaron Webster Housing Co-op to honour Aaron's memory.

The Aaron Webster Memorial Fund will support projects started by young people living in housing co-ops, age 13 to 20. Projects will highlight the issue



of diversity and help educate co-ops and the broader community on the need for inclusion, respect and understanding in our society.

The diversity committee will promote the fund and encourage co-op youth to apply. Awards will be made, finances permitting, at CHF BC's annual general meeting each November.

Donations for the fund may be made care of CHF BC. Donors requiring a tax receipt should contact CHF BC before sending their donation. ■

CHF BC's Diversity Committee welcomes your feedback regarding this article or any area of co-op diversity. Send your comments or suggestions to Diversity Committee, 200 – 5550 Fraser St. Vancouver V5W 2Z4 or to info@chf.bc.ca.

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island news

Island co-op pledges to help co-ops in Ontario

This fall, Spring Ridge Co-op in Victoria unanimously passed a motion to donate \$10 per unit (a total of \$220) to help Ontario co-ops fight the Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA).

"It's a solidarity gesture from BC co-ops to Ontario," says Spring Ridge member Tony Sprackett.

The SHRA is an onerous package of legislation that means government officials, not co-op members, control the day-to-day decisions of housing co-ops in Ontario. For more information, call 1.866.879.5111 or visit www.chf.bc.ca/pages/shra.asp.

BFI keeps prices low

When CHF BC renewed its commercial services agreement with BFI Canada in 2004, BFI agreed to remove the fuel surcharge and to freeze prices

until September 2007. Only increases in landfill charges imposed by the Capital Regional District can result in higher prices.

The CRD announced an increase of 3.75% in landfill charges effective January 1, 2006. Since landfill charges only account for a portion of BFI's costs, the increase to members is 2.4% applied only to garbage collection. Recycling prices will not be affected. All Island co-ops using BFI's garbage collection services have received a letter outlining the new charges.



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BFI Canada has been part of CHF BC's Commercial Services program since 1998 and currently provides high quality garbage and recycling services at very competitive rates to over 95 CHF BC member co-ops. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Hunter, Commercial Services Director at 1.877.879.5111 ext.138 or email jhunter@chf.bc.ca.

Island Potluck

It's potluck time again! Join us January 16 at 7 pm at the Glentana Village Recreation Centre (1507 Glentana Road, Victoria) for some delicious winter comfort food.

CHF BC Island directors have volunteered to do the cooking! They will provide piping hot chili, soup and stew. You bring your favourite bakery bread or corn bread recipe, side dish, salad or dessert. Beverages, plates, cups and cutlery will be supplied.

Mark this date on your calendar for a casual night featuring delicious food, great company and lots of fun and laughter.

Everyone welcome. Please RSVP Kerry Panter at 384.9444 or islandinfo@chf.bc.ca.

Island election events

As we go to press, one Vancouver Island election meet and greet has been scheduled in the riding of Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca. It will be held at Cameo Co-op (1501 Glentana Road) at 7 pm on Tuesday, January 10. Candidates from the three main parties will be invited to attend and meet co-op members from the riding and discuss their party's positions on co-op and affordable housing issues. Light refreshment will be provided. RSVP to Kerry Panter at 384.9444 or kpanter@chf.bc.ca, or just bring your questions on January 10. Stay tuned to www.chf.bc.ca for a meet and greet announcement in the riding of Victoria. ■



island dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing:

Jan	10	Election meet and greet, Esquimalt – Juan de Fuca (see p. 11)
	16	Island Potluck (see p. 11)
	23	Federal Election
Feb	23	Vancouver Island Council
Mar	25	Island Education Day
Apr	1	Spring Education Conference, Vancouver

island chip rates

These preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op operating accounts were effective December 1, 2005 and are subject to change.

Coast Capital 2.75%
(Vancouver Island)

VanCity 2.943%

For info about Island services, contact Kerry Panter in CHF BC's Victoria office at 384.9444.

Emergency preparedness: getting started

With news of earthquakes in Afghanistan, flooding in New Orleans, mudslides in Guatemala and other catastrophes, you would think we would all be on edge about the possibility of disaster on our doorstep.

More often, however, it seems the vast amount of disaster news desensitizes us. This apathy could have awful consequences. Even if the odds of an emergency are low, the payoff for emergency preparedness could be lives saved.

Housing co-ops are known to have policies and procedures to cover many situations, but has your housing co-op made adequate emergency preparations? If not, or if you think it's time for a review, here are some resources:

Some municipalities have public education or information programs for emergency preparedness. The City of Vancouver (www.city.vancouver.bc.ca) has an extensive program called NEPP (Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program). NEPP offers a series of workshops to Vancouver residents for little or no cost in Personal Emergency Preparedness, Damage Assessment & Light Rescue, Disaster First Aid, Fire Safety, and Neighbourhood Team Building. For more information or to register call 604-871-NEPP (6377) or email nepp@vancouver.ca.

BC Housing has a 23-page emergency preparedness kit specifically designed for housing complexes. It explains how to prepare for an emergency as well as how to survive an actual event such as fire, flood, earthquake or power failure. It also contains a handy list of how to set up and stock an earthquake

preparedness cabinet. Visit www.bchousing.org and search for 'emergency preparedness' for a free downloadable copy of the kit.

The Federal Department of Public Safety and Emergency Planning (www.psepc.gc.ca or 604.666.7572) has information on emergency management, including tools and tips geared to individuals and families including an easy-to-follow 10-page publication *Emergency Planning for your Family: the 5-step guide*. ■

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YES Camp journal

Lucas Petter gives an insider's account of grad camp.



A summer highlight for me was rounding out my Camp Rainbow* education experience by attending grad camp. It was an exciting and challenging time. Campers' leadership skills are pushed to the limits, with campers themselves planning many of the activities.

After a lengthy bus and ferry ride to Lake Cowichan on Vancouver Island, the week began with Five Rhythms, a celebration of music and dancing without a care for several hours before bedtime.

As with previous camps, each morning began with Wake and Shake — dancing, singing, or practicing yoga in an energetic process of tossing sleepiness aside.

Then Open Space allowed us to break into small groups for intense discussions on specific topics. The Open Space concept allowed us to choose a group according to the topic that was most appealing and even switch mid-stream to a different group.

The week was a blur of activities, from swimming in the lake, forming committees, having a campfire made of candles, to holding a comedy dating game show in which a blind-folded bachelor or bachelorette asked ridiculous questions of the contestants.

One day we were introduced to the Heart Circle, which took place in a large tapestry-draped room. We all sat in three circles, one inside the other, with candles, rocks and leaves decorated around a big cushion in the centre. Campers took turns sitting on the cushion to talk about any troubles in their life for which they needed support, such as family problems or losing a best friend, and then the same camper sang a song.

On our last day counselors presented us with Haven, a magical world that spanned the farthest, most unexplored reaches of the campground, filled with spirited creatures, the

counselors themselves, dressed as forest sprites, Japanese geishas, and mad hatters. We broke into groups to complete our task of collecting objects and scrolls to save Haven from certain doom. With all the campers participating, this was our ultimate test of leadership.

Another feature of our last day was Creation, a thank you celebration for which we had prepared for days, making artwork and practicing skits. A boy had just started giving a speech praising Camp Rainbow, when he was interrupted by a crazed tribal group who took Rainbow's new director down to the lake for an initiation.

Throughout the three camps I've attended, I learned how to work co-operatively with others to complete tasks, be a responsible member of society, and effectively lead groups toward completing their goals. It also tremendously boosted my confidence and my ability to make good friends. (p. 21) ►

Below: Rocio Nino (right) and her daughter Sabrina. They and the rest of their family lived in Mitraniketan Housing Co-op's Casa Maria Emergency Housing for three years. They are refugees from Colombia. Opposite page: Mitraniketan member Safia Ibrahim-Hassan, pictured cooking for the Moss street market, as part of the International Women's Catering Co-op.

Mitraniketan: A small co-op with big ideas

Whoever once said big things come in small packages might easily have been talking about a tight knit housing co-op in Victoria, BC. Compared to the average co-op, Mitraniketan with its 20 units is quite tiny. One might think that without the efficiencies and volunteer resources of a larger group, they'd be simply treading water with the everyday responsibilities of running and maintaining their co-op. But Mitraniketan is clearly a special place.

It probably started out that way long before the co-op even had a name, which, by the way, is Sanskrit for "abode of friends". The founding group got acquainted through an organization called L'Arche, founded by Jean Vanier in 1964 to provide caring environments for people with developmental disabilities. Their shared concern for community lent itself to forming a co-op, and became the seed for other initiatives, such as Casa Maria.

"We were all involved in caring for handicapped people in some way or another, and working on social justice in Latin America," says founding member Laura Johnston. "A lot of us had done hospitality work prior to the co-op, so we decided to set one unit in the co-op aside for hospitality, and that was the beginning of Casa Maria."

The co-op created Casa Maria Emergency Housing Society to provides homes for refugees or families in critical need of housing. Each unit at

Mitraniketan contributes a monthly amount from their housing charge to support the Casa Maria Society. Originally providing up to one year of accommodation, this was later extended as they discovered refugees usually need longer to pickup the language and employment, "to move on with grace" says Laura. Starting with one unit in 1986, Casa Maria expanded when the house next door went up for sale in 1990.

"We put a bid on the house," says Laura, "and in a month we raised





\$15,000 for the down payment. We managed to get a \$160,000 public grant towards the mortgage and renovations, and the BC Builders of Victoria phoned and said ‘We hear you have a project. How would you like it renovated for free?’ It was a pretty awful four-bedroom structure. We renovated it into a duplex with two-bedroom units. We received donations for the roof, the lighting, the furniture, and BC Builders provided the labour. It was amazing how it all came together.”

Casa Maria has hosted people from an impressive range of places and backgrounds, including four men from the Sudan, a native family from Bella Bella, two doctors escaping political persecution in Columbia, and two Canadian women who retired after starting a school for the deaf in Mexico. This last couple brought a boy with them from Mexico who was later adopted into Laura’s family.

A number of people who have stayed in Casa Maria later joined the co-op. Safia Ibrahim-Hassan came with her family of four to Canada in 1988 from Oromia in East Africa. She stayed in Casa Maria for a year, and then joined Mitraniketan. Her family has since grown to eight.

“We wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for Casa Maria,” says Safia. “It’s an amazing thing to be involved with.”

Asked what she thinks of the co-op, Safia replies “It’s like the building I lived in before coming to Canada. There, all the homes face a courtyard and everyone’s door is open. It’s the same here! I heard that in North America you don’t see your neighbours, so it’s very good to have this kind of community.”

One might expect that, years later, the activism of Mitraniketan’s founding generation might be wearing thin.

“There’s maybe five original members here,” says Laura, “and there’s a lot of changeover that’s happened. So we have to work at passing on the history of Casa Maria – the feeling and the passion for it that we had.”

Sol Kinnis has been a member of Mitraniketan for one year. Asked about her new home, Sol says “It’s going great. We’re quite different from a lot of other housing co-ops. We make decisions by consensus. I don’t know if it would work in a 100-unit co-op, but I think it has a lot of benefits. Although we feel like we have some challenges around participation, in comparison to other co-ops I’ve spoken with it seems that we have quite a high participation rate. Our work parties usually get most people out. I think part of that is that everyone is welcome to take part in decisions.”

In an era of housing cutbacks Sol has been working towards creating new co-op housing with a group called Roofs and Roots. With an advisory group including representatives from CHF BC and the BC Institute for Co-op Studies, Sol and her group forge ahead towards the goal of creating a new housing co-operative in Victoria.

It appears that the co-op’s passion is inspiring newer members – passing the torch – or attracting other bright lights. ■

New co-op units despite lack of programs

During the current federal election campaign, housing co-ops, as they have done in repeated elections, will push for funding and programs to build new co-ops.

The desperate need for affordable housing can't be met without a serious and ongoing commitment from all levels of government. We haven't seen a federal program in more than a decade and Quebec is the only province that has continued to offer a program that enables groups to build a significant number of new co-op units.

But despite the lack of ongoing programs, there is still some co-op housing being built across the country:

New Brunswick

In July, Saint Croix Valley Housing Co-operative added 12 new apartment-style units to the 20 townhouses built 15 years ago. Through the Canada/New Brunswick Affordable Housing Agreement, the co-op received a capital contribution of \$420,000

from the federal government and long-term rent supplements from the province. The co-op has plans to add eight more townhouse units to meet the desperate need for good housing in the area.

Quebec

Meanwhile, Arc-en-Ciel de Gatineau, a Quebec housing co-op with 24 units built in 1985, celebrated its 20th anniversary by adding 59 new one and two-bedroom units. The co-op used two Quebec housing programs to add the new units, which will help them to meet the needs of current members now living alone and wanting to downsize, and help to house an aging population.

Ontario

The Ontario government is slowly re-entering the housing business, with the recent signing of a new federal/provincial housing agreement. And housing co-ops are taking note. A few projects are already in the works. On October 28, Blue Heron Housing Co-operative held a groundbreaking ceremony

on its site just outside Ottawa. And architecture students at the University of Waterloo are planning a new student co-op with development grants from the Ontario Co-operative Association, The Co-operators, and seed funding from CMHC.

There are similar projects happening in other provinces across the country. All of them will provide some relief for Canada's affordable housing crisis. But we can only start to make a dent in the long waiting lists for co-op housing with sustainable long-term government funding to build new co-ops and maintain the affordability of existing stock.

That's why CHF Canada, CHF BC, and members across Canada will continue to urge housing co-op members in this election to vote for candidates and parties that will support more co-op housing. ■

Merrilee Robson is CHF Canada's communications officer. You can reach Merrilee at 1.877.533.2667 (879.4116 in Vancouver) or mrobson@chfc.coop.

Rooftops visits Tanzania

Rooftops Canada board members Amanda Shaughnessy and Pamela Hine recently joined Marc Lamarche of the Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation and Bonnie Rice of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association on a Rooftops Canada sponsored study visit to Tanzania.

The objective of this tour was to increase the understanding of Rooftops Canada's international program by board members and partner organizations. Participants learned first hand how local housing groups and communities are working together with Rooftops Canada support to fight for secure tenure, to build new housing and to respond to the impacts of HIV/AIDS on housing. They also learned how women are educating themselves about their land and inheritance rights.

"In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, we were welcomed with flowers, dancing and singing by the staff of Women's Advancement Trust, led by their legendary executive director, Mama Siwale", says Amanda.

Participants were taken to see the different projects in and around Dar es Salaam. They spoke to residents who were upgrading their houses and others who were building new houses with loans from a revolving loan fund. At one site, they all had the opportunity to lay a few bricks in the new house being built by a schoolteacher.

Women Advancement Trust (WAT) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization whose main objective was initially to promote the advancement of women through education and

training in human settlements and other related issues. They have recently shifted focus to developing human settlements for all, not just for women. WAT is developing several co-operative housing projects and a savings credit co-operative.

"It's clear that WAT's accomplishments are a direct result from their ability to use the co-operative principles to organize people and to provide tools and resources at the community level to improve the well being of their membership", says Pamela.

The goal of WAT's housing development program is to empower low-income communities to improve their housing situation and provide education and training. Currently five housing groups consisting of 270 members are serviced under this program.

WAT has also developed HIV/AIDS workplace policies. The organization continues to mainstream HIV/AIDS awareness through information material (p. 21) ►

Study tour participants help lay bricks for a house belonging to a co-op member.



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Coinamatic

the co-op connection

Right and below left: Sample pieces of art produced by the co-op. Below: InsideArt members taking a break in the Mountain Institution glass shop.



InsideArt Co-operative

InsideArt is an artists' co-op established to market and sell members' work. Specialties include woodwork, glasswork and photography. Incorporated in 2004, it is the first prison-based co-operative in the world.

Most of the co-op members are prison inmates. Members pay a portion of earnings back to the prison as 'room and board'. Earnings are subject to income tax and artists pay for their own supplies and business expenses. The co-op was formed with support from

Community Futures South Fraser and the British Columbia Co-operative Association, and with funding from the Co-operative Development Initiative.

InsideArt has started exhibiting at craft markets including the Circle Craft Annual Christmas Craft Market in Vancouver. For more information – and to see the art – visit www.insideart.ca.

Do you know of an interesting co-op? Contact SCOOP so we can profile them.



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There are some big changes and surprises in store for 2006 including less paper, a one-step registration process and much more, making this the most convenient AGM ever. Check out this issue of *Newsbriefs* for more information.

Although June is still half a year away, don't wait to start planning for your co-op to take part. By planning ahead, you can take advantage of early registration fees, cheaper airfare and get a room in the hotel you want. Check out www.chfc.coop to find out more.

◀ p. 13

YES Camp journal

Camp Rainbow has been an unbelievable experience for me and I consider myself lucky, as most people never get to be in such a welcoming and supportive community. In my opinion, Grad was the most challenging of all three camps and was a strong ending to an awesome leadership training experience.

*Camp Rainbow is now known as The YES, for The Youth Excellence Society. For more information, visit www.theyes.ca or call Brian Smith at 604.662.3906. ■

◀ p. 17

Rooftops visit Tanzania

preparation and dissemination, and training with co-ops and housing groups.

“The admiration in the eyes of the children living in the slums and the hope of the people waiting for their opportunity to secure land tenure or loan funds, clearly identifies the need for Rooftops Canada’s ongoing support,” says Pam.

While WAT has come along way in helping to provide housing and shelter to low income people living in deplorable conditions, there is still a long way to go and they will need support for many years to come.

Kitty Molefe is the education co-ordinator at Rooftops Canada. For more information on HPZ or the work of Rooftops Canada, visit www.rooftops.ca or call 416.366.1445.

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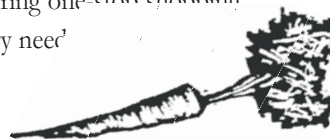
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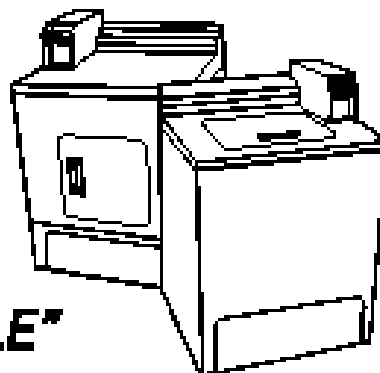


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