

# SCOOP

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES IN BC

## Inside:

Co-ops in the BC Interior  
Report from the World Urban Forum  
Unit inspections:  
how to do them right



# How's your vision? 2020, I hope

Is it too soon to be thinking about how healthy your co-op will be in the year 2020? Not according to the delegates who showed up in London for CHF Canada's June annual meeting. They gave an enthusiastic thumbs-up to a new project called 2020 Vision, and BC delegates were vocal in their support.

More housing co-ops were built in the 1980s than in any other decade. And in 2015, their agreements with government will start to end as they pay off their mortgages. The wave of co-ops coming to the end of their mortgages and government agreements will crest in 2016, and by 2020 more than 1,200 co-ops will not have any relationship with government.

That means no more government rules to follow, but it also means no more subsidies for low-income members and no government safety net if a co-op runs into trouble. In other words, we'll be on our own, a thought that is exciting some co-ops, and making others nervous.

CHF BC and CHF Canada are working together on 2020 Vision. It's our way of helping co-ops decide what they want their future to look like, and giving them the tools to make that vision a reality.

The challenges we face mean that governing and managing our co-ops well has never been more important. Delegates at the CHF Canada AGM were quick to comment on those challenges. A surprising number said that they can't keep up with regular maintenance or don't have a long-term financial plan. Others worried about how to recruit and keep good directors, and how to keep housing charges affordable for their members. And some weren't sure that we've found the right division of responsibility between volunteers and paid management to make our co-ops run smoothly.

Big issues? You bet they are. But there was plenty of optimism to go around too. Delegates were united in their desire to keep operating as non-profit



co-ops—even after government agreements end. They said that co-ops should help their low-income members even if government won't. And they spoke clearly in support of a strong co-op housing sector to knit the co-op community together across the country.

But that was talk. Now it's time to get to work. In the coming months, you'll hear more about 2020 Vision and what it will mean for your co-op. CHF BC wants to lead the country in the number of "2020 co-ops", and we can't do it without a big effort from you. This is the most important thing we've done together since the first co-op programs were negotiated. We look forward to working with you to achieve our 2020 Vision.

**Thom Armstrong** is the executive director of CHF BC.



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### Co-op notices are published separately.

Co-op notices are available at [www.chf.bc.ca](http://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](mailto: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:** The children of Sahali Housing Co-op in Kamloops love this playground built by co-op members. See page 14 for more pictures of this and other co-ops in the BC Interior.



**hot dates** Mark your calendars for upcoming co-op housing events you don't want to miss. Mainland **5** Vancouver Island **10**.

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# up front

## LETTERS

Dear SCOOP,

Our secretary can't remember who moved and seconded some motions we adopted at our last board meeting. Are motions recorded without movers and seconders (and the minutes of that meeting) still valid?

Dear Reader,

Most of us take care to record the names of people who move and second motions at board or members' meetings. We do it because that's how we were trained to keep minutes, but it's not necessary.

SCOOP checked out three well known books on meeting procedures. Bourinot's and

*Wainberg's both suggest that names of movers and seconders need not be recorded. Robert's Rules provides that just the name of the mover be recorded, and then only for important motions.*

*It's still a good idea to have movers and seconders for motions. At least two people in the room should think that a proposal is worth discussing before it takes up time at your meeting. And it's the chair's job to make sure that motions are properly moved and seconded by people who are entitled to vote at the meeting.*

*So, unless you have a policy or rules of order that require the names of movers and seconders to be recorded, your minutes (and the decisions they record) are perfectly valid with or without those names, as soon as they are approved at the next meeting.*



## hot dates

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

- |            |           |  |
|------------|-----------|--|
| <b>Aug</b> | <b>6</b>  | Vancouver Pride Parade (see p. 9)                              |
| <b>Sep</b> | <b>11</b> | Delegates Forum  |
|            | <b>25</b> | Workshop: Doing business with the new Agency for Co-op Housing |
| <b>Oct</b> | <b>9</b>  | Delegates Forum  |
|            | <b>21</b> | Fall Education Conference                                      |

## chip rates

Preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op operating accounts. These rates were effective July 1, 2006 and are subject to change.

<b>CCEC</b> – variable	3.20%
<b>CCEC</b> – fixed 12-month	3.70%
<b>Coast Capital</b> (Vancouver Island)	3.75%
<b>Prospera</b>	2.90%
<b>VanCity</b>	3.943%

## WANTED

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

All entries qualify for our prize draw.  
This issue's winning contributor is Kerri Cowie of  
Spruce Housing Co-op in Surrey.

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



Paloma Housing Co-op celebrates twenty years as a co-operative community. Pictured (from left) are MLA Jenny Kwan, CHF BC president Wes Hosler, Paloma president Richard Magnusson, and CHF Canada director Tony Legare.

## Paloma celebrates bittersweet anniversary

Paloma Housing Co-op in Vancouver celebrated its 20th anniversary this spring. The co-op is actually 21 now, but members decided to postpone the party so that they could combine it with celebrating getting their leaks fixed. The leak repairs are still stalled, so they went ahead with the anniversary. But for Paloma, a co-op that has spearheaded the campaign to fix BC's leaky co-ops, the festivities were bittersweet. "We are strong as a community," says the chair of the leak remediation committee, Michael Springate, "but our leaky building continues to rot, and is only made safe by temporary emergency shoring. We need your support in our ongoing struggle."

## New staff to assist leaky co-ops

Mandy Yeomans is CHF BC's new leaky co-op liaison officer. This new position, funded by CMHC, will help co-ops make their way through the remediation and workout process.

Mandy, her husband, daughter and two dogs live in Lakewood Terrace Co-op in East Vancouver. For the past two years, she has been the remediation co-ordinator for her co-op and has successfully steered Lakewood Terrace to a full and complete repair.

Mandy Yeomans, CHF BC's new leaky co-op liaison officer.

Now that Lakewood Terrace has been fixed, Mandy is ready to bring the experience and skills she has gained from that position to benefit other leaky co-ops in BC. Mandy starts work on August 1.

## Vancouver YWCA launches jobs program

The YWCA of Vancouver has launched a new employment service called Steps to Employment to assist women returning to the workforce. This service provides a safe and supportive environment for women to develop career choices and job search tools. Women will be able to determine their work



interests, assess their skills, education and experiences to make short- and long-term work plans. Participants also develop strategies to build and maintain work/life balance, to help ensure a positive outcome.

For information, call Celina Strachan at YWCA Steps to Employment at 604.709.0440. Or for programs in other regions visit <http://service.canada.gc.ca/en/home.html>

## Disability Trust makes 200<sup>th</sup> loan

The Disability Trust has now helped 200 people enjoy safe affordable housing in co-op communities throughout BC by providing almost \$170,000 in loans. Most of those loans have been repaid, and there are currently 52 loan recipients with a total of \$36,000 in outstanding loans. In all, members of 83 different co-ops have taken advantage of the program.

Started in 1982, the Disability Trust provides interest-free loans to help people with

disabilities who cannot pay for their shares when they move into housing co-ops. In order to be eligible for a loan, applicants must meet three criteria: they must be accepted as a member of a non-profit housing co-op in BC, they must have a permanent disability, and they must demonstrate financial need.

For more information on the Disability Trust, to make a donation or to request an application form, contact Mary Boles at 604.879.5111 ext 141, toll-free 1.866.879.5111 or [mboles@chf.bc.ca](mailto:mboles@chf.bc.ca).

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## Helen's Court first to pay dues

Congratulations to Helen's Court Housing Co-op in Vancouver for being the first to pay membership dues for 2006. Dues invoices were sent to member co-ops in June, and Helen's Court took less than one week to send a cheque! Thanks also to the large number of other members who pay dues so promptly. Your support keeps us strong and able to serve you better.

## Welcome to new members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to new members: Westminster Heights Housing Co-op in New Westminster, and Bowen Island Seniors' Co-op on Bowen Island. This brings the number of CHF BC member co-ops to 227, representing 11,879 units.

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- ▶ General co-op issues
- ▶ Co-op Association Act
- ▶ Occupancy agreement
- ▶ Contract interpretation
- ▶ Member disputes
- ▶ Rules

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New Vancouver Island director Sean Berard (left) with Island Council vice chair Sharon Logan and chair James Quaife.

## island dates

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

- |            |           |                                      |
|------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Sep</b> | <b>26</b> | Agency workshop                      |
| <b>Oct</b> | <b>11</b> | Vancouver Island Council             |
|            | <b>21</b> | Fall Education Conference, Vancouver |
| <b>Nov</b> | <b>4</b>  | Island Education Day                 |

## island chip rates

Preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op accounts. Rates effective July 1, 2006 and subject to change.

**Coast Capital** 3.75%  
(Vancouver Island)

**VanCity** 3.943%

## In profile

### New Vancouver Island Director Sean Berard

At the May 24 meeting of the Vancouver Island Council, Island delegates selected Sean Berard to fill the Federation board position left vacant after James Quaife stepped down. The CHF BC board made Sean's appointment official on May 29. *SCOOP* interviewed Sean by phone.

#### *Why did you decide to run for the CHF BC board?*

Our co-op (Friendship) wasn't all that connected with the co-op sector, so my wife and I decided to step up and be more active, to see what we could learn and to help better our co-op community. My wife joined the board here, so I can't be on the board with her.

## island ads

I ended up going to a CHF BC meeting one night. I ran for the board position, and I got elected. I figured this would be a good way to learn more about co-ops, be more directly involved with co-ops.

### *Do you have any particular issues or goals you'd like to pursue as a CHF BC director?*

At this point in time I'm doing a bit of catch up. I've just had my first meeting with Thom Armstrong (CHF BC's executive director), so I'm still figuring out what my job is. But from what I've seen of the different committees, the ones that interest me are communications, education and diversity. I truly believe in diversity because I'm First Nations. Everyone is a person, and everybody deserves equality. I believe in anything that has to do with diversifying the culture of co-ops.

### *Is there anything else you'd like to say to introduce yourself to members?*

I think the key to a good co-op is open-mindedness, education, and fairness. I've lived in two co-ops, one while growing up, and the one I'm in now. I find that the area where people tend to be at loggerheads most is over the fairness or even-handedness of the rules.

It's funny because I grew up not liking working within the confine of rules, but I find myself turning to them all the time saying "this is what we have, these are guidelines we are working with so either we all need to live by them or change the rules so that they suit the co-op."

I grew up in a co-op—spent about seven years there—and before that I lived in social housing with my mother. It's great to be in a community with a lot of kids around, because kids are the future. It's a good way to grow up, I think. ■



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**For info about Island services,  
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Victoria office at 384.9444.**



# Nuts + bolts *by John Waldo*

## Unit inspections: the key to co-op maintenance management

Most co-op members know the importance of annual unit inspections. How else can we organize and prioritize repairs? There's more to good maintenance than answering complaints or waiting for an emergency to happen!

Some co-ops complete inspections regularly, some not often enough. But even if your co-op does inspections, what are you doing with the information you gather?

Unit inspections and maintenance follow-up are vital to your co-op. If you are not doing inspections correctly or not following through with repairs, you are probably missing a great opportunity to increase the lifespan of your homes. And not having market-ready units will cost you vacancy losses when members move.

Here are some tips to help ensure that the same problems don't show up on unit inspection reports year after year without ever getting fixed.

### Conduct effective and useful inspections

An effective and useful inspection involves the following:

- a standardized and easy-to-use inspection form
- trained inspectors to ensure all inspections are to the same standard
- an agreed upon period of time to complete the inspections
- a privacy agreement with the inspectors to protect members' peace of mind

### Put the information gathered together in a plan

After you've done the annual unit inspections, review all inspection forms to create listings of the different types of repairs (e.g. emergency, preventive, plumbing, electrical, appliance and/or construction repairs)

### Assign repairs promptly

Assign the various repairs to a handyman or tradesperson (or get your maintenance coordinator to manage the work). If you use volunteers for maintenance work, be realistic in what you expect from them.

### Follow up to ensure completion

When the work is reported complete, assign someone to do a follow-up inspection. This

could be the occupant, another volunteer or a maintenance coordinator.

Whatever system you use, make sure that you're using the information you get from inspections to maximum advantage. ■

**John Waldo** is the Director of Client Services for COHO Repair Services. For a free quote on preparing your RRF Plan or other maintenance solutions call 604.879.5770 or email [jwaldo@coho.bc.ca](mailto:jwaldo@coho.bc.ca).

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# Adapting co-op units for seniors and disabled members

by Nola Tonkin

Good news! There is funding available from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for housing co-ops to adapt units to help their aging and disabled members.

The Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI) and Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities (RRAP-D) programs offer full reimbursement for approved changes to units.

Last year, Heritage Housing Co-op in Vancouver received \$17,500 for unit improvements to seven units housing lower-income seniors through HASI. This covered costs for items such as pot drawers, new shelving, railings, grab bars, hydraulic bath lifts, lever handles on doors, hand-held showers and single-handled faucets for sinks. Each of these improvements has helped the seniors living in those units to be more comfortable and mobile in their homes. Many more adaptations qualify.

Comments from Heritage Co-op members include "I can't believe that we could get this for free for our unit" and "These changes have been so good, I can soak in a bath again without pain and without being afraid I'll fall."

Call your portfolio officer to confirm if your co-op is eligible for the grant. Section 95 and ILM co-ops are eligible, but Homes BC co-ops are not. Your portfolio officer will advise you. Improvements done prior to application do not apply.

Contact CMHC at 604.731.5733 or toll-free at 1.800.639.3938 to order the information kits for either program.

The bad news? These programs end in March of 2007. That means you need to act quickly to qualify. It also means that your political pressure is needed to encourage the federal government to change its plans and keep these valuable programs. ■



For more information, visit [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca) and use the search function for information on the two programs and for lots of useful related resources.

Nola Tonkin is an independent co-ordinator at Heritage Co-op. She also works with Innovative Housing.

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in the spotlight

# CHF BC visits co-ops in the BC Interior

**T**his Spring, CHF BC member services director Kerry Panter spent a week visiting housing co-ops in BC's beautiful interior, concluding her tour with a full day of workshops at CHF BC's first Interior Education Day, hosted by Desert Breeze Housing Co-op in Kelowna.

"This was a great opportunity to renew CHF BC's ties with Interior members and to take the Federation's message to the few co-ops that haven't joined yet," says Kerry. "I'm already looking forward to the next trip."

Special thanks to Desert Breeze Housing Co-op in Kelowna for hosting our education day. *p. 16* ▶

 For more photos, and in colour, visit our website at [www.chf.bc.ca/pages/news.asp](http://www.chf.bc.ca/pages/news.asp)

Top: Desert Breeze Co-op, Kelowna. Centre: The Links members are proud of their beautiful co-op. Like many Interior co-ops, it is well maintained and beautifully situated. Bottom right: A Sahali member and his children enjoy a bike ride around the co-op. Bottom far right: Two small residents of Okanagan Co-op.







Top left: Sahali president, Wil Dekker (centre) with fellow members. Below centre: A beautiful back yard at Ida Vista Co-op in Salmon Arm. Ida Vista sits on eight acres of land. Below right: The tour included CHF BC's first Interior Education Day, hosted by Desert Breeze.



Above: Executive director Thom Armstrong (left) talks to Ron Oates, president of Clarendon Hall Housing Co-op in Penticton at CHF BC's first Interior Education Day. Left: Members of Southgate Manor in Kelowna extend a warm welcome to Member Services Director, Kerry Panter. Far left centre: Okanagan Co-op, Kelowna – this space between units transformed into a tranquil, perfect spot!

**CHF BC visits co-ops in  
the Interior**



Top right: The Links Co-op.  
Top left: Wayne Ackerman has  
lived over 30 years at Woodland Park,  
Castlegar. He was a resident long before the  
co-op was incorporated! Bottom right: Woodland  
Park directors say farewell to CHF BC after  
receiving a co-op finance workshop.



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# Nano camp big hit with youth

The Yes nano camp workshop at the latest CHF BC education conference was a hit!

Our afternoon started off plainly enough with a scrumptious lunch, but soon the real fun began when participants received messages in mysterious black envelopes. The notes told us we were chosen for a fun and exciting adventure.

Once it was time for the workshop, we were invited to enter the room by two silent figures sporting fantastic blue masks. They motioned us to don masks as well. These two

outlandish individuals were two wonderfully eccentric camp counselors from The Yes. Thus, our quest began.

Our mission was to decipher and protect Sacred Scrolls through a series of challenges. The first challenge was to name our team. Ultimately, we agreed on 'The Next Tops' to represent that we, youth, are the next in line to lead and champion the co-op movement. One of our challenges was to create a method of initiating others who wished to become a fellow Next Top, but not without a twist: a role-playing game.

We were each given a card with a different type of role that we had to take on during the activity. Some of us had to dominate the group by interrupting or rejecting everyone else's ideas, while others agreed with everyone without offering their own opinions or ideas. Another role called for being overtly uninterested and downright rude! We also switched roles a few times. This was a lot of fun because many leaders (not to mention hilarious actors) emerged.

Afterwards, we discussed how we felt while taking on a role as well as what our personal reactions were to the attitudes of others. We concluded that all of the roles reflect the mannerisms of many people we meet and know in life, including ourselves. By exploring these dynamics, we were able to establish which qualities are negative, as well as come up with a few happy mediums and ways of improving one's approach while interacting in a group setting.

This group setting continued with a new game about adopting "consensus" – a process the counselors introduced to the group. p. 22 ►

**This masked group worked together to unveil co-op mysteries at the first youth workshop at CHF BC's spring education conference. Alyssa, the person who wrote this account, is at the far left.**



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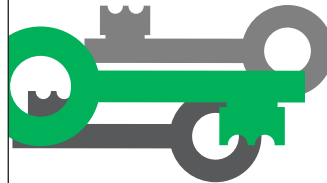
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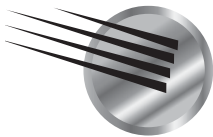
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# Free the Children advocate one of the highlights at CHF Canada AGM

Craig Kielburger learned about child labour by accident. When he was 12 years old, he was looking for the comics in a newspaper when he saw the headline, “Battled child labour – boy, 12, murdered.”

That was when Kielburger, guest speaker at the CHF Canada AGM in London, Ontario, learned that slavery was a reality for many children his age. As he rode his bike to school that day, he told delegates, he desperately thought about what he could do to help them. He asked his Grade 7 class for help.

Today, just over a decade later, those efforts have led to Free the Children, an international network of children helping children. Kielburger talked about how co-ops could help with the Adopt a Village program, which helps provide schools, income-generating projects, health care and clean water to villages in Kenya, Sierra Leone, China, and Sri Lanka. He challenged young people in co-ops to get involved in Free the Children’s programs and co-op members over 18 to support the co-op development work done by Rooftops Canada. Kielburger’s speech was just one of the highlights of the CHF Canada AGM.



Above: Keynote speaker Craig Kielburger. Bottom left: Wes Hosler, here speaking during CHF Canada’s London AGM, was one of several British Columbians newly elected to its board of directors.

## 2020 project

Delegates also had a chance to think about what their co-op would look like in the year 2020 (see page 2). Members passed a resolution launching a new project that will help co-ops prepare for their future when their agreements with government end. Delegates gave feedback to some of the questions facing co-ops, using new ‘gizmos’ that allowed instant responses from every delegate in the room. Watch for new materials and information coming soon. p. 22 ►



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## A sad note

*Members were moved by Kielburger’s speech to make donations to Free the Children. BC members, who had been saddened to learn of the loss of Glen Armstrong’s son the night before, took the opportunity to collect funds and donated \$565 in the name of William Armstrong. Members from other regions joined BC delegates in doing what they could for Glen at this most difficult time.*



# international

## Right to housing a major theme at World Urban Forum

The world's urban population is expected to reach 4.2 billion by 2020. If no serious action is taken by then, 1.4 billion of these people – or one in three – will be living in urban slums.

Tackling this and other challenges to human settlements was the goal of the World Urban Forum 3, an international conference on urban sustainability held June 19 to 23 in Vancouver and organized by the United Nations.

Vancouver has played a big role in facilitating this global dialogue since it hosted the first

forum 30 years ago. The original event, called Habitat I, featured celebrities such as Margaret Mead, Jane Jacobs and then-prime-minister Pierre Trudeau, who famously ditched the official event to walk barefoot with the 'hippies' along Jericho beach at the alternative conference.

This year's event at the Vancouver Conference Centre featured fewer personalities but more engagement with close to 10,000 participants from over 100 nations. There was no need this time for an alternative conference since registration was open and

free and included everyone from activists to average citizens, ministers to mayors, and bankers to slum dwellers.

"Thirty years ago the World Urban Forum was an event filled with optimism," said UN-Habitat executive director Anna Tibaijuka. "Slums existed, but we believed that with affordable housing they would be eliminated. The environment was threatened, but we believed that technology would give us ways to escape our dependence on fossil fuels and live more sustainably. In hindsight, these were naïve expectations."

In contrast to Habitat I, the six dialogues, 13 round tables and 160 networking events at WUF3 featured more realistic discussions of the hurdles to positive change, from AIDS to corruption to neo-liberal governments. But this forum also displayed its own brand of



Left: Entertainers welcome delegates from Slum Dwellers International, Kenya. Top right: A rally asserting the right to housing took place during the first day of the forum.



optimism, particularly by people from the slums who spoke of determination to improve their own lot and have a say in their own future.

Sessions featured countless fascinating stories, such as that of the mayor of Bogota, Columbia fighting a successful war against the automobile to improve his city, or the work of the mayors of Calgary, Chihuahua and Dar es Salaam to envision life in their cities 100 years from now rather than the more typical 5- or 10-year city plan.

Outside the session rooms too, in security line-ups, in halls, at exhibition booths and lunch counters, individual participants

were immersed in breathless one-on-one exchanges throughout the week.

"I have mixed feelings about the event," said CHF BC executive director Thom Armstrong, who attended parts of WUF3. "The Forum bubbled with the energy of people committed to making a difference in the sustainability of urban environments and in the living conditions of the world's poorest citizens. Many of the speakers—from the podium and from the floor—were positively inspiring. Yet there was a noticeable lack of focus in the agenda, and almost no reporting on progress made since the last Forum, as if people didn't want to acknowledge the obvious, that the

UN can't hold its member nations accountable for their lack of progress toward the Forum's lofty goals. It was a very interesting experience, and I'm glad to have been a part of it." ■



For details, you can visit the conference website at [www.wuf3.ca](http://www.wuf3.ca) to read the final report and the recommendations of the various stakeholder groups.



## ***First person perspective: Dianne Cook***

**Dianne Cook is a CHF BC director and a member of Creekside Housing Co-op in North Vancouver. Here are her reflections after attending the World Urban Forum:**

I actually had goosebumps the first couple of days at the conference because I had never before taken part in an international forum like this. I was thrilled to be surrounded by people from so many nations, and I knew something important was happening.

During the first two days, I volunteered at the booths for Rooftops and CHF Canada. This was a wonderful opportunity to connect with people from around the world because they stopped to talk with me about housing. I had several memorable conversations with people from India, Africa, the U.S. and elsewhere.

One of the things that stood out for me was how many people commented on the homeless people on the streets

of Vancouver. They said they had expected to see a shining example of a wealthy country that looks after the poor. For my part, I learned that in Africa corruption is a huge obstacle to creating housing. This was new to me.

Another highlight for me was the debate over whether the slum dwellers themselves could work with the private sector and government to develop their own facilities. This was another revelation because I often think that we're doing good when we go in to provide funding for housing and sanitation, but we're being told that they don't want us to come in and tell them what to do. They want to take part in the process because it's their home. I would compare this to the co-operative housing movement in Canada where we want autonomy for our own housing rather than government or the private sector saying 'we know how to do it better than you'.

Not all the press on WUF3 was positive. I saw one article in the paper describing it as a very expensive but useless 'chatfest' among rich African men in expensive suits. My feeling was just the opposite. I was so excited to be there among people with like-minded intentions to change the world. It's lovely to be with 10,000 people who care about the same things you care about.


I also went to the dialogue about bringing spiritual principles to urbanization. At the end of this meeting the moderator said that it might seem like a waste of time, but the meeting itself was an action for change. I guess I take that from the entire forum itself. My taking part was an action for change.

The biggest thing for me was taking some optimism from this and saying that, yes, we can help to build communities and housing and offer people security of tenure.

## Strong representation on CHF Canada board

Representatives from BC will be continuing a strong role on the board of directors of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Mike Alsop, a former CHF BC president, was elected as regional director for BC/Yukon. Mike takes the place of Tony Legare, who stepped down after six years as the BC representative on the board. Isabel Evans, also a former CHF BC president, was elected CHF Canada's vice president. And Wes Hosler, CHF BC's current president, was elected to the CHF Canada Board as treasurer.

Make sure to join us next year. Mark your calendars for next year's meeting, June 7 – 9 in Winnipeg, where the focus will be on housing co-ops and their environmental initiatives. ■


 To find out more about what happened at the AGM, visit the CHF Canada website at [www.chfc.coop](http://www.chfc.coop).

Merrilee Robson is CHF Canada's Communications Officer.

By discarding the conventional first-past-the-post system, many of the participants' eyes were opened to the process of achieving consensus, a new way of decision making by means of discussion, compromise, and co-operation. There were many other activities that helped us solve parts of the Sacred Scrolls including an auction for donuts, where we pooled our play money so everyone could enjoy a fair share.

Once our final clue was solved, we uncovered none other than the Seven International Co-op Principles, most of which we had used during our epic journey.

In conclusion, the workshop was very successful since it raised awareness about the co-op movement, gave youth a better understanding of how a housing co-operative functions, and enticed many participants to attend The Yes camp this summer. ■

 For more information about The YES, visit [www.theyes.ca](http://www.theyes.ca) or call 604.662.3906.

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