



DOWNTOWN

**COMMONS**

Sustainable Community Living

320 Colony Street, Winnipeg Manitoba

**MNPHA Education Session**

**Partnership between Downtown Commons and New Journey Housing**

**January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

# About Us

The University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) is an independently incorporated, not-for-profit charitable organization established to support the development of a sustainable University of Winnipeg community, guided by the four pillars of sustainability: environmental, social, economic and cultural.

Work done by the UWCRC has included a direct contribution to the positive revitalization of Winnipeg's downtown and advancement of the UWinnipeg campus and community as an innovative, dynamic and sustainable place to live, work, and play. Since its inception just over a decade ago, UWCRC has undertaken over \$230 million in development downtown. Among UWCRC's portfolio of campus developments there are several residential projects. These include the McFeetor's Hall: Great-West Life Student Residence (170 dorm beds and 25 student family townhouse units (19 affordable)); and, the 32 congregant student housing units in three renovated properties on Balmoral Ave., south of Portage Avenue.

More recently, UWCRC served as developer, owner and property manager of the Downtown Commons.

University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) 2.0 Inc. is a community-focused non-profit real estate development and property management corporation. We are a non-controlled entity of the University of Winnipeg. Now in our third year of operations, we have organizational experience relevant to housing management. UWCRC's twelve years of student housing management has transitioned to include affordable and market housing for the broader community.



# Downtown Commons



14 storey, residential tower located just South of the Buhler Centre and West of the WAG.

- 102 suites, mix of 1,2 & 3 bedroom
- 18 Premium suites
- 38 Market suites
- 46 Provincially funded affordable units, (32 rent-geared -to- income, and 14 affordable)
- Multipurpose Community space
- Small meeting/smudge room
- Terrace including BBQ and furnishings

# Market Suites



- ▶ 3 full size white appliances; dishwasher, fridge & glass top range
- ▶ Open concept kitchen, dining and living area
- ▶ Storage room
- ▶ One of a kind 2 story townhouse, living space on main floor with bedrooms upstairs
- ▶ All utilities included with the exception of cable, phone and internet

# Premium Suites



- ▶ Stainless steel appliances; dishwasher, fridge, glass top range & over-the-range-microwave
- ▶ Quartz countertop
- ▶ Stackable washer & dryer
- ▶ Large open balcony
- ▶ Covered parking
- ▶ All utilities included with the exception of cable, phone and internet



# Accessible Suites

- ▶ 3 fully accessible suites
- ▶ Remote control access at entrance to suite
- ▶ 3 full size white appliances; dishwasher, fridge & glass top range with front controls
- ▶ Lower countertops in bathroom and kitchen with open space under kitchen sink
- ▶ Pull-down upper cabinets in kitchen for easier reach
- ▶ Side by side washer and dryer
- ▶ Pedestal sink in bathroom and grab bars
- ▶ Roll in shower with flip-down seat, factory installed grab bars and hand held shower system with slide rail
- ▶ All utilities included with the exception of cable, phone and internet

# Amenities

- ▶ The second floor is devoted to common interior and exterior amenity spaces as a means of creating community within the planned diverse social mix of tenants.
- ▶ Small meeting room ventilated for smudging
- ▶ Large shared common laundry facility
- ▶ Access to on-site Peg City car co-op



# Community Partnerships

- ▶ Mary Mound
- ▶ Manitoba Housing
- ▶ MNPHA
- ▶ New Directions
- ▶ New Journey Housing
- ▶ Peg City coop
- ▶ RWB
- ▶ University of Winnipeg
- ▶ Villa Rosa
- ▶ West Central Networking Group
- ▶ West End Commons

# Educational and Social Programs

- ▶ Family movie night
- ▶ Games night
- ▶ Holiday party
- ▶ Income tax clinic
- ▶ Wellness Programming (mental health, nutrition etc.)
- ▶ Implement Rent Smart Certificate Program



# New Journey Housing

resource centre for newcomer housing

MNPHA Education Session

Partnership between Downtown Commons and New Journey Housing

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

# Our clients

## Newcomers to Canada

- Anyone born outside of Canada that requires housing supports
  - Provincial nominees
  - Government-assisted refugees
  - Privately sponsored refugees
  - International students
  - Temporary work permit holders
  - Asylum seekers / refugee claimants
  - Canadian Citizens
  - Visitors on exploratory visits
- Landlords\*
- Sponsoring organizations like churches, etc.\*

## **Services Provided:**

- Resource centre
- Provide training and support through one on one counselling and workshops
- Help clients attain stable housing

## **Services NOT Provided:**

- Rental property or property manager
- Manitoba Housing
- We do not 'put' people into housing

# Our Program



- Rental Workshop - rental process, rules, expectations, how to be a good tenant
- Home Purchasing Workshop – buying process, mortgage, how to save money on mortgage payments, being mortgage ready
- Budgeting Workshop – saving and spending, credit
- Money Basics Workshop – budgeting, banking, fraud, investments, RESPs, RRSP
- Other Housing Workshops – various topics with guest speakers (preparing house for winter, basic home repair, gardening, etc)
- One-on-one advising – home search, housing application, problem solving (eviction, heating, rent, etc.)
- CVITP – Saturday tax clinics and weekly drop offs
- Bedbug treatment – heat truck and moving
- Home Visits – moving-in orientation
- Home Reviews – volunteers with expertise in construction will visit potential homes to buy

# Languages

English

French

Swahili

Russian

Arabic

Tigrinya

Amharic

Karen

Tagalog

Kinyarwanda

Kirundi

# Partnership between Downtown Commons and New Journey Housing

- ▶ Why have a partnership?
- ▶ MOU
- ▶ Roles of DC and NJH
- ▶ Process to deal with tenant issues
- ▶ Challenges
- ▶ Successes
- ▶ Questions

# Why have a partnership?

- ▶ With a mixed income mandate, the Downtown Commons provides an opportunity for creating a true community with a wide-cross section of people from different cultural, economic and social backgrounds; it is a place built to respect and facilitate the diverse needs of people of all abilities.
- ▶ Supportive housing
- ▶ Build community
- ▶ Cultivate cultural diversity
- ▶ Creating an inclusive environment

# MOU and Roles

Downtown Commons	New Journey Housing
Provide 15 units - (10 RGI, 5 affordable)	Refer NJH clients for these units
Contact NJH when new vacancies opens up - allow 2 weeks for NJH to find applicant	Rental workshop for all clients
Determine eligibility of tenant applications	Assist clients with DC application and lease signing - provide interpretation if needed
	House visits after move in
	Ongoing support for all 15 families and DC team

# Process to deal with issues

- ▶ When Downtown Commons team is confronted with a tenant issue they contact NJH housing advisors that are working with the tenant in question. NJH then contacts tenant and take next steps
- ▶ Next steps often include phone call in preferred language, house visit, and demonstration on how to avoid similar issues from happening again
- ▶ Whole building issues (eg. problems with garbage chute)
  - DC team contacts NJH then NJH can explain issue to all clients in preferred language. Sign posted in elevator doesn't help tenants that cannot yet read English
- ▶ Communication between DC and NJH goes both ways

# Challenges

- ▶ Lease renewal and subsidy renewal - paperwork and supporting documents. We learned how to copy emails between DC, NJH and Rent supplement
- ▶ Other NJH clients that have friends living at DC want to live there - not enough units for everyone! DC set the bar high - challenge and a success
- ▶ Families outgrowing their accommodations
- ▶ Maintenance delays due to cultural differences
- ▶ Multi-lingual signage

# Successes

- ▶ Holiday Party - For whole building - not just newcomer tenants. Great way for tenants to meet each other
- ▶ Family/Friend referrals - shows that people love and are recommending to others to live at Downtown Commons
- ▶ Low tenant turnover
- ▶ Vacancies are filled quickly

# Thank you!

- ▶ Codi Guenther - Executive Director New Journey Housing

[codig@newjourneyhousing.com](mailto:codig@newjourneyhousing.com)

- ▶ Crystal Wels - Tenant Living Manager Downtown Commons

[c.wels@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:c.wels@uwinnipeg.ca)