



Media Release

March 9, 2017

Homeward Trust Congratulates this year's ROOPH Awards Recipients

Today, all levels of government, community, and business leaders gathered to celebrate the 2017 Recognizing Outstanding Organizations and People in Housing (ROOPH) Awards.

"I am so proud of our community's accomplishments since these awards were created 12 years ago," says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust. "The ROOPH Awards give us all a chance to come together and recognize our sector's achievements and milestones; our dedicated people who strive for excellence whether working on the frontline or working in policy."

Larry Shaben Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Housing Sector:

Larry Shaben was a respected Alberta cabinet minister who provided critical leadership in addressing housing issues across the province. One of Mr. Shaben's most outstanding contributions was in the area of safe, secure, and affordable housing. As a trustee with The Edmonton Housing Trust Fund, he was instrumental in initiating the ROOPH Awards. This award is named in Mr. Shaben's memory to recognize the highly committed and passionate individuals working in the housing sector in our city.

2017 Larry Shaben Award Recipient:

Bob McKeon
Social Justice Coordinator (retired)
Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Bob has been involved for over 30 years in board leadership positions with several community and church organizations in Edmonton's inner city, addressing issues of poverty, health, hunger, housing, and community and economic development. Until his retirement in 2016, Bob served as Social Justice Coordinator for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton. In addition to his professional work, Bob is also a long-time resident of the McCauley community where he lives and serves as a founding member of the InnRoads Housing Cooperative. His vision helped forge the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society, now called the Right at Home Society which provides home to more than a thousand Edmontonians. He helped shape the No Room In The Inn campaign that raises money every year to assist non-profit housing providers in refreshing their facilities in order to better meet the needs of their tenants.

2017 ROOPH Awards Recipients:

Christopher's Place, George Spady Society

This Permanent Supportive Housing Program provides a safe controlled environment for men and women who require significant permanent supports to maintain their independence in the community. The program operates from a harm reduction perspective and focuses on providing residents with the skills and knowledge required in tenancy. Residents experienced a marked increase in overall self-sufficiency after moving into Christopher's Place, especially in the areas of human relations, financial matters, household management, mental health, and substance use. Christopher's Place staff has built a relationship with *Homeward Trust is a community based organization that provides leadership and resources toward ending homelessness in Edmonton. We fulfill our mandate by leading initiatives and programs, engaging community stakeholders and partners, conducting research, creating awareness, and funding housing and support projects.*



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EPS Beat Constables which help ensure the safety of the residents and furthers collaboration with community partners.

SAFQEY

Society for Safe Accommodations For Queer Edmonton Youth - SAFQEY - is an organization whose mission is to help end youth homelessness in Alberta. It does so by building awareness of LGBTQ2S+ youth homelessness in Edmonton and Northern Alberta, and by working towards establishing specialized transitional housing. Established in 2015 with only a handful of individuals, SAFQEY has been working hard in the Edmonton area to build relationships with queer and youth organizations to help meet the needs of a demographic that is often overlooked.

Community Bridge Program, Bissell Centre

Community Bridge is unique as a multi-dimensional homelessness prevention program in Edmonton. It is a rapid response intervention that stops imminent eviction and provides interventions and services to address the root causes of eviction to prevent recurrence. Community Bridge funding is intended to support any financial need that is leading to the impending eviction, including rent and utilities, but also job loss or reduction, loss of a roommate, car repairs, system funding gaps, and unexpected medical expenses. Bissell Centre developed the program in partnership with a volunteer steering committee made up of funders, community agencies, utilities, landlords, and tenant advocacy groups.

Youth Residential Services, Edmonton John Howard Society

Edmonton John Howard Society's Youth Residential Services works towards ending youth homelessness through a variety of programs that offer a continuum of services to provide appropriate interventions depending on where youth are at in the change process. The LOFT, which opened in 2008, is a 6-bed supportive housing program for male youth ages 16 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Nearly all of its clients report that the LOFT has helped them increase their skills to live independently. NOVA, which opened in 2013, is a 20-bed supportive housing program that provides low-barrier, harm reduction focused housing to youth ages 16 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness. Surveys show 95% of youth in the program feel safe living at NOVA.

Suzanne Kassian, Project Manager, Youth Housing First Project

Suzanne is the Project Manager for the Youth Housing First project, the first program of its kind in Canada. Its intention is to not only house youth between the ages of 13-24, but to identify and capture the systemic barriers and gaps that contribute to youth homelessness. Suzanne put the project in motion and brought the ideas behind it to life. In the first six months of the project, more than 150 referrals have been received and more than 60 youth have been housed and supported. Suzanne has been involved in all roles including securing housing, landlord relations, youth engagement, data analysis, and advocacy.

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