

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

## **2012 ROOPH Awards Recognize Six Organizations and People for their Outstanding Contributions to Housing and Homelessness**

**Edmonton, March 8, 2012** – Close to 300 guests representing organizations, individuals, corporations and all levels of government committed to ending homelessness in Edmonton were in attendance at the Westin this afternoon to recognize outstanding organizations and people in housing.

### **The 2012 ROOPH Award winners are:**

- The Larry Shaben Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Housing Sector – **Alfred Nikolai, Habitat for Humanity**
- Excellence in Building Design – **Integrated Management and Realty Ltd. – Canora Place**
- Exceptional Volunteerism in the Housing Sector – **Les Umpherville**
- Outstanding Service for the Aboriginal Community – **Elsey Gauthier**
- Partnerships for Success – **Shaw Conference Centre**

### **Background information on the winners is included following this release.**

“It’s important to recognize the success our community is achieving towards ending homelessness,” said Susan McGee, Executive Director, Homeward Trust Edmonton. “So many individuals and groups are doing tremendous things, and the event is a chance for us to come together and celebrate their achievements. Ending homelessness is truly a community-wide commitment and our nominees and winners reflect that.”

This year, Homeward Trust honoured former Alberta Premier, Ed Stelmach with ***Special Recognition for Leadership towards Ending Homelessness***.

“Mr. Stelmach’s commitment to ending homelessness and promoting the development of affordable housing deserves our recognition,” said McGee. We are so pleased to honour him with this special award.”

In his term as Alberta Premier, Mr. Stelmach championed issues around housing and homelessness. His commitment to this initiative funded more than 11,600 affordable housing units, creating safe and modest homes for more than 22,000 Albertans. He also established the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, which led to the development and implementation of ***A Plan for Alberta: The 10-year plan to end homelessness***. Since its inception in 2009, the plan has seen a drastic reduction in the number of Albertans who report that they are homeless.

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## 2012 ROOPH Award Winners

### The Larry Shaben Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Housing Sector

#### Alfred Nikolai, President and CEO, Habitat for Humanity Edmonton

With clear vision, strong leadership and endless optimism, Alfred Nikolai has grown Habitat for Humanity Edmonton (HFHE) from building four homes to more than 80 homes in just seven years, enabling the organization to become one of the largest affiliates in Canada.

Under his leadership, Alfred strengthened HFHE administration funding by doubling ReStore operations. He also implemented the first Habitat Prefab shop in Canada and played an instrumental role in helping five rural communities implement the Habitat program. Finally, through developing innovative partnerships and mobilizing volunteers, he increased volunteer hours at HFHE from 25,000 in 2005 to 85,000 in 2011.

#### Excellence in Building Design

##### Integrated Management and Realty Ltd. – Canora Place

Canora Place, which officially opened its doors on March 24, 2011, was developed for Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre with the goal to house chronically homeless men and women. The design includes bachelor, one and two bedroom units. Additionally, the facility includes a common area for social gatherings; large windows, allowing natural light; energy efficient appliances and water conservation.

#### Exceptional Volunteerism in the Housing Sector

##### Les Umpherville

Les Umpherville has been supportive of Homeless Connect since the initial event in 2008. Formerly homeless himself, he knew what services guests required as well as what supports were missing. When approached to sit on the steering committee, Les was eager to participate and provide his insight. Through his engagement of homeless people on the streets, he has promoted Homeless Connect and has given a voice to the homeless.

#### Outstanding Service for the Aboriginal Community

##### Elsy Gauthier

Through her work with the DiverseCity Housing Initiative, Elsey Gauthier has made a positive impact on housing supports in Alberta. As an aboriginal consultant and housing worker, Elsey serves as a valued advisor to the entire team. Her contributions to the community extend well beyond her day-to-day work with DiverseCity.

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In addition to her formal work with Alberta Health Services, Eley is gracious in sharing her knowledge with community members. Her leadership has extended to other Housing First teams, who learn from Eley's workshops about Aboriginal culture and DiverseCity's work in the community.

## **Partnerships for Success**

### **Shaw Conference Centre**

Every year, the Shaw Conference Centre hosts two Homeless Connect events, providing the opportunity for homeless and at-risk individuals and families to connect with essential services to improve their quality of life. Through this innovative partnership, the Shaw Conference Centre staff participate as active members on the event steering committee and as in-house partners, contributing over \$20,000 in event services; the Shaw Conference Centre kitchen feeds thousands of guests and the Centre itself contributes over \$83,000 in facilities services annually.

**ROOPH Awards Sponsors:** Edmonton Homeless Commission, REALTORS Association of Edmonton, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), City of Edmonton and Gable Investments Ltd.

*Homeward Trust Edmonton is a not for profit organization that uses a community-based approach toward the goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton. Our primary role is to coordinate responses to housing needs by working together with local agencies and all orders of government.*