

We call our newsletter three P's. It stands for **Place Purpose Progress**. Please read on and find out more about Fred Victor and our three P's.

three P's

FALL/WINTER 2011

Finding Home

Every year, 55,000 people speaking more than 140 languages and dialects come to live in the Greater Toronto Area. Fifty per cent of the City's population was born outside Canada.

But, what happens when you come to Toronto and you don't have an adequate place to live? How can you find "home", that elusive feeling of warmth, security and belonging, when you don't have stable, affordable, adequate accommodation?

Fred Victor's Yong Lee was hired as the manager of a new partnership between The Learning Enrichment Foundation – a settlement organization – and Fred Victor's Housing Access Support Services.

The program's mandate is to help conventional refugees and landed immigrants to find safer, more affordable housing. A housing referral phone line has

“It's hard to believe, but this type of on-the-ground collaboration between a settlement organization and a housing access organization is a first in Toronto.”

been set up. Also, a series of housing and settlement workshops have been created. In the first couple of workshops, a total of 110 settlement workers visited different types of housing in the City to learn about what is available for newcomers.

The issue of settlement in Canada is one Yong knows personally. He came from Korea to Canada with his family when he was four years old: "It was very hard for my parents. Just the language issue alone was difficult." He continues, "New immigrants often don't have access to information. Many may come from countries where there is no such thing as 'tenant rights'."

So, the Housing Access and Support Services for Newcomers program provides information in different languages and educates immigrants about their rights and obligations as tenants. Yong describes a not uncommon issue among immigrants, "hidden homelessness". An example of this is a large extended family crammed into a one-bedroom apartment in a hi-rise.

Erika experienced this kind of housing pressure. She came from Peru 11 years ago, was trained as a chef and worked in her brother's restaurant in Etobicoke. She married and lived with her husband who was a good provider but became violent when he

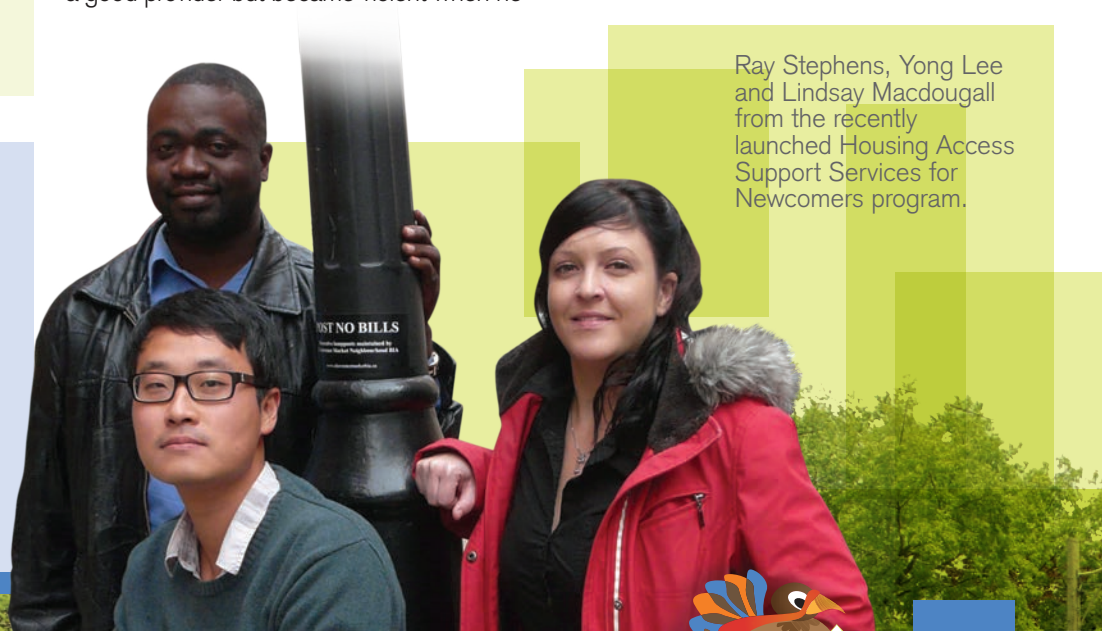
drank excessively. She says, "I never felt I had too many choices. I thought I had to stay with my husband, otherwise I would have left a long time before I did."

Women friends at a Learning Enrichment Foundation's English class convinced her she had options. When she escaped with her two very young children, she says, "It was such a bad moment. I left with nothing." She fled to her family's household where her mother and two brothers live. The new set-up, however, put severe pressure on everyone, especially Erika.

Erika found out about the HASS for Newcomers phone referral line (416-760-2569) through the Learning Enrichment Foundation. She phoned and left a message, "Please, can I get a place?" Settlement Housing Worker Ray Stephens returned her call. She says, "When I met Ray for the first time, I thought I had found a friend. I worried if he would understand my English. I felt shy, but he was so gentle and nice."

Ray was able to find an adequate, affordable apartment for Erika and her children. She looks to the future with optimism. Eventually she sees herself as a chef again. "I want to give a good life to my children."

Ray Stephens, Yong Lee and Lindsay Macdougall from the recently launched Housing Access Support Services for Newcomers program.



Just Past...

On September 22, Fred Victor's main community services site at Queen and Jarvis echoed with the sound of hundreds of conversations. Settlement, health and housing organizations set up information booths to provide information to newcomers at the City's first Newcomer Wellness Fair.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide responsive, accessible and innovative housing and services for people who are experiencing homelessness and poverty, and to advocate for a more equitable society.

In this Issue

- Finding Home 1
- It's Great to Know 2
- Passing on 2
- Brad, the Bread Man 3
- Toronto Local 416 Plant "Mary's Garden" 4



It's Great to Know



Four Open House Drop-in participants toast with the mugs donated by United Church Women.

When Gomo George, a worker at Fred Victor Open House Drop-in, sent out an email to staff in June, he said: "We are planning to go Green so we are writing to inform you of our drive for donations of non-disposable coffee cups for our Drop-In. We also need clothes hangers for our fabulous new clothing room."

No sooner were the words written

than the emails started clicking and the Drop-in's "Green need" was in email boxes all over the GTA. The result? 120 ceramic mugs were delivered from Wexford Heights United Church Women in Scarborough in September. More came from Southeast Presbyterial Women on October 25, and yet more were donated on November 8th. Also, a huge load of hangers and clothing from Richmond Hill United Church Women were piled into staffer Carol Watson's Toyota Matrix hatchback and delivered to the Open House in early October.

Mark's Message



If you're like me, you've probably paid some attention to the "Occupy" movements that have sprung up in many North American and European cities. Toronto's

version is, or was, in St. James Park depending on when this newsletter reaches your doorstep. But, at the moment, many of our Fred Victor service sites are very close to the encampment in St. James Park.

As I walked past the tents in early October, I doubted that their message and methods would resonate with the broader public. Now, I'm not so sure. Many people are concerned about the same things as the Occupy protesters. Ed Clarke, president and chief executive of TD Bank, recently expressed sympathy for the protesters' fundamental message. A retired partner from a national accounting firm recently told me he thought the Occupy movement was going to change our society and how we do business. Many people in the social services sector have long-held views that align with the Occupy movement. Researchers and academics, also, have identified the harmful effects of income disparity on health, productivity, crime rates and social cohesion.

At Fred Victor, we drive toward a more just society. It's in our mission statement. Many times when presenting

funding proposals to prospective donors and businesses, I have personally critiqued the increasing gap between rich and poor in our society. And I have left knowing that these funders are as uncomfortable as I am with the conditions that many people endure.

The problem is, we do not seem to be willing to go one step further and make the hard choices that would make a more just society a reality. The Occupy movement is both a very visible reminder of that fact and an example of people who are willing to challenge the status quo.

Today, a cool fall day in Toronto, I walk past the tents again and see a group of older adults talking with a group of twenty somethings. It makes me feel optimistic, and that well-known quote from Margaret Mead comes to mind, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."



A warm thank you to all of you whose gifts of money and time in 2011 have made it possible for us to continue to address poverty in Toronto. Cheers!

Mark Aston,
Executive Director, Fred Victor



It's great to know the needs of our Fred Victor community are in the hearts and hands of **United Church Women!** Thank you!



Passing On

Housing activist Bill Bosworth died in Toronto on August 18th, just four days before Jack Layton also passed on.



Bosworth was a senior staff person at Fred Victor in the late 1970s. He was important in shaping Fred Victor's permanent community housing out of a men's emergency shelter. Former executive director Reverend Paul Webb said Bosworth was the kind of person who asked "all the tough questions that needed to be asked".

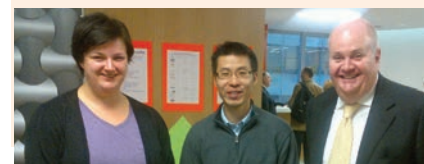
Bosworth understood that people who are on the street need to share power. Today at Fred Victor, we emphasize doing things "with" our tenants and program participants, rather than just taking care of them by doing things "for" them. That is one of Bosworth's lasting legacies, along with a long and impressive list of accomplishments related to affordable and supportive housing in our City. We are grateful, Bill, thank you.

Friends Catering's Big Spread

On October 24th, Thomson Reuters employees were treated to both a talk and tasty breakfast morsels. They heard about Fred Victor's wide community reach and munched on the best tiny mushroom quiches in town prepared by Friends Catering. Order through www.fredvictor.org.



Do you know a downtown business that would like to host a breakfast and presentation on Fred Victor? Call Jane Truemner at (416) 364-8228 ext. 341.



Monica Schroeder, community support worker for Friends Catering, Trainee Sergio Ro, and Managing Director of Thomson Reuters Canada, Mark Davidson.

Brad, the Bread Man

Brad Chapman is a generous and highly motivated volunteer who every week packs his car to the ceiling with fresh bread and delivers it to Fred Victor's Open House Drop-in and other charities in the east-end. Brad is no stranger to travelling for a purpose. In the 1970s, he was "wagon master" looking after the needs of Parliamentary Press Gallery journalists who travelled across Canada during federal elections.



I have a long history of people and places, and I've seen need. We're born to share with, and help others.

TPN: Three P's newsletter **BC:** Brad Chapman

TPN: Brad, I heard from Enza, the Drop-in Manager, that you've been delivering bread once a week to Fred Victor for 4 or 5 years. Can you tell me a bit about that?

BC: About 10 years ago, where I live, there used to be a supermarket that put out bread every night into a bin. It looked

like it was going to be thrown out so I took a couple of bags.

TPN: So it was good bread going to waste?

BC: Yes! I started picking it up from behind the store and delivering it to different places like Maxwell Meighen and the Good Shepherd. Then, someone at the supermarket found me picking up the bread and told me the supermarket got credit toward the next delivery of bread based on what was in the bin. I told the guy I was sorry and stopped doing it. But then I looked at the packaging on the bread and cold-called the bakery. I went and met with Dennis Rossetti at the Italian Home Bakery in Rexdale, and he said I could take as much "overbake" as I wanted.

TPN: So, did you drive out to Rexdale and get it then?

BC: Yes. Twice a week, I jammed my Plymouth Sundance with bread. Then one day, during one of my deliveries to the Salvation Army's Maxwell Meighen Centre, Ray Medley (volunteer from Fred Victor's Open House Drop-in) came over and asked me to deliver bread to Fred Victor. I was happy to accommodate. (The Drop-in provides food, warmth, creative programs, health information and referral for up to 100 people a day.)

TPN: Why do you do it?

BC: I have a long history of people and places, and I've seen need. We're born to share with, and help others. If we just lead a "me first" life, what good is that doing? Also, there's a surprising amount of personal satisfaction in doing it. I feel good for having pitched in. Food waste when people are hungry in the city just doesn't make sense.

It's Completed!

It's not EVERY day you see four smiling faces at Fred Victor's new, central reception. But, EVERY day, you do see ONE. It's Natalie Edison! She greets and guides every person who enters the building. She's the first woman in the front of the picture below.

It's hard to believe how much the redesign and rebuilding at 145 Queen Street East has improved the site. That's where you'll find Fred Victor tenant housing, transitional housing, harm reduction, a drop-in program, healthcare services, a clothing room... not to mention Friends Restaurant and Friends Catering Company!



three P's **fred victor**

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Please join in our efforts to provide emergency shelter, food and counselling for people when it's needed most. Support from people like you will ensure our programs and services are kept effective, innovative and respond to the real needs of the community.



Yes! I will help people live with dignity.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

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Thank you for your support!

If you would like to donate over the phone, please call Leah at 416-364-8228 ext. 309 or online visit www.fredvictor.org



Toronto Local 416 plant “Mary’s Garden”

It starts something like this: Krystyna Dixon, a worker at Fred Victor Women’s Hostel phones her Mom, Denise Rehel, a staff person with the Toronto Civic Employees Union Local 416, and says, hey Mom, how about bringing your Union to the Hostel for a day and doing some gardening? So, her Mom says, ok, sounds good, let’s do it!

Then all the pieces start to fall into place. Paul Le Page, City gardener, gets a good deal on \$200 worth of plants, mostly annuals. Everyone gets tee-shirts and Thursday, July 14 arrives. The sun is shining so brightly you actually want to get sprayed with the garden hose!

The volunteers are working with Hostel staff, residents, and even a couple of kids who belong to staff. There’s a small sheltered garden at the back of the Hostel and this is the day it will be planted and named, “Mary’s Garden”. Mary’s Garden honours Mary Sheffield, the pragmatic and visionary founder of the fledgling Fred Victor Mission. Local 416 not only donated their time that day, they also



presented the Hostel with a plaque that reads: Mary’s Garden.

Most days, Kuriat Yusuf works alongside Krystyna at the Women’s Hostel. “We’ve built a tradition around the garden. Each woman who stays at the hostel can adopt a plant. It’s theirs to take care of as long as they’re with us. It seems to help the women to do this.”

Despite the heat and the crush of people gathering in the back for a barbecue, Paul isn’t slowing down: “I love beautifying the city. That’s what it’s about

for me. Look up and down this street. There’s no green space anywhere. So any chance I get – I’ll take a day off work to do it if I have to – I plant flowers, shrubs, trees. It just makes the city so much better.”

The Union hasn’t planted at a Hostel before but they’ve done lots of other environmental good deeds, delivering big brown paper recycling bags to the public, attending environment days with city councillors... And they do it on their own time, too. Now that’s community spirit!

Thank You!

Thank you! The following organizations donated \$500 or more to Fred Victor between April 1, 2011 and November 15, 2011.

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