

October 11, 2012

## ***FACT SHEET***

### **What is Fred Victor?**

Fred Victor is a not-for-profit organization that operates out of 10 City service locations and assists approximately 8,000 people a year who are experiencing poverty and homelessness. The organization has a long and respected track record with deep roots in the downtown Toronto community that date back to its founding in 1894.

### **Why is Fred Victor creating new affordable housing in the West Don Lands?**

#### **Social need**

There are as many as 83,000 people who have placed their names on waiting lists for affordable housing in Toronto. There is an enormous need to provide high quality supportive housing for people with disabilities, seniors and veterans. The new West Don Lands housing, owned and managed by Fred Victor, will be a bold step forward in creating a diverse community that demonstrates what a valuable asset supportive housing is to our City.

#### **Fred Victor's capacity to deliver**

Fred Victor's stellar history of innovation and responsiveness to people living in poverty — single adults, families, seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities including mental health concerns, and people living with addictions — attests to its capacity to successfully create affordable housing at the Pan Am site. Also, in recent years, Fred Victor successfully raised \$12M to redesign and rebuild its historic site at 145 Queen Street East, so it has proven its capacity to raise adequate funds for the new project.

### **Design excellence in Fred Victor's new apartment building and neighbourhood**

Block Three of the Athletes' Village, acquired by Fred Victor, is a LEED Gold certified building of 108 one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom units housing a total of 300 people. LEED certification is the recognized standard for measuring building sustainability in North America.

This affordable housing will be located in the redeveloped West Don Lands neighbourhood, a community bordered by the Don River, King Street, Parliament Street and the rail line adjacent to the Gardiner Expressway that includes a YMCA, outdoor parks and trail system, and with easy access to public transit, amenities, schools and downtown Toronto. Through new partnerships, Fred Victor will develop a community services hub that supports creative, healthy living for people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability.

### **How was Fred Victor chosen?**

In 2011, Infrastructure Ontario requested proposals to purchase and operate affordable housing at the Pan/Para Pan Am Athletes' Village site. Twenty organizations responded to the request for proposals and two were awarded. Fred Victor was one of the two winners.

### **Fred Victor's programs, services and partnerships**

- **Permanent housing** for 240 previously homeless individuals and families at three separate locations: Queen Street East; Dawes Road; and Mortimer Avenue
- **Transitional housing** for 20 people with long histories of homelessness at Queen Street East

- **Emergency shelters** for 100 people at two separate locations, one for women including transgendered and transsexual women, and the other for people with pets, transgendered and transsexual people, people with disabilities, singles and couples.
- Fred Victor helped 255 individuals and 40 families find and keep permanent housing in 2011 through its **Housing Access Support Services**.
- **Employment and training** including skills development, volunteer opportunities, pre-employment training, job research, resume writing, interview preparation and job placement. Annually, the service receives close to 17,000 visits.
- **Community programs**
  - a) two separate Drop-Ins, one women only, one men and women. Services include: counselling, a Mental Health and Justice Program, Harm Reduction Program, facilitated expressive arts, ID replacement, clothing, workshops on health, legal, and safety issues and nutritious food
  - b) Friends Restaurant delivers approximately 70,000 affordable meals each year
- **Health services**
  - a) Fred Victor is the lead agency in the Concurrent Disorders Support Services which, through case management, referral and service networking ensures the most marginalized in our City get health services. Shared Care Clinic Outreach, St. Michael's Hospital Withdrawal Management, and the Inner City Access Project all operate out of the Queen Street East site.

### **Fred Victor's Innovation and Leadership**

1) Fred Victor excels in training and hiring people who have experienced homelessness and poverty. The Social Service Traineeship Program provides intensive, 12-month education and job training for people who want to work in the social service field. The Cooling Centres Project operates in partnership with Working for Change and the City of Toronto to train and employ people to operate the City's Cooling Centres during extreme heat alerts. In 2008, Fred Victor established Friends Catering Company, a successful social purpose enterprise that provides another job training, mentoring and employment opportunity. View their menu at [www.friendscatering.ca](http://www.friendscatering.ca).

2) Fred Victor created a new transitional housing model in 2011 based on collaborative research with the Wellesley Institute in order to determine the best way of housing community members who have complex health needs and long histories of homelessness. Residents are now provided intensive support on the redesigned second floor of 145 Queen Street East. The results after one year of applying the new model will be published and made available to other transitional housing providers.

3) In 2003, Fred Victor researched the best ways for emergency shelters to accommodate Toronto's transsexual and transgendered (Trans) population. As well, in 2005, Fred Victor conducted research that confirmed the positive health benefits to homeless people of continuing to own pets. When Fred Victor opened its new emergency shelter on Caledonia Road in 2007, the organization was guided by the results of these studies. The Caledonia shelter is the only shelter in Toronto that welcomes people with pets and is Trans-friendly. It is one of the few shelters in the City that is fully wheelchair accessible.

***For more information about Fred Victor's new affordable housing at the Pan Am/Para Pan Am legacy site or to schedule an interview, please contact:***

Mark Aston  
Executive Director  
(416) 364-8228 ext. 310/ cell (416) 270-4058  
[maston@fredvictor.org](mailto:maston@fredvictor.org); OR

Jane Truemner  
Director, Fund Development and Communications  
(416) 364-8228 ext. 341/ cell (416) 523-1575  
[jtruemner@fredvictor.org](mailto:jtruemner@fredvictor.org)