

Creating a Sense of Belonging..

Kelly Moore has been a member of the Medicine Hat Community for 6 years. As a creative writer for both CHAT 94.5 FM and MY96 she's had the opportunity to meet many people and become familiar with several of our cities businesses and community groups. She has recently decided to lend her writing talents to the Community Foundation as a way to become more involved and learn even more about all the wonderful things Medicine Hat has to offer it's residents.

The Champion's Centre ... a fitting name for a place that offers not only permanent affordable housing for residents who may otherwise end up homeless, but also provides employment, community involvement, safety, friendship and above all else a sense of belonging.

Living with financial, emotional, physical or mental barriers can be lonely and depressing, but the Champion's Centre will give it's residents a chance to build lasting friendships with peers who are struggling with similar challenges.

Thanks in part to a grant from the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta , Klaas Klooster and his team are in the process of transforming what used to be the Stardust Restaurant on North Railway. Downstairs will be open to the public as a café and also be home to the hot lunch program, giving it's recipients a sense of dignity dining in a café atmosphere as opposed to a soup kitchen.

Upstairs will be home to 10 or 12 tenants living together in a room and board style. Residents who would otherwise have a difficult time fitting into society, due to mental illness, brain injury or other social challenges, will also be employed within the café, helping to reintroduce them into the community and restore confidence in themselves.

This all inclusive lifestyle which combines a comfortable home, on site employment and constant support, will help it's tenants thrive and once again become viable, productive members of the community. And Because the café is also a business it will continue to generate revenue and cover operational costs, making it completely self sufficient.

Tenants of the Champion's Centre will enjoy a normal living situation with constant encouragement and support from the staff, community groups and each other. Already proven to be a huge success in Ponoka, the addition of this Supportive Housing project to Medicine Hat will be a huge step towards getting our homeless off the streets and enhancing the quality of life for individuals living with mental illness. For more information on the Champion's Centre visit

-Kelly Moore

The Community Foundation provided a \$40,000 grant to help purchase a building that would house Medicine Hat's own Champions Centre. Using its' community connections the Foundation spread the word about the new organization. In the words of local Champion's Centre committee consultant, "The Community Foundation has put the Champion's Centre on the map in this community". He continued by explaining that with a substantial grant from the Community Foundation came further donations that ensured the organization can purchase and renovate a premises that 10-12 people can now call home.

The Community Foundation is pleased to be part of a project like the Champion's Centre, we are confident many people in our community will be greatly impacted by having a place to call HOME.

Watch for The Champions Centre's progress in our next newsletter. We hope to share photos of the project nearing completion and talk to some of the people who will call the Centre home.