

# Housing Help office opens door for those in need

by Kate Watson

THE POWER of collaboration was a common theme among the speakers at the grand opening of the Dartmouth Housing Help office on May 21.

“Good things happen when people come together with a shared goal and with purpose and desire,” said Doug Livingstone, chair of the Public Good Society of Dartmouth. “This office started from conversations at meetings and conferences about housing, but its doors are open today because of teamwork.”

The office, which is located at 260 Wyse Road, is a satellite location for Halifax Housing Help—a program administered by Metro Non-Profit Housing Association that supports single people who are seeking to improve their housing situations. The United Way of Halifax has committed four years of funding for the Dartmouth Housing Help program.

It will serve people in Dartmouth and surrounding area who are having trouble finding—and keeping—safe and affordable housing. Housing Help can negotiate and advocate on behalf of clients, and the

*“A roof over your head is pretty important—life and death, even.”*

~ resident Larry Reynolds

program also offers trustee services that ensure rent and power bills are paid directly from clients’ cheques. Clients can refer themselves to the program or may be referred by case workers or other supporting agencies.

The office is staffed by Housing Support Worker Allie Magee, who says the new location is a huge benefit to clients in Dartmouth, making the service easily accessible by transit and removing the barrier of having to cross the bridge to Halifax.

The Constituency Office of Joanne Bernard (MLA for Dartmouth North and Minister of Community Services), the Dartmouth Learning Network and several social workers’ offices are all located in the same building. Bernard echoed Magee’s enthusiasm for the location.

“I think this building has become a kind of community hub, and



Photo: Leigh Beauchamp Day

Some of the collaborators who helped open the door for a Dartmouth location for Housing Help (left to right): Susan Lapiere, United Way; Dr. Carol Charlebois, Executive Director, Metro Non-Profit Housing Association; Tess Warner, Coordinator for Halifax Housing Help Program; and Dennis Pilkey, board member, Public Good Society of Dartmouth.

from experience, I know that it’s extraordinarily helpful when services are accessible and convenient,” said Bernard. “It removes a very big barrier for people.”

Politicians from other levels of government showed their support for Dartmouth Housing Help. Dartmouth-Cole Harbour MP Robert Chisholm, who is also on the board of the Public Good Society, couldn’t

attend but conveyed his excitement about the project and the collaboration that made it happen. Deputy Mayor Darren Fisher brought greetings on behalf of Mayor Savage and Council.

“It’s wonderful to listen in on some of the conversations that are happening in this room,” Fisher said. “It’s such a beautiful combination of people who are working together to fill the gaps in

society.”

The community was also well represented at the opening. Doris MacDonald spoke on behalf of a group called Tenants Advocate for Liveable Conditions (TALC). She said the Dartmouth Housing Help office would be a valuable resource for many people who are struggling with the high cost of rent and the lack of rent control.

Siblings Valerie Pretty from Cole Harbour and Larry Reynolds from Eastern Passage came

out to the event after hearing about it through an email from Community Services. They’re both looking to find affordable housing, and are hopeful that Dartmouth Housing Help will be able to assist them.

“A roof over your head is pretty important—life and death, even,” said Reynolds. “We’ve come here today because doing anything is better than not doing anything at all. I hope they can help.”

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## Shannon Park takes the Challenge

...cont. from p.1

they had won the spirit award at the competition. This group of four dynamic and spirited girls displayed a positive attitude, enthusiasm and respect for their peers. They also showed great character and compassion for their fellow competitors during the build part of the competition as they helped their rival team by lending them

their supplies, enabling them to complete the challenge. It was a great event that served to celebrate our future scientific contributors.

Congratulations to all of our Grade 6 students who represented our school so well!

Bill Malloy is a Grade 6 teacher at Shannon Park School