

Housing for the 55+ Woman: Do We Have a Choice?



Making Change

- ***A woman is like a teabag – you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.***

- Nancy Reagan

Women represent the primary users of retirement housing and residential care facilities

Regardless of age group, men are less likely to live in residential care facilities. There are approximately 2.5 women for every man in residential care facilities in Canada.

Source: New Brunswick Women's News, June 6, 2006

Baby Boomers

As the “baby boomers” age, there is a projected lack of retirement options for this group who are now reaching 60.

Women are poor

- **Women over 65 make up a substantial percentage of people who live below the poverty line.**
- **Many women have little or no pensions because they were predominantly homemakers, in low paying jobs or had part-time employment.**

Choices?

So what is wrong with the choices we have now?

Present Issues

- Many retirement / long term care facilities are in the middle of nowhere, and not in the communities where people have connections
- We separate retirement housing from long term care.
- We operate on the premise that long term care is based on a “hospital” model, not a housing model.

Present Issues

- Residents, particularly in long term care, have no control over decisions or their environment
- Private options are not affordable for most women
- Most long term care facilities do not accommodate couples

Isolated

Retirement complexes and long term care facilities are built in the middle of nowhere, and not in the communities where people have connections.

Moving

We separate retirement housing from long term care.

Hospital or Housing?

We operate on the premise that long term care is based on a “hospital” model, not a housing model.

Affordable?

- Private options are not affordable for most women

Principles

Housing built on principles of respect, diversity and community building.

We believe:

- That the housing should be affordable for access for low-income women.
- That the housing should support a sense of community, with people helping people, sharing and caring
- That the housing should be integrated into the community at large, not isolated
- That the housing will be built with environmentally friendly features and will operate with minimal negative impact on the environment

We believe:

- That there is respect for the experience and knowledge of the residents and their knowledge should be passed on to others
- That respect for differences will be a key principle, with a conflict resolution mechanism to resolve disputes
- That diversity will be a principle and be inclusive of the needs of women from different cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal women, lesbian women and women with disabilities

We believe:

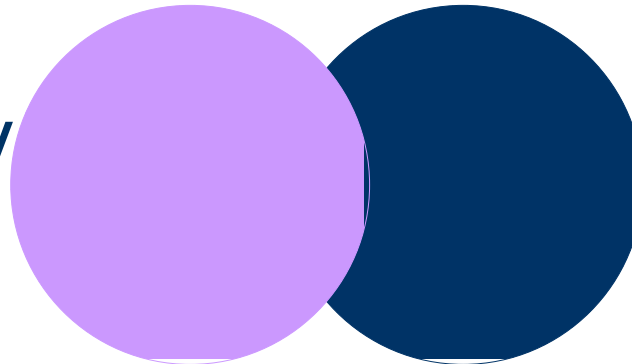
- That the governance model will allow for participation of the residents in the policies and operation of the housing complex
- That there will be options for women - to participate in programs, to have privacy, to interact with others, to interact with the community, to travel, etc.
- That there should be a continuity of care, from early retirement housing to comprehensive care, at the same location

The Place

- 100 to 150 suites
- Kitchen and sitting area in each
- Centre – with walking track, yoga, café, library, etc.
- 2 floors

The Place

Community
area



Residence

Change?

Can we influence public policy to change the assumptions on which retirement and long term care is based? Can we make a difference?



Women are going to form a chain, a greater sisterhood than the world has ever known.

- Nellie McClung, 1916