

Carol Charlebois' Metro Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPHA) story starts in 1988 when a local council of churches, - entitled the 'Central Halifax Ecumenical Council', got together with the 'Homeless Men's Network' and the 'Halifax Neighbourhood Society' to address the need for more permanent housing for low-income single people.

Out of the efforts of this group came Metro Non-Profit Housing Association. Also forthcoming was funding sufficient to enable the purchase of a 16-unit apartment building in Dartmouth, called Stewart Place. Having purchased the building, what was then, of course, needed was a project manager to select tenants and to manage it.

The need was advertised, and Carol applied for the job! Here was a woman with a BA, MA and a PhD, with a background in property management, supervisory experience in the running of a major YWCA residence and experience as a treasurer for a large Housing Cooperative. Her education, qualifications and experience, not to mention her interpersonal skills and strong appreciation of housing issues, would make Carol more than qualified for this role.

So began Carol's incredible record of contribution to the provision of social housing, and support to the homeless, in HRM.

After Stewart Place there followed:

- In 1992, the Amethyst Apartments (with 12 units)
- And in 1994, in collaboration with Amethyst tenants, and under Carol's leadership, a report was assembled, entitled "Sharing Courage – The Voices of Recovering Women"
- In 1995 another report, led by Carol, was produced entitled "Rooming House Conditions in Halifax which was quoted by more recent scholarship out of Dalhousie in 2014.
- 1996 marked the opening of the Housing Support Centre, with Bryon Anderson (and it was called the 'Coffee Shop' by participants)
- Also, in 1996 the Belle Aire and Cunard Street Apartments (12 units) were added.
- 1997 saw another major success story, with the formation of the Shining Lights Choir with Bryon Anderson, which endured for over 25 years
- In 2001 – The Buddy Daye Apartments were added (19 Units); renamed Bryon Anderson Place in 2017 to honour the cofounder of the shining lights and the coffee shop
- And in 2008 – In collaboration with Direction 180, Carol led the establishment of Halifax Housing Help, which provided much valued housing assistance and advice, as well as trustee services to many low-income clients.
- In 2009 – Metro Non-Profit, under Carol's leadership, was a key player in a collaborative effort to set up the Out of the Cold shelter.
- Also in 2009, and drawing on the 'Housing First' approach, a fundamental principle that Carol has long espoused, we saw the acquisition of the Maynard Street Apartments (20 units).
- Most recently in 2014, in partnership with the Public Good Society of Dartmouth, Dartmouth Housing Help was established.

- In 2017, Carol worked with the Board and staff, consultants and tenants and program participants to rename MNPHA to Welcome Housing and Support Services (WHSS) as the organization was often confused with other housing services.

Carol's accomplishments have not gone unnoticed! In 2011 she was nominated as a Progress Woman of Excellence. In 2012 she was the recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and in 2014 received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of King's College. Other recipients at that event included Governor General David Johnston and activist and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai.

The Rotary Club of Halifax Northwest, which has been closely associated with MNPHA/WHSS since its inception, was pleased and proud to recognize Carol as a Paul Harris Fellow, the highest award that a Rotary Club can bestow on a member of the community. This was not only to recognize what she had accomplished, but how! In particular her very special relationship with, and indeed love for, the people with whom she worked.

In December 2017 Carol travelled to Ottawa to accept the Social Innovator Award of \$5,000 from the Federal Government. This award in particular recognized Metro Non-Profit Housing's innovative Housing Support Centre initiative. It recognized how Housing Support Workers assisted individuals and families in going from homelessness or unstable housing to being securely housed. It also recognized the hundreds of interventions by Metro Non-Profit offering support services to homeless and at-risk individuals with addictions and mental health issues, tenancy concerns and eviction prevention needs.

These milestones, impressive as they are, still do not entirely capture Carol's drive and determination to support those in need in the Halifax Community. As mentioned, she has championed 'Housing First' as the only viable way of addressing the needs of those grappling with physical and mental health issues and the consequences of substance abuse.

All those who have been lucky enough to benefit from the support offered by Metro Non-profit have been encouraged by Carol to participate in discussions and debate about solutions to housing and homelessness issues, including representation on the Board of Directors. Tenants also help with maintenance and, with Carol's encouragement, have produced some very fine art that decorates the buildings.

Interestingly, it is also through what Carol might view as her failures that she has often been seen at her best. Examples include her unrelenting, but in the end, unsuccessful, efforts in 2004 to generate support for Situation Appropriate Supportive Housing, or SASH through the production of a study. It was directed at providing housing for people facing homelessness because of mental illness. I know she was very disappointed that this initiative never got off the ground.

Again, despite Carol's valiant efforts, in collaboration with Ark Outreach, to advance to fruition the Morris House initiative, this too finally had to be abandoned. While neither of these initiatives ever quite made it, they illustrate graphically Carol at her best in her drive and determination to help those in need.

Carol viewed people less as tenants and more as family, and she had a special place in her heart for the people she served. Through her, there have been numerous success stories, of people who have returned to work, earned degrees and diplomas, and even launched businesses.

Again, her unrelenting support of The Shining Lights Choir illustrates one of the many ways in which Carol has reduced the stress of individuals having multiple needs, and helped build friendships and self-esteem.

To quote a fine (now retired) journalist, Joel Jacobson, "She speaks softly, but when Carol acts, everyone watches, and then they follow."

This donation was made to Compass NS for the community of Maitland Street Development as the donor sees this Co-operative Housing Project developing with the same spirit of service, inclusion, respect for members that Carol espoused in her leadership of MNPHA/WHSS

At MNPHA/WHSS tenants were brought together to decide who would fill a vacant unit; decisions were always made collaboratively and with tenants and participants at the centre of decision-making. An awesome example of this was the way in which Carol her staff, and the board, in the last years of Carol's work at MNPHA/WHSS, collaborated with all the tenants and the support centre participants to rename MNPHA. It was truly an amazing combination of community voices that led to the new name, Welcome Housing and Support Services, near to her retirement in 2019.

In her private life, Carol shared her life with her husband, Paul White and enjoyed close relationships with her siblings and their children. Carol was devoted to her springer spaniels, loved to garden and appreciated nature and beauty through the lens of her photography. Carol had showings at Viewpoint Gallery of her works. Carol had a personal trainer who kept her healthy in body and Carol and Paul enjoyed the city markets supporting local for their food selections. Carol cooked for tenant and program participants on many occasions and enjoyed the company of the folks with whom she worked at the coffee shop, in the buildings, and during occasions such as thanksgiving and December holidays.

A memorial service is to be held August 11, 2022 at 1pm, St. Patrick Church, 2263 Brunswick St with the Rev. Kevin Little's leadership.