

Building Equity for Community Living



THE REAL ESTATE
FOUNDATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Mainstream clients live in residences throughout the greater Vancouver area.

Jim loves his neighbourhood and being able to live in a home where he has assistance to meet his daily needs. Recently, he was forced to move to another house and the gains that he had made while living in a stable environment were severely tested when he had to abandon familiar rooms and places.

Jim's care provider, the Mainstream Association for Proactive Community Living, was very concerned when the property it had been leasing was sold. When Jim and the other clients living in the house were displaced, Mainstream had to secure another residence and renovate it to meet municipal and

provincial standards for group/community living homes. And the clients, their belongings and equipment had to be moved to the new house. This was not an easy task, nor was it cheap.

Mainstream clients have physical, behavioural, developmental, and autistic challenges and are often "hard to house" because they require physical and social environments adapted to their individual needs. Given that Mainstream operates 61 residences (3/4 of which are leased), occupied by over 150 people, it is understandable that its housing strategy would include plans to buy property. Mortgage payments are similar to lease payments, and Mainstream wanted to avoid subjecting its clients and staff to such an ordeal again.

Thus began the process of fundraising to purchase certain houses that Mainstream was already using. Enter the Real Estate Foundation.

In 2002 the Foundation made two grants--one for \$40,000 and one for \$50,000--to assist Mainstream with the down payments on two greater Vancouver area houses. Owning the houses, which Mainstream has leased for over ten years, will help provide stability to the organization's residential program. It will also prevent clients like Jim from having to undergo transitions that interrupt their progress toward greater well-being and integration into the wider community.

The Foundation's grants, when combined with contributions from other donors, will allow the association to take another step toward increasing its real estate portfolio. Foundation Executive Director, Tim Pringle, notes, "Mainstream is a mature agency which can gain security for its clients by building real estate equity. Secure housing is an important goal both for Mainstream and its clients."

The Foundation's mandate under the *Real Estate Act* is to support real estate related research, education, law reform, and good works throughout the province of British Columbia. Making grants to organizations which provide non-profit, affordable housing for people who are not well served by market housing is one way that the Foundation can contribute to community vitality.

While the Foundation's philanthropic purposes are connected to real estate, the initiatives it supports have social, environmental, and economic consequences. Not only is quality housing a valuable real estate asset, it is an essential part of maintaining health and well-being. For Mainstream and its clients, the two new houses will go a long way toward helping several people sleep better at night.