

The Beacon: Supporting Low-Income Families



The Beacon at 90% Completed Construction

The Beacon, located in the north east community neighbourhood of Beacon Heights, will provide 21 new homes on what used to be a hotel parking lot. These townhomes will provide a mix of two, three and four bedroom units. Right at Home Housing Society will continue its relationship with several social agencies that provide supports for families in poverty. These partnerships will provide extra supports for the residents to ensure their success as they settle into their new home and community. The Beacon will open its doors in December 2022 in time for the holiday season.

Tenant Feature: Omamoo-Wango-Gamik Resident Finds Tenancy Brings a New Lease on Life

Omamoo-Wango-Gamik (Belvedere) is an Indigenous-led housing initiative that provides homes to people struggling with low-income who are unable to find adequate housing. The 42-unit affordable housing project in Belvedere is a partnership between Right At Home Housing Society and NiGiNan Housing Ventures. Through Niginan's cultural support programming, some of the units are reserved for kokums (in Cree, "grandmother") who can act as mentors for families who are at-risk. The building includes office space for social workers to work on-site with an approach that is sensitive to Indigenous rights and needs as the tenants settle into a stable environment.

Aviendha arrived as a resident at Belvedere almost two years ago while she was still pregnant with her youngest daughter. Prior to moving in, Aviendha recalls she was evicted from other homes twice in one year and was facing homelessness. Since her time moving into this model of housing, she has felt secure and is able to maintain her tenancy with the supports that are in place.



Local Indigenous artwork lines the halls of the building.



Aviendha, a tenant at Omamoo-Wango-Gamik (Belvedere), holds her one year old daughter in the comfort of home.

Aviendha Has Become a Leader Within Her Home

Now with a stable home, Aviendha has the ability to give back to others who are struggling with homelessness. For the second year in a row, she is organizing a Holiday Giving Program, collecting toiletries, gift cards, socks and gloves to hand out at Churchill Square in time for the holidays. In partnership with staff and residents, she has organized a fundraiser in which 50% of funds raised will help to support this initiative, as well as gathered over \$300 in donations so far from Edmontonians.

If you are interested in contributing to this project, please email us at info@rightathomehousing.com before December 10, 2022 to connect.



Exterior of Omamoo-Wango-Gamik (Belvedere)

Aviendha has found herself as part of the community that is built within this housing complex. She chairs a weekly Narcotics Anonymous meeting that serves the residents, participates in weekly yoga, and enjoys some bingo games the residents share in their free time. Aviendha has found value in a traditional parenting group that has formed within the walls of the building, in which kokums support parents and those interested in learning more about Indigenous approaches to raising children within a cultural context.

When asked about what she might tell others who are worried about the stigma of a similar low-income housing program, Aviendha says “it’s really intimidating at first, but once you spend some time in this environment, it feels very comfortable. It’s always hard to ask for help at first. You wonder ‘why is this person trying to make me do this?’ or ‘why are they offering me a ride somewhere?’”. Aviendha says the staff at Belvedere are focused on letting residents lead the way. “They always have their doors open,” she says. “They are persistent and consistent, and they never give up on you.”

Aviendha now enjoys the stability of a home with her two children, aged three and one years old. But more than that, Aviendha has a place within her community where she can connect with others who share her cultural background and have become a truly supportive community where she can thrive.

Edmonton Urban Farm Helps Grow Tenant Relationships

Right at Home Housing Society pioneered the supportive management model, which provides additional resources to empower tenants to thrive and take part in community life. This past year, we established a relationship with the Edmonton Urban Farm, managed by Explore Edmonton. With a donated community garden plot, volunteer opportunities were created for our tenants to build their relationships with each other, include their children in community volunteerism, and develop gardening skills over the summer season. Through our Supportive Tenant Employment Programs and Services (STEPS), we have built an ongoing relationship with Explore Edmonton, who will be offering workshops on small construction projects within the Edmonton inner-city community that will create temporary employment opportunities for our tenants as well. Our first workshop will commence in 2023.



Right at Home Housing Society tenants and their children volunteer together with Explore Edmonton at the City of Edmonton Urban Farm

