

## Message From Our Chair



As Chair of the Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the 2017 NRH Annual Report, which outlines our achievements in the past year. NRH's main challenge continues to be the lack of affordable housing in Niagara.

The Centralized Waiting List remains high, with more than 5,000 households waiting for affordable housing across Niagara. I am happy to report, however, that there is new momentum at all levels of government and significant initiatives on the horizon.

The National Housing Strategy, the Updated Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the Social Modernization Documents and the Ontario Fair Housing Plan are providing the support Niagara needs to implement our Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and fulfill our shared goal that "Everyone in Niagara Has a Home". Within this framework of legislative support and local commitment to innovation, NRH is well-positioned to explore expanded partnerships and new opportunities. I am hopeful that we will see progress in a variety of affordable housing solutions in the near future.

NRH has faced many difficulties in the last decade – from aging infrastructure and expanding waitlists to increasingly high-need tenants – but our organization is proactive and dedicated to progress. We are building another new affordable housing community on Carlton Street in St. Catharines, have expanded Housing Allowances for applicants on our waiting list and continue to maximize funding for improvements to our existing stock.

In 2017, NRH changed our Board structure to reduce the number and composition of Directors. We are working with Niagara Region, through the lens of the Alternative Service Delivery Review, to ensure that we are exploring every possibility to be creative and leverage partnerships to provide more affordable housing to meet the needs of our citizens.

NRH is committed to housing stability in Niagara through increased access to affordable housing and providing assistance to help existing households to remain housed. Our goals are clear – stable, safe, affordable housing and healthy communities. Thank you to the NRH Board, Staff and Community Partners for helping us achieve those goals. It is through our combined efforts that we are making a difference in Niagara.

Sincerely

*Henry D'Angela | Chair*



### NRH VISION:

The Niagara community will provide affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents



### NRH MISSION:

To expand opportunities that make affordable housing an integral part of building healthy and sustainable communities in Niagara



“

We have failed to fully appreciate how deeply housing is implicated in the creation of poverty... When people have a place to live, they become better parents, workers, and citizens.

— Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*

”



**Countdown to Move-in!** We look forward to welcoming tenants into our newest build in early 2019

## What Have We Accomplished? NRH 2017 Highlights

**Maintained Rent-Geared-to-Income Units (RGI) through the end of operating agreements** – At the beginning of 2017, there were 66 housing providers across Niagara whose operating agreements were set to expire over the next 15 years. This means that they will no longer be obligated to provide Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing. NRH is working with Niagara’s housing providers to offer rent supplements to help tenants retain housing after the end of these agreements. In 2017, 63 units were retained, which ensured that these low-income households would be able to remain in their homes.



**Community Gardening** – “These projects help to anchor in a sense of home, place and ownership in the community they live and show the kids in the neighbourhood that working together is a positive, lifelong goal”  
– Brandon Agnew, CASTLE Community Health Broker





**Created More Affordable Housing** – In 2017, Gateway Residences of Niagara opened an additional nine units of affordable housing in Niagara Falls and Thorold Municipal Non-Profit opened an additional 14 units under the Investment in Affordable Housing Extension (IAH-E) program.

NRH began construction on an exciting new build in St. Catharines in 2017. The Carlton Street development will provide affordable housing for adults (including seniors) in urgent need in St. Catharines. The building will have 85 units, with 13 accessible. Rents will be “affordable”, which means that tenants will pay 80% of Average Market Rent. NRH has been working with neighbours to address their concerns and ensure a successful project in which the whole community can take pride.

**Change in Board Structure** – NRH’s Board of Directors is now made up of five Regional councilors and four community members. The streamlined structure was designed to enhance responsiveness and accountability, encourage better communication between NRH and Niagara Region and ensure transparent cooperation in recognition of the increasing complexity of affordable housing.

**Alternative Service Delivery Review** – NRH is working with Niagara Region to determine the best means of delivering and supporting social housing programs in Niagara. Through examination of best practices and service delivery methods, the Alternative Service Delivery Review is committed to providing Niagara with the best possible organizational model.



**Making his community proud!** – Manchester tenant Abu Kigab won a gold medal as part of the Canadian basketball team at the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and was honoured with the St. Catharines Sportsman of the Year Award in 2017.

*image credit: BOB TYMCZYSZYN/Postmedia News*

## What Does it All Mean? NRH Programs

**Public Housing** – Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) units owned and operated by NRH\*. Rent-Geared-to-Income means rent set at 30% of household income

**Non-Profit/Co-operative Housing** – RGI and market rent units owned and operated by independent Boards; NRH provides legislative oversight. Approximately 75% are Rent-Geared-to-Income and 25% are set at Market Rent

**Affordable Housing** – Rents are set at 80% Average Market Rent with no ongoing government subsidy

**Niagara Renovates** – Assists low-income households with repairs and accessibility modifications

**Rent Supplement Program** – Partnership with private landlords to subsidize rents in private buildings

**Welcome Home Niagara** – Down payment assistance to help renters purchase their own homes

**Housing First** – Partnership with Community Services and support agencies to rapidly rehouse people experiencing homelessness

**Housing Allowance** – Temporary assistance for households on the waiting list

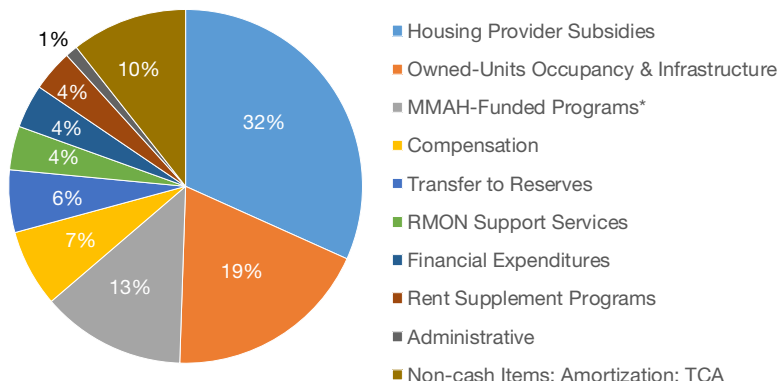
**Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance Program** – NRH partnered with private landlords to subsidize rents in 1,007 units in private buildings

**Community Programs** – Eviction Prevention and community programs to help NRH tenants maintain successful tenancies.

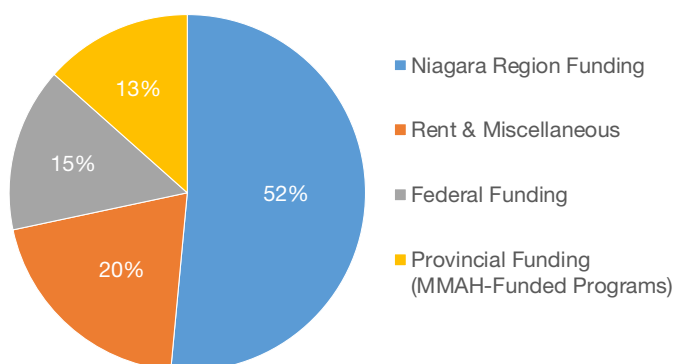
\*NRH owns additional units that have affordable (80% market) and market rents



## 2017 Expenses



## 2017 Revenues



## Who Has Helped Us? Thank You to Our Partners

- Bethany Community Church
- Boys & Girls Club of Niagara
- Brain Injury Community Re-entry
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- Central Community Church
- Community Care St. Catharines & Thorold
- Community Health Centres of Niagara
- Community Support Services Niagara
- Faith Welland Church
- Grace Anglican Church
- Harbour Fellowship Church
- Life Together Church
- Literacy Link Niagara
- March of Dimes Canada
- Nancy Siciliana Seniors Computer Lab
- Niagara Dental Hygiene Inc.
- Niagara Region Seniors Programs
- Niagara Region Public Health
- Niagara Region Police Services
- Niagara Resource Services for Youth (The RAFT)
- Renewed Computer Technology
- Scott Street Mennonite Church
- Southminster United Church
- Town of Lincoln
- Start Me Up Niagara
- The Well Church
- West Niagara Second Stage Housing



**Rykert Volunteer Committee** – The Rykert Volunteer Committee (RVC) is made up of current and former tenants, who have joined to bring the Rykert community together through positive, inclusive engagement of families.)

## Thank you to our Board

Henry D'Angela  
Councillor, Thorold (Chair)

Patrick O'Neill  
Stakeholder, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
(Vice-Chair)

Karen Blackley  
Stakeholder, Thorold (Secretary)

James Hyatt  
Stakeholder, St. Catharines (Treasurer)

Ken Goka  
Stakeholder, Welland

Paul Grenier  
Councillor, Welland

Kelly Kendrick  
Stakeholder, Fort Erie

John Osczyppo  
Public-at-Large, St. Catharines

Andy Petrowski/Tim Rigby  
Councillor, St. Catharines

Walter Sendzik  
Councillor, St. Catharines

Selina Volpatti  
Councillor, Niagara Fall



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Please call 905-682-9201  
if you need this information  
in a different format.