

# Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP) - Hansen Building

---

## Promising Practice

- Designing a new mixed-income building with dedicated supportive housing units within it.
- Providing residents a broad range of supports available within the organization.

## Background

Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP) is a multi-service organization with a long history in supportive housing (formerly Supportive Housing In Peel). They are a large organization that houses over 1000 people and provides support services to over 3000 individuals annually. The Hansen building opened for occupancy in Fall 2016. It is a mixed income building with two support programs on site: High Support Phase 2 and Housing in Place (HIP).

## Population Served

High Support Phase 2: tenants come through a partnership with CAMH. This program is available for people coming out of long term hospitalizations including alternate levels of care (ALC) patients and through the mental health forensic program.

HIP: this program supports individuals who are 16 and over who have a serious mental illness and problematic substance use and are homeless or have a high risk of homelessness.

## Housing

*Designing a new building of mixed income apartment units.*

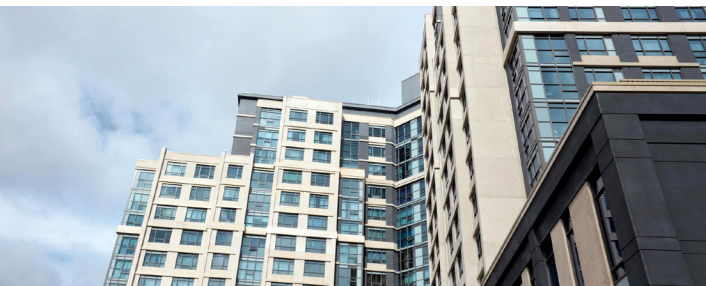
In 2012 SHIP was successful in a Region of Peel RFP to build new affordable housing. Working with an architect, SHIP spent two years planning and developing a mixed income building with 232 units ranging from 1 to 3 bedrooms. Of these, 32 units are supportive housing for two separate programs; 12 of the support units are part of the High Support Phase 2 program and 20 of the units are in the Housing in Place (HIP) program. The building includes a ground level retail space, one level dedicated to older adults housing and 13 storeys of affordable residential housing with communal building amenities located on the top floor. Construction began in 2014 with occupancy in late 2016.

# Case Study #12



Below are some key learnings from SHIP about the development process:

- **Determine design elements that are important to the organization and tenants.** Having a broader framework for organizing a new housing development helps to ensure that design elements meet the needs of future tenants. SHIP utilized their '7 Principles of Healthy Housing' when designing the new build.



These principles are: inclusiveness, accessibility, sustainability, safety, education and training, empowerment, and professional services.

- **Work with a likeminded developer.** When selecting a developer it is ideal to find someone who understands the vision of the organization. SHIP approached a developer who is well known in the Region of Peel and was able to work with the developer to design more comprehensive community spaces than found in typical apartment buildings including a large community room, laundry facilities and a large indoor children's play space. At the Hansen building, the developer owns the ground floor retail space but has committed to selecting businesses that add value to the community such as medical clinics, dentists, etc. The developer has had calls from businesses that do payday loans/cheque cashing but has turned them down with the best interests of the community in mind.

- **Consult with the nearby community.** SHIP was proactive in engaging the nearby community from the onset. SHIP held open houses, created a website, held face-to-face meetings with community stakeholders including engagement with local businesses. SHIP held meetings with a prepared slideshow about the organization and pop ups showing plans for the new development and layouts. SHIP marketed the new Hansen building as not just an affordable housing building but a wellness benefit to the entire community.
- **Utilize expertise from agency staff, partners and board of directors.** SHIP consulted with experts involved with their organization when developing the Hansen building. SHIP's Board of Directors and Senior Management in particular came with specific expertise around social housing and building development.

## Support

### *Providing residents a broad range of needed supports available within the organization.*

The SHIP Hansen building consists of two supportive housing programs. There are 12 supported units through the High Support Phase 2 program which is a partnership with CAMH for tenants coming out of long term hospitalizations, primarily ALC patients or from the mental health forensic program. Also, 20 of the supported units are through the HIP program which is a housing first program for people with mental health and problematic substance use who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The two programs function separately although they do share similarities in their underlying principles and approaches.

Below are key features of the support programs at the Hansen building:

- **Multi-disciplinary support teams in house.** SHIP employs support staff with a variety of specialty and professional backgrounds. Support staff at SHIP that work within these two support programs include ACT teams (nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, peer support workers, addiction specialists and a psychiatrist), as well as community mental health workers, case managers, addiction specialists, trauma specialists, hoarding specialists, tenant relations, recreational therapists, alternate dispute resolution worker and housing workers. Employing these staff in-house gives SHIP the ability to ensure staff are all working as a team with the same goals in mind, and the ability to provide supports when and where they are needed across the organization.
- **Give tenants choice in housing and supports.** The supports available to residents in both programs at Hansen are determined through tenant choice. For HIP tenants, the choice starts with selecting the location of their unit with support from the housing worker. 20 of the organization's 70 HIP units are in the Hansen building, so tenants can choose to live either in the Hansen building or elsewhere. Although tenants referred to the High Support program do not have a choice in unit selection, they do have a choice in the type of supports they receive and work with staff on self-directed goals.

- **Connect with future residents before move in.** With both programs, staff start to engage with tenants before move in. During this time they are able to build rapport and conduct assessments to plan for types of supports that may be needed upon move in. For the High Support Program, residents also have the choice to stagger their move in dates so that they may start to come to the building for visits during the day, then staying overnight, gradually increasing their time spent in their new unit until they are completely moved in. This has been invaluable for tenants who are transitioning out of long term hospitalization.
- **Include non-clinical supports for activities of daily living and community building.** Social integration is an important piece of mental health and wellness that SHIP addresses through supports at the Hansen building. Staff provide supports including community meals, budgeting, cleaning, grooming/hygiene, social recreational activities and social outings. Non-clinical staff also work with tenants on their identified goals with tenants choosing supports as needed or required. In addition, there is an onsite wellness coordinator dedicated to creating community within the building, providing programs and promoting tenant engagement.
- **Understand that support takes time.** Although staff work with tenants in a goal-oriented way, it is recognized that building a supportive relationship takes time. Most tenants have not lived independently for quite some time and there will likely be a period of adjustment.

In order to achieve their goal of community integration - staff will work with residents on smaller, self-determined goals such as grocery shopping, navigating the transit system, going to the park, and building skills related to living independently.

- **Separate support and housing staff functions.** Housing staff that follow up on tenancy issues, rent, and administration are not the same staff providing mental health or activities of daily living supports. Separating these staff roles ensures that tenants understand that their engagement with support workers does not affect their status as a tenant. Support staff are only involved in housing-related issues where there is an overlap with support services, for examples when hoarding issues may affect the health and safety of the unit or when behaviour negatively affects other tenants in the building. There is a dedicated tenant relations worker, a maintenance coordinator and an alternate dispute resolution worker who supports these efforts.
- **Invest in staff.** At SHIP, the organization makes it a priority to provide staff opportunity for training, and provide support for staff to continue their education. SHIP also provides in-house trainings and recently developed a curriculum for their staff to enhance their learning and skills. SHIP also has an education and training committee that oversees staff development policies, trainings and curriculum development.

## Partnerships

Although SHIP prides itself in offering many of the supports and staff roles in house, they do have a number of important partnerships relating to large advocacy issues including the elimination of homelessness. SHIP is a member of the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness, a collaborative effort from agencies across Peel Region to improve coordination of access and assessment, measure the demographics and service needs of homeless people in Peel and to conduct advocacy for the end of homelessness. SHIP staff also sits on other sector specific committees dedicated to providing system level leadership (i.e. Youth Homelessness in Peel, etc.).

## Outcomes

Across the organization, SHIP uses data and measured outcomes in order to assess whether their programs are meeting their intended goals. SHIP uses a number of formal measures in addition to hearing directly from tenants and their families about how they are doing.

For formal measures, SHIP administers outcome questionnaires. SHIP staff also track outcomes related to housing status, employment status, and participation in education. In addition to these measures, SHIP also has a Quality Assurance Manager who participates in the Excellence through Quality Improvement Project (E-QIP). The data from these measures allow staff to monitor the impact of services on tenants' mental health, substance use and overall wellness and to plan what services and supports are needed.

SHIP recognizes the importance of measuring the outcomes of their support through feedback from tenants and their families. This happens through tools such as the Ontario Perception of Care (OPOC) tool. There is an Advisory Committee that consists of clients, family and community members who provide recommendations to programming. SHIP also has a formal compliments and complaints procedure so people can give their honest opinions and share their ideas. The compliments and complaints are reviewed by a third party so that tenants feel they have the ability to provide honest and frank feedback.

- Assess community resources available. Stay informed of funding opportunities, leverage resources available through partnerships.
- Goals and outcomes are important for SHIP, but the ultimate goal is to successfully house and support residents by meeting them where they are at which is best done by following the person's lead of what they need.
- Be proactive with engaging the community. Meet with the community and share information and education about programs and the benefits they can have on the entire community.

**Contact:**  
Cory O'Handley  
*Senior Manager: Projects and Housing Development*  
Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP)  
Tel: 905-795-8742 x477  
Email: cory.ohandley@shipshey.ca

## Replication and Advice

- Develop a program model with articulated short and long term goals and measures. Monitor the outcomes and make adjustments to optimize the program.
- Invest in good people from leadership to front line staff. Give opportunities for continuous learning and staff development.
- Stay on top of trends and try to predict what service needs will be, identify service gaps and create proactive solutions for future service needs.

