

imagine it - live it

## An Exciting New Development



In early 2012 the CLS, in partnership with Vancity, will open seven new semi-independent living condominium homes in North Burnaby. We are very excited about this and would like to share some information with you as a member of the CLS community. We would also like to take this opportunity to answer some potential questions you may have about the project.

### **About the initiative**

The Madison is located in North Burnaby above the new Vancity Branch 6, at the intersection of Hastings and Madison. The new Burnaby Heights community branch is now Vancity's largest branch. It was built from scratch, at its original location and took more than three years to complete. Prior to the build Vancity reached out to its members and the community and asked what people wanted the location to be – the feedback was unanimous – the redevelopment needed to reflect a dedication to nature, community, and a love of the “Heights” neighbourhood.

### **About the Madison residential development**

What has been developed is a new building that blends 46 private and seven assisted-living residential suites along with retail units in a vibrant community setting. There is a roof-top patio, Vancity (of course!), a community meeting room and grocery stores, cafes, restaurants and public transit all within easy walking distance. The units were built to be highly adaptable so that they can meet the needs of residents as they age. The work of the CLS Aging with Dignity Committee will be incorporated into our long-term planning for individuals who will reside at the Madison.

The CLS has always been about being person-centered and meeting the emerging needs of the individuals we support. That means we need to provide a variety of housing options so that individuals can choose a lifestyle that best fits their interests and needs. Similar to our other assisted-living properties (Yukon and City Club), the Madison provides the opportunity for natural and paid supports to come together to assist individuals to maximize their independence and autonomy in a vibrant and safe community setting.

The following are answers to some questions that we anticipate people will have about the Madison.

### **Why did the CLS choose this particular location at this time?**

Vancity issued a Request for Proposal from housing providers interested in acquiring these condominiums to advance their mission. We were recently informed that CLS had the strongest proposal and was selected. We thank Vancity for choosing CLS for this excellent opportunity to again demonstrate leadership in housing solutions for individuals with disabilities.

### **When will the residential units become available?**

There has been a great response to the development. Demand is high and the private residential units are already sold, with residents



moving in prior to the holiday season. Our seven new semi-independent living condominium homes will be available from January 2012. CLS hopes to mark the occasion with key partners, staff and residents at an official ribbon-cutting event in the New Year.

### **Are the units rented or owned by the CLS?**

CLS will purchase the units at the predetermined price. This is part of the CLS commitment to provide quality and stable housing for the individuals we support.

### **Why does the CLS prefer to buy homes rather than rent them?**

As you all know, the housing market in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley is very expensive. As such we are finding that landlords are reluctant to maintain rental homes to CLS standards. It does not make sense for CLS to make required investments in rental homes, such as accessibility accommodations, when those homes could be sold by the owner at any time.

### **Will the purchase of these condominiums have a negative effect on the compensation of employees?**

No. This represents an investment in the future of the CLS and the individuals we support. While there will be a mortgage on the condominiums, CLBC compensates CLS at fair market value for the premises individuals we support live in. Continuing to offer the housing that people want and need is part of the CLS being an innovative provider with a strong future. This is good for the futures of individuals we support and our employees. As a member of the Community Living Agencies Network, we will continue to advocate for employee compensation.

### **Might the CLS purchase similar condominiums in other communities in the future?**

The CLS Board is supportive of innovative opportunities that advance our mission and strengthen the organization. In the next few years we will be exploring the potential of building or acquiring a multi-use building that can advance our housing and community inclusion objectives, while enhancing the long-term sustainability of the CLS. If other opportunities similar to the Madison present themselves in other communities in Metro Vancouver or the Fraser Valley, we would certainly consider whether they fit with the future of the CLS and those we support. Because these represent significant investments for the CLS, we would only proceed with the opportunities that best match our vision for the future.

### **What makes this such a great opportunity for individuals supported by the CLS?**

Some individuals supported by the CLS have indicated they would prefer to live in their own suite by themselves or with a chosen roommate. These new and accessible suites, in a dynamic, inclusive community, present a great opportunity for individuals to express and enhance their independence with choice over their daily activities. They will also be safely supported at home and in their community.

### **How can interested individuals and families find out more about the opportunity to live in a suite at the Madison?**

The individual or their representative can inform Pete Stone or Diane Zalasky that they would like to be considered to live at the Madison. These units will not be suitable for everyone but we certainly want to hear from everyone whom might be interested. Those who are interested will have their information forward to the selection team.

### **If an individual might be interested in moving there, can they see what it is like before they decide?**

We believe that supported individuals, in consultation with their family or network, should always be in a position to make an informed choice about where and how they live, and whether they wish to live alone or with a roommate or partner. We will expect that all individuals who are potentially interested would want to see a unit similar to the one that would be available to them. We will arrange convenient times for viewing. Given the time constraints, it is likely that individuals will be viewing a unit without furniture. We are happy to help them imagine what it would be like!

### **How long will an individual get to decide if they are interested?**

The decision to move is an important one and the interest in such units is likely to be very strong, as it is for all such homes in Metro Vancouver. As such, once the individual and their family have seen the unit we expect them to decide if they are interested in being considered for the Madison. We will make ourselves available to individuals and families to discuss what the supports would look like, and what the advantages and risks are of semi-independent living. We will need to make timely decisions so that people are not living with uncertainty and employees who may be affected by moves can be kept informed and be part of the transition planning.

### **If an individual moves into the Madison and later decides they don't like it, what options will they have?**

We want individuals to be comfortable trying new things understanding that if it doesn't work out they can make another decision. If an individual decides later that they want something else, we would become involved with them in planning where else they may wish to live, just as we do now. This is a part of life and those we support have the right to take chances in pursuit of a better life. In these situations it will be important for family members and CLS employees who know the individual well to work with us towards a successful move.

### **If an individual moves from a staffed home and later changes their mind, can they return to that staffed home?**

While this might be the ideal, it is often not practical or possible. Someone else may have moved into that home or the other roommates may have also moved on to something they preferred. That is why it is important that the individual and their family are informed before they make the decision. However, as indicated above, if they decide that the Madison doesn't really work for them we will work together to find something more suitable.

**Are we worried that the individuals will not be able to handle the change? They may have lived in their home for a very long time.**

Often it seems we underestimate the ability of individuals to make changes, especially when the change is done with them rather than imposed on them. We all experience some anxiety when contemplating significant change, but most of us don't avoid making changes because of that worry. It would be unfair to the individuals we support to assume they can't handle the change or the stress associated with a move. The individuals who moved over the last few years did great with the change and have benefited from their expanded horizons.

**If an individual moves into the Madison and in the future their needs change, what options will they have?**

The CLS Aging with Dignity and Development Committees have been looking at the issue of the suitability of CLS operated homes as individuals' needs change. Even one set of stairs can be an impediment to people who have mobility issues. One advantage of the Madison is that the units were designed to be highly accessible with the potential to be modified for residents whose adaptability needs increase. Sometimes even modifications can't make a living situation work. Like all of us, if the person's needs are no longer met with their existing home they will need to consider a home that better meets their needs going forward. We would work with the individual to find a more suitable arrangement.



**If more than seven people are interested in living there, how will it be decided who gets to live there?**

CLS is setting up a selection team to guide us in the unbiased decision-making process about who would really thrive in this environment. This team will include a self-advocate, a family representative, the Family Support Worker, a Residential Director, and the Executive Director. Those people not selected for this particular setting will be a priority for future possibilities. They will have indicated to us they are interested in a change and it will be our responsibility to respond.

**If less than seven people currently supported by the CLS are interested in the move, what will be done with the units?**

We would inform our funders of the availability of these units and open it up to individuals not currently supported residentially by CLS. We expect there would be strong interest by individuals and families if they become available.

**If an individual currently living in a staffed home moves to the Madison, what will happen to the roommates that don't move?**

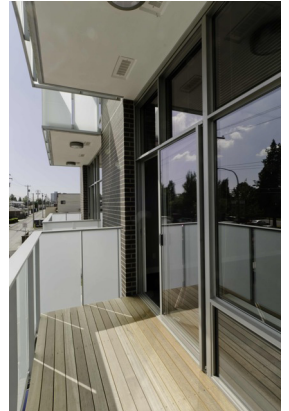
Most of us have faced a situation where another person's decision made it necessary for us to consider a change. We face the same challenge whenever an individual living in a staffed home moves or passes away. What we ultimately end up doing will depend on the unique circumstances involved. Sometimes that will mean someone new moves into the "vacancy," other times it may make sense for the individual(s) to move to another home. Other times the home can function effectively and efficiently with a reduced number of individuals and a smaller support team. The key is that we all remain person-centered and that we involve the individual and their family or network early in the planning and decision making. No one will be left behind or left out. As we did with the 2010 CLBC Residential Review, we will work towards positive relocation for employees who may be affected by a move. Our goal is always to maintain employment status for affected employees.

### **Could this result in staffed homes being closed?**

Over the last few years the CLS has moved the individuals living in two staffed homes (rental units that were put for sale by the owner); closed three staffed homes, and opened two new staffed homes. In responding to the changing needs of individuals we support, we expect that this trend will continue. In all situations we make plans with the individual and family before the home is closed. We are committed to making sure we meet the emerging needs of individuals and that the homes we operate are aligned with those needs.

### **How will the CLS manage the human resource challenges?**

As in the past, our goals will be remaining flexible to the needs of those we support while minimizing the impacts on employees. In 2010 we created a plan with protocols and processes for managing the service reductions. This included fair practices and due process for redeployment of employees. Through good preparation and careful planning layoffs were avoided and employee status and benefits were unaffected. As we did then, teams will work together to redesign support schedules and work on transition plans for smooth changeover. Any training will be identified and provided for new individuals coming into our services.



### **What role, if any, will CLBC or the Fraser Health Authority play in this process?**

Our funders have typically been quite responsive to housing solutions that are innovative and cost effective. When it has been determined that an individual is ready to make a change, we will work with the funder(s) to ensure we are aligning our efforts to help the individual achieve their goal. Because the change can have an impact on those not choosing to move, we will make the funder aware of the needs and desires of all those affected by a change.

If you have any other questions about this exciting development, please contact either Diane Zalasky or Pete Stone at 604.451.8699