

A HISTORY OF PATHWAY

The Founding of Pathway

In January 1987 members of FOODPATH, a food bank organized by several congregations in Peel (PATH stood for “Peel Association to Tackle Hunger”) met to discuss ways in which the organization could act as advocates on behalf of the clients of the FOODPATH. One of the suggestions was to look into the problem of affordable housing in Peel. The earliest strong supporter of this idea was Desmond Morton who generated enthusiasm within the entire group. A survey of FOODPATH clients had revealed that a significant fraction of the clients were essentially “permanent” users of the food bank, that virtually all were single-parent families, and that after paying rent these families had little money left for anything else, such as food. The primary need of these families was for affordable housing. In August Marion Hartley and Rabbi Larry Englander met with Interfaith Homes, a group that had experience in this area and came away from that meeting convinced that something could be done by the FOODPATH group. They announced a meeting date amongst the congregations and early in the Fall of 1987 a group of people got together to discuss affordable housing in Peel.

At this first meeting of what was to become Pathway it was agreed that something needed to be done to help house single-parent families and this became the focus for all that followed. The first few meetings in late 1987 were well attended. Streetsville United Church was represented by Marion Hartley, Rev. Victor Shepherd, and Gord Hird. People from the Unitarian Congregation of South Peel included Carol Spencer, Alda Curry, Maureen Milliard, June Scott, and Ken and Mary Noble. Solel Congregation was represented by Rabbi Englander, Ron Bobker, Les Stoch, Shirley Herman, Albert Silver, and Mike and Faith Fich. Many of the people attending those first meetings had useful contacts. One of the first “outside” people brought into assist Pathway proved himself to be immensely helpful. Keith Ward, the director of Policy and Development and Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation (PNPHC, now Peel Living) provided an enormous amount of helpful advice, especially with regards to government policies and funding.

Several organizations that provided development consulting services were invited to make presentations to the Pathway group and eventually PNPHC was selected as Development Consultant. There were many decisions to be made in those first few months. A target profile of tenants was needed involving issues labeled as: families vs. singles, couples vs. single parents, housing for elders, working vs. unemployed, people with special needs. This profile was needed to determine things such as the fraction of tenants that would require different levels of subsidies and the composition of the building into the proportions of one bedroom units vs. two, three, and four bedroom. Start-up funding was applied for and the search for suitable land was begun. Other topics under discussion at the time related to what special services Pathway might provide to tenants such as a Daycare centre (a very high priority in the initial plan), job training

programmes, and parenting workshops. There was also some discussion as to whether or not Pathway would manage its own properties.

In January 1988 members of the Daniels Group made a proposal to Pathway for the construction of 257 units on property that the Group owned on the Collegeway. The project was considerably larger than anything originally planned by Pathway and when PNPHC offered to become a partner in developing the site their offer was quickly accepted. There is little doubt that this partnership was effective in convincing the Ministry of Housing to fund an allocation for this new project.

Another of Pathway's early "outside" contacts was Randy Friedland, a lawyer who volunteered to work on the legal aspects of incorporating Pathway, a necessary early step before any significant progress could be made. (Eventually, when Pathway became a reality, Mr. Friedland became Pathway's "official" lawyer.) During the latter part of 1988 Pathway spent much of its time with organizational details, such as creating Bylaws, opening bank accounts, choosing a formal Board of Directors, and expanding the numbers of members, while Pathway and PNPHC carried out negotiations with the Daniels Group.

On 29 December 1988 Pathway became a legal entity. Shortly afterwards a Design Committee was established, and when a few months later an architectural firm had been selected (Quadrangle), the new Committee began its work in assisting in the design of a new building that became known as Forest Ridge.

This is the first chapter of a history of Pathway, being written by Mike Fich. Comments, corrections, and additions are very much welcomed and can be sent to Mike Fich via any of the Pathway Board Members or to the Pathway office.