

Habitat for Humanity to host affordable housing seminar

Written By MIKE BAKER

Habitat for Humanity Wellington Dufferin Guelph (Habitat WDG) is hosting a free, two-day Affordable Housing Symposium at the River Run Centre in Guelph next week.

The Symposium, facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Sutherns, will bring together community leaders, planners, housing advocates, those with lived-experiences, and more all under one roof and at one table. The goal is to create a community-driven affordable housing solution, one that is full-spectrum and solves our city's current housing crisis.

"This is about capacity expansion," explained Steve Howard, CEO of Habitat WDG. "The Symposium will look at each piece of the affordable housing spectrum, and through that, we will learn about what is happening both in our city and in our country; what works and what doesn't. We can identify the tools that should be put in place to benefit the whole housing spectrum, rather than as separate pieces."

Habitat has invited speakers from across the country to participate and share their experiences in building vibrant and supportive programs and communities. On Day 1, next Thursday, Sept. 19, attendees will explore tools, structures and support mechanisms like inclusive housing, mobilized partnerships, social enterprise models, and community land trusts.

"This is a collegial approach," says Mr. Howard. "We want each group in our community to come together as one to have a better understanding of resources, identify gaps, and most importantly, expand our collective capacity for growth."

Day 2 of the Symposium, Sept. 20, will be a work session that is focused on application.

"For the second day, we envision a working group of developers, social agencies and senior government representatives coming together to develop a Guelph-specific plan that will be put in place to solve our city's housing crisis," says Mr. Howard. "This is where the pieces will come together. From here, we will have a plan that continues to support the good work that currently exists, while moving forward as one."

Community members are encouraged to attend one or both days of the Symposium, and to RSVP at andrea@habitatwdg.ca.

"This event is hosted by Habitat on behalf of our entire community," said Mr. Howard. "If you are interested in alleviating homelessness, looking to support affordable and/or market-priced rentals or homeownership, or are simply interested in the future of our city, your voice matters. You have a place at this table."