

Memorandum

COM-C 1-2025

Subject: ReNew The View Partnership

Date: January 7, 2025

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Wendy Thompson, Manager Community Resource Programs

Purpose

The Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors has requested that NRH share with PHSSC a partnership initiative called ReNew the View.

Background

Community engagement is designed to engage and empower Community Housing tenants/members to improve their communities and their own lives through positive programs, workshops and events that bring tenants together. Housing Services Staff work in partnership with local agencies and others to provide community engagement, which helps to embed supports and develop relationships and trust with the organizations that are able to assist them. Community engagement delivered with partners helps to integrate low-income communities into their broader neighbourhoods and municipalities. Positive interaction among tenants also improves community safety and reduces social issues as neighbours begin to look out for each other and see each other in positive circumstances.

Currently there are more than 20 partners delivering community engagement in Community Housing across Niagara. These partners include the RAFT, Faith Welland Outreach, Brock University, Niagara College, Niagara Region Public Health and Senior Services, Community Cares and many others. Programs include homework help, sports, cultural activities and wellness workshops etc.

ReNew The View

One example of community engagement is the ReNew the View project in St. Catharines. This initiative began when St. Catharines City Councillor Robin McPherson reached out to Housing Services to invite Niagara Region Housing (NRH's) Manchester community to participate in a project to beautify the old General Motors property in her ward.

St Patrick's Ward Councillors McPherson and Caleb Ratzlaff had been working with The Willow Arts Community and the neighbourhoods surrounding the site to create murals that tell the stories of their community and their lives. Willow Arts provides a peer support network for individuals living with mental illness or substance use through the arts. NRH's Manchester community is across the street from the Haig site of the mural, so the tenants were the ideal partners to participate in the storytelling. Willow Arts and the City joined with the RAFT, who deliver Manchester's After-School Program, to consult with the Manchester community and draft their vision for the mural.

On October 19, Willow Arts, Councillors McPherson and Ratzlaff, the RAFT and NRH joined the Manchester youth to produce murals that reflect the innocence of the children who live there. In addition to bringing the Manchester youth and parents together with City Councillors and Willow Arts for the day, this project enabled Manchester youth to leave their mark on a piece of St. Catharines history with murals of handprints and pictures. Below are pictures of the event, which capture a unique partnership that will continue to show this community that they are a valued part of St. Catharines.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Wendy Thompson
Manager Community Resource Unit







