

Affordable Housing Presentation – Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell – Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Good Afternoon Your Honour, Lieutenant Governor Dowdeswell, Mayor Foster and Roundtable participants. My name is Marilyn Forster - Lo Turco and I live in Whitby in Durham Region.

I am part of two very diverse Durham family housing groups called **Imagining Home and Durham Intentionally Built Communities Corporation**. We are made up of over 30 very involved families who have a family member with a disability. These groups are looking at innovative and affordable housing options using a combination of family assets, creativity and government resources.

We want to be a part of the process for finding housing solutions that will allow our family members with a disability to be participating, contributing members of our community – **in the same typical ways that everyone else participates and contributes.**

Housing for people with a disability is essentially an affordability issue. However, much of what is called AFFORDABLE housing is still not affordable to my daughter on her ODSP income.

These are the thoughts of our families on these issues:

Housing for people with disabilities is mainly an *AFFORDABILITY ISSUE*, and families intend to be partners in the solution. **We believe that the following actions would make the biggest difference in housing affordability:**

1. Provide **ongoing portable rent subsidies** that are allocated to individuals, not units of housing. This allows individuals the *choice* to live in familiar neighbourhoods where they can access natural supports.
2. Access to **low-cost renovation dollars** that provide for *innovative housing options* such as legal apartments within or attached to our homes.
3. **Creation of funds and incentives** that will encourage developers to build housing that is *integrated and affordable*.

These solutions brought about with the cooperation of the Regional and Provincial Governments will help to **create and sustain vibrant, diverse neighbourhoods** anywhere in Ontario.

We truly believe that these actions will be of assistance to all Ontarians who are looking for a home they can afford in the communities where they wish to live.

And what will this mean for our plans for our daughter?

What will be the impact on our family?

My daughter Sara is 27 years old and still living at home...and I am not getting any younger. **Sara would like to live in a place of her own in an integrated (possibly cooperative) setting in a typical, ordinary mixed income rental building.** With an ongoing rent subsidy that supplements her ODSP, Sara will be able to live in a place where our family can build natural supports around her.

I am a senior. Currently my only option to secure Sara's future is to sell my condo to free up funds to augment Sara's rent. This means using my retirement funds to secure her future – at the expense of mine. As a result, I will soon be looking for affordable housing myself. This is our reality.

We would like to be part of the renovation or the creation of a sustainable building that is run on a cooperative model. Sara and I would each have our own rental apartment and both be involved in the running of this community. We will know and be known to our neighbours.

If Sara has a reasonable rent subsidy, I will be able to pay market value for my unit.

We would like to live in a building or neighbourhood that is diverse and vibrant. This means that it would have no more than 10% of the housing units set aside for persons with a disability. This is a reflection of the composition of the community at-large.

I am working hard so that Sara's supports and my own supports as I age will be managed by a "Circle of Friends" that will include family, friends, and resources in the community.

When these supports are put in place, I know that Sara will continue to have a good life when I am no longer on this earth.

I would like to request that your office make **affordable housing** a focus that will shine the light on this critical issue that touches all Ontarians. If you do so, I know a group of families in Durham that will be happy to help you with this.