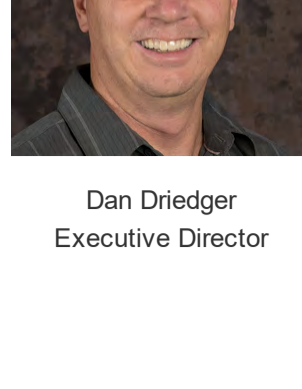


# Summer 2021 Newsletter

The beginning of September often feels like the unofficial beginning of a new year. For MennoHomes, September 2021 also feels that way as a number of activities have come to completion over the summer months, and we are looking forward to what the coming months hold in store.



Dan Driedger  
Executive Director

As you will see in this newsletter, it has been a very active summer for us. Construction at 544 Bridgeport and 24 Mill St. were both completed. Our administrative office has now moved to the basement of our apartment building, "The Foundry", in Elmira, and we have welcomed some new staff to join us.

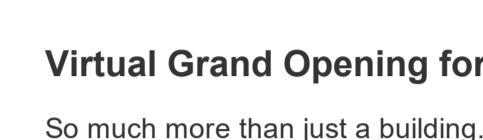
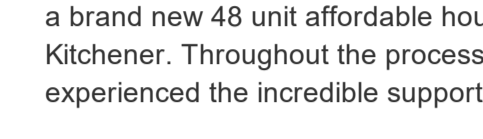
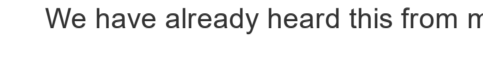
It's worth noting that all of these changes or activities were ones that we had a measure of control over. Life can be much more difficult when change is imposed on you. For the over 6,000 households currently on the waiting list for affordable housing in Waterloo Region, their situation is often the result of something that they were not able to control. And when life feels out of control, one of the most valuable and stabilizing things you can have is quality, safe, and affordable housing.

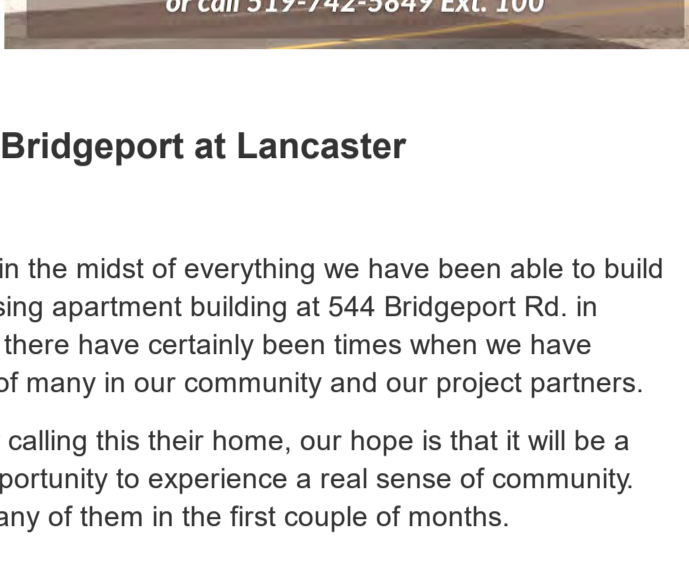
MennoHomes' vision is for "Caring communities where every person can thrive in a safe and affordable place they call home". You are receiving this newsletter because you have helped us do this. Thank you! My hope is that as you read the updates included below, you will be inspired and encouraged that your support through the work of MennoHomes is making a difference.

This September 49 additional households have a new place to call home. Because of your support, they will have for many years to come. Once again, thank you for responding to the need for affordable housing.

Dan Driedger

**THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP**



**BRIDGEPORT at LANCASTER**

So much more than just a building.

JOIN US FOR OUR "VIRTUAL" GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION  
SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2021  
4:00pm

RSVP online (link below) or call 519-742-5849 Ext. 100

## Virtual Grand Opening for Bridgeport at Lancaster

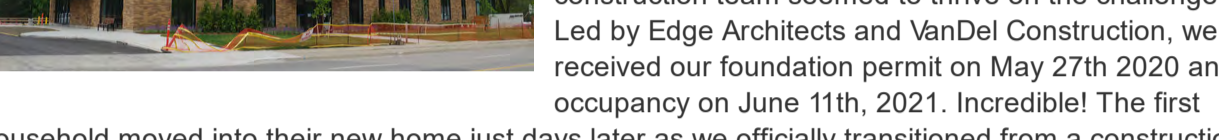
So much more than just a building.

It has been a year like no other but in the midst of everything we have been able to build a brand new 48 unit affordable housing apartment building at 544 Bridgeport Rd. in Kitchener. Throughout the process, there have certainly been times when we have experienced the incredible support of many in our community and our project partners.

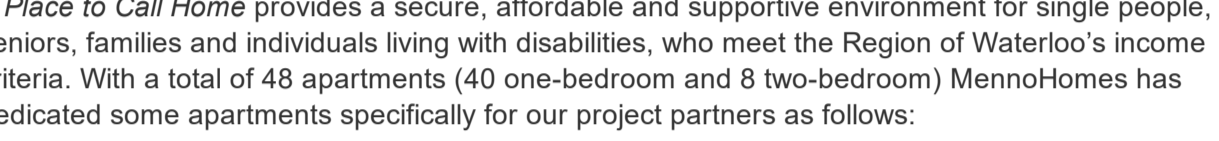
For the 48 households that are now calling this their home, our hope is that it will be a place for them to flourish and an opportunity to experience a real sense of community. We have already heard this from many of them in the first couple of months.

We are hosting a **Virtual Grand Opening on Thursday, September 23rd at 4:00pm** and invite you to join us. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP for the Virtual Grand Opening Celebration.

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME



## 544 Bridgeport Construction Completion



Starting and completing this project in the midst of a pandemic was certainly a new experience but our construction team seemed to thrive on the challenge. Led by Edge Architects and VanDel Construction, we received our foundation permit on May 27th 2020 and occupancy on June 11th, 2021. Incredible! The first

household moved into their new home just days later as we officially transitioned from a construction site into *A Place to Call Home*.

### Residents

*A Place to Call Home* provides a secure, affordable and supportive environment for single people, seniors, families and individuals living with disabilities, who meet the Region of Waterloo's income criteria. With a total of 48 apartments (40 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedroom) MennoHomes has dedicated some apartments specifically for our project partners as follows:

- Twelve homes dedicated to tenants on the Community Housing waiting list (currently over 6000 households)
- Two homes for tenants supported by Thresholds Homes and Supports
- Two homes for tenants who will come to us through Compass Refugee Centre
- Ten homes for tenants supported by Parents for Community Living

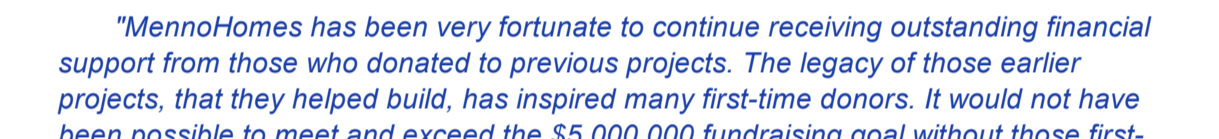
While the numbers above help to describe this project, they simply don't tell the story of the impact that this new housing will have for those who now call it their home.

Following is a quick sample of their initial comments:

- "I wake up so happy every day. You have no idea what this place is for me."
- "I wanted to let you know how grateful I am for this beautiful home. I feel safe, which has been a long time coming. My home is beautiful and well made. I feel that I now have the opportunity to rebuild my life and start over."
- "Living here makes me feel accomplished, and I've worked really hard to get to this point."
- "I just seem to be comfortable almost immediately."
- "If there's groceries that I want that I normally couldn't buy before because I couldn't afford it, I can now"
- "It feels like a community here, and it's nice to be part of it"
- Totally awesome
- "I feel very positive about the future in this place"

To learn more about how this project came together, and how it is making a difference in the lives of the people who call it their home, you are invited to our Virtual Grand Opening on Thursday September 23rd at 4:00 p.m. [Register here](#).

## Photo Gallery



## Capital Campaign

In January 2020, MennoHomes launched the *A Place to Call Home* capital campaign to support the construction of 48 new residential apartments at 544 Bridgeport. With a campaign goal of \$5 million, this was our most ambitious fundraising effort ever. Little did we anticipate the additional challenges that COVID-19 would present.

Under the leadership of former City of Kitchener mayor Carl Zehr, the capital campaign team shared the vision for *A Place to Call Home* with existing donors as well as many who were new to the work of MennoHomes. As Carl notes, the response was incredible!

*"MennoHomes has been very fortunate to continue receiving outstanding financial support from those who donated to previous projects. The legacy of those earlier projects, that they helped build, has inspired many first-time donors. It would not have been possible to meet and exceed the \$5,000,000 fundraising goal without those first-time donors. Together, over 1,100 donors raised an amazing \$5.2 million during a pandemic, while so many of them were also significantly supporting other basic needs in our community. To all of you, thank you for your support."*

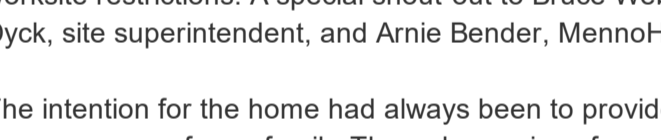
--Carl Zehr, Campaign Chair

The campaign for Phase 1 came to a close at the end of August 2021. Any donations and outstanding pledges that may not be required, as well as any new donations designated towards 544 Bridgeport, will be used as seed money for Phase 2. While the timing for construction of Phase 2 has not yet been determined, site services are already installed and we will be well-positioned to proceed once funding is in place.

A sincere *thank you* to everyone who donated to help us exceed our goal for Phase 1, and to the capital campaign committee members for the many ways they contributed to the success of our *A Place to Call Home* capital campaign.

### Campaign Committee Members

Carl Zehr – Chair, Bob Astley, Craig Haney, Linda Kieswetter, Hulene Montgomery, Bob Nally, Joanna Taylor, Dan Driedger



## 24 Mill St. Kitchener

In January 2021 MennoHomes acquired at no cost a house in Kitchener from The Region of Waterloo. The house at 24 Mill St. had been vacant for ten years and required significant renovations before it could once again be suitable for a family to call their home. MennoHomes

entered into a unique partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to restore the home. We also took the opportunity to upgrade the house's efficiency with improvements such as additional insulation and new windows.

This project would not have been possible without the dedicated volunteers from MDS who were able to balance working on the renovations with the challenges of COVID-19 worksite restrictions. A special shout-out to Bruce Weber, MDS project director, Ken Dyck, site superintendent, and Arnie Bender, MennoHomes site representative.

The intention for the home had always been to provide affordable housing for a newcomer or refugee family. Through a series of unexpected events, a connection was made with Jackie Williams whose extended family had privately sponsored (through Mennonite Central Committee) the Altroudis family from Syria 3 years ago. The family of five was living in a two-bedroom apartment and desperate for something more appropriate that was also affordable.

With the help of many MDS volunteers who assisted with all aspects of the renovation from demolition to final cleanup, the Altroudis family was able to move into their new home in late August, just in time for the new school year to start.

[MDS Article about this project](#)

Since the capital campaign for 544 Bridgeport was actively underway, MennoHomes did not launch a new fundraising effort to offset the estimated \$30,000 material expenses. We are thankful to the following volunteers who not only shared their technical expertise but also donated materials and labour towards the renovation: Ken Dyck – new kitchen cabinetry, Ron Roth – exterior siding, Dr. Roof – new roof.

Donations to offset the balance of the expenses are still welcomed and should be designated "24 Mill St."

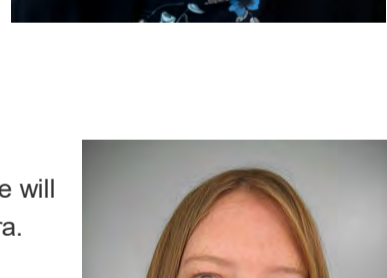
[Donate](#)

## Mennohomes' Team is Changing & Growing

### SUE MARTIN - Community Support Worker

Sue joined our team in spring 2021 as the MennoHomes Community Support Worker. She works alongside tenants to help create and support "happy, healthy, and safe community living".

Tenants in Kitchener on Village Road, at Rockway Gardens, and 544 Bridgeport, as well as in Elmira at The Foundry will find Sue in their midst on a weekly basis. She has a wide range of work and life experience. Her role is to connect with all tenants on a friendly and informal basis.



### LORI MARTIN - Administrative Assistant

Lori joined our team in August 2021 as Administrative Assistant. She will be working on various tasks at the 7 Memorial Avenue office in Elmira. Lori brings her administrative experiences from a similar role with Mennonite Central Committee in the past.

In addition to her work at Mennohomes, Lori lives and works on a dairy farm outside Elmira, is a supply teacher with Upper Grand District School Board, and enjoys a variety of sports and outdoor adventures. She looks forward to sharing her administrative expertise to help provide affordable housing in Waterloo Region.



## MennoHomes

100 - 7 Memorial Ave.  
Elmira ON N3B 2P8



Effective August 18, 2021

## Out-Spok'n Bike-a-thon

Our 11th Out-Spok'n for Affordable Housing bike-a-thon was held on June 12th. This was the second year we've held a virtual event with participants joining the event over the course of the weekend in a location convenient for them. While we missed the opportunity to come together in one location, we were thrilled that an estimated 80 riders, walkers, and hikers collectively raised over \$71,000. Thank you to everyone who supported their efforts by sponsoring them. All funds raised from this year's event went towards the construction of 544 Bridgeport Road East.



**THANK YOU!**  
We had a great event raising over **\$71,000** for new affordable housing in Waterloo Region.



You can view some pictures from this year's event here:

[Photo Album](#)



## Notice to Members

The Board of Directors for MennoHomes is inviting you to submit suggestions for new Directors.

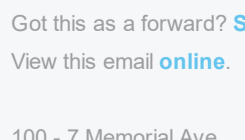
Names should be submitted to [Dan Driedger](#), Executive Director on or before September 30th to be included.



This process concludes with the election or appointment of directors at MennoHomes' Annual General Meeting in January 2022.

More details are available here: [Director Recruitment](#)

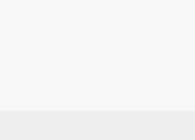
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