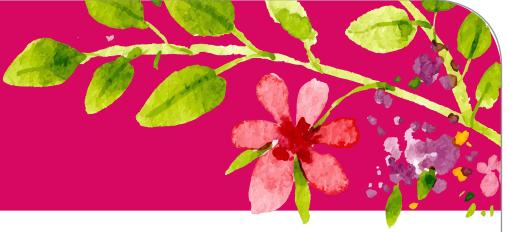


# community connections

GEF Seniors Housing Newsletter ~ Spring 2018



## Sakaw Terrace Applications Are Open

Applications for Sakaw Terrace are officially open. This comes on the heels of a great deal of anticipation from both the community at large and from GEF Seniors Housing. CEO Raymond Swonek explains that he's been eager for the applications to open to the public.

"Between the phone calls we receive every day, the engagement we see on social media, and the excitement we've seen at events, we know opening these applications couldn't have come soon enough," says Swonek. "The Mill Woods community has wanted a building like Sakaw Terrace for a long time."



GEF Seniors Housing staff will collect application forms over the next three months, compiling a list of all the qualified applicants. On May 8, 2018, a lottery draw will be held at the Mill Woods Seniors Activity Centre (second floor, 2610 Hewes Way, Edmonton) to determine who will be first to be interviewed. For previous building openings, GEF Seniors Housing has used the lottery system for applicants as a means of making sure the entire process is fair to everyone involved.

"The building has 158 suites and we're expecting many more applications than that," says Swonek. "With such a huge demand for the building, we want to ensure that everyone who applies has an equal chance of being able to move in."

After the applicants are chosen from the lottery, they'll be scheduled for an in-person interview followed by a letter either accepting or declining the application.

GEF Seniors Housing will be handling all applications for Sakaw Terrace's early 2019 opening for both the lodge and the apartment programs. Applications and the brochure explaining Sakaw Terrace's housing programs will be available at all GEF Seniors lodge sites.

"Sakaw Terrace will be the first GEF Seniors Housing building to offer some market level apartments and lodges to seniors at any income level," explains Swonek. "Affordable housing is still the main offering. Having both market level and affordable options is important because we want Sakaw Terrace to be available to as many seniors as possible."

The building team led by Chandos Construction and RPK Architects continue to make huge strides on the Sakaw Terrace project. With the construction team working so closely with GEF Seniors Housing, the scheduling and the budgeting for the building can be kept in close check, ensuring Sakaw Terrace is completed on time and on budget. Swonek is exhilarated with the progress made on Sakaw Terrace in such a short time and is proud of how well GEF Seniors Housing has worked with the construction team.

"The Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) model used for Sakaw Terrace pushed everyone, from the architects to the sub-contractors, to work as efficiently as possible without sacrificing any quality," says Swonek. "All 900 people who have worked on Sakaw Terrace have done an amazing job on this building and I know Sakaw Terrace will set a new standard not just for GEF Seniors Housing's buildings, but for seniors housing buildings all over Alberta."



## Message from the CEO



It might be a little early to declare that spring is here. The snow on my front lawn has been melting steadily. This is Edmonton, though. Who knows when we're due for the next snowstorm? No matter how the weather outside changes, GEF Seniors Housing is marching ahead on its projects. We're experiencing some amazing growth here and have some exciting announcements.

Firstly, tenants have already started moving into Canora Gardens. There will be a grand opening celebration coming later this summer, after everyone has a chance to move in and get settled. The 98 units in Canora Gardens is serving a need for affordable seniors housing in Edmonton's west-end and to continue serving the seniors in this community is important for all of us at GEF Seniors Housing.

The applications for Sakaw Terrace have officially opened and we've spent some time in the Mill Woods community letting everyone know about this new housing option for seniors. This is the first GEF Seniors Housing building to incorporate both affordable and market housing options for apartments and lodges, making it accessible to any senior looking for a new home. We'll be drawing applications from a lottery assigning interview order on May 8, 2018, at the Mill Woods Seniors Association. People who have already submitted their applications are itching to pick out their new suites. We're excited to be serving such an engaged group of seniors in Edmonton's south side.

We're hosting our next Building for Life Breakfast Fundraiser on May 24, 2018, with a few new changes. The first being the that the event will be held at Fort Edmonton Park, taking advantage of the beautiful scenery around the historical site and utilizing the horse drawn carriage for arriving guests.

The other change is where we will be allocating the funds raised from the event. Attendees now have the option to either donate towards capital building projects or towards GEF Seniors Housing's Community Supports program. This program has done some incredible work with the seniors experiencing social isolation and our work in this area is only just beginning. What we learned through this program is that seniors needing assistance to improve their quality of life extends far past those living with social isolation. Through the Building for Life Breakfast Fundraiser, we want to help see the Community Supports program expand its operations into a whole range of life improving services for all seniors. In the two years that this team has been in operation at GEF Seniors Housing, they have proved to be an invaluable addition to how we continue serving seniors.

There's always so much going on at GEF Seniors Housing. For more stories about everything we do at GEF Seniors Housing, make sure to visit the GEF Seniors Housing Community Connections blog at [gefcommunityconnections.com](http://gefcommunityconnections.com). In the meantime, one weather report is saying sunny skies while another says to brace for another snow storm. I better make sure both my lawn mower and my snow blower are ready for whatever Edmonton brings us.

Raymond Swonek  
Chief Executive Officer

## Canora Gardens Reopens

After nearly five years of renovations, Canora Gardens (10160 151 Street, Edmonton) reopened its doors in earlier 2018. The \$13 million renovation project saw GEF Seniors Housing collaborate with The Workun Garrick Partnership Architecture and Interior Design as the designer and Emcee Construction as the general contractors. The team opened Canora Gardens up, tearing everything down right to the studs and rebuilt from the main foundation. The building itself now features 98 suites that have been redesigned to be better suited for seniors living.

"Now that Canora Gardens is done, it's like a whole new building," says GEF Seniors Housing CEO Raymond Swonek. "I've been really proud of the team who not only have been rebuilding Canora Gardens but modernizing it as well."

The renovation project began as a reaction to a fire that spread through much of the building's second floor. Upon inspection of the damage, Director of Facility Management Doug Kitlar could see how much smoke damage there was throughout the entire building.



"We opened up a couple of walls and we could clearly see the extent of the smoke damage," says Kitlar. "It was a tragic situation for the whole building and the people living in it. The building was going to need a lot of work for the renovations but I knew with the right kind of renovation plan, we could turn this into an opportunity for something extremely positive."

Throughout the newly rebuilt Canora Gardens, signs of the building being brought out of its original 1977 construction date and into 2017's higher standards to residential buildings are evident all over. The building features better lighting, new interior finishes, improved common area spaces, a sprinkler system, and new energy efficient mechanical systems. For Kitlar, he's proud of the mechanical and structural upgrades to the building, but there's one facet that he's especially excited about.

"We redesigned each of the suites so they function better for seniors," says Kitlar. "We moved a few walls, flipped some floor plans, and were able to make the suites more conducive to the unique facets of seniors living without losing any suites. I am especially proud that we were able to keep the seniors who will live in the building so front of mind during this whole process."

Applications continue to be accepted for Canora Gardens and the rooms are filling fast. For Swonek, the excitement in the new tenants already moving in and from the community as a whole needing more affordable seniors housing options shows that Canora Gardens is a building to be proud of and filling a big need on Edmonton's west-end.

"I visited the build site often during construction because I'm a very visual person and I like to see the process being made," says Swonek. "Canora Gardens is setting a standard for seniors building renovation projects happening all across Edmonton."



## GEF Seniors Housing Meets the Prime Minister

Members of the GEF Seniors Housing staff, along with staff from the Mill Woods Seniors Association and from the Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association (ASCHA), had a chance to meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the beginning of February. The Prime Minister toured around Edmonton for the day, making a stop at the Mill Woods Seniors Association along with Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities Amarjeet Sohi and MP Randy Boissonault.

The Prime Minister took the time to briefly speak with staff from ASCHA and GEF Seniors Housing on the National Housing Strategy and even stopped for a quick couple rounds of pickle ball with a few seniors at the centre.

Thank you to all who attended the meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau and helped give the Prime Minister a warm welcome. And thank you to Prime Minister Trudeau for taking the time to tour Edmonton and explore some of the seniors serving organizations working in the city.



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