

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ESSENTIAL TO CANADA'S RECOVERY

PANDEMIC HAS SHED A LIGHT ON HOUSING INEQUALITIES, WRITES EDEN GRODZINSKI



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Column

Since the onset of the pandemic, most of us have been spending a lot more time at home.

Rarely has the nature of these homes been more important, as they became our entire world — doubling up as workplaces, schools and gyms. COVID-19 brought to light the stark inequalities with housing in Canada. Some of our neighbours endured lockdowns in large homes with plenty of living space, landscaped gardens and pools, while others struggled in unsafe and overcrowded conditions with no outdoor areas.

We know that safe and

hardest by the pandemic are our most vulnerable populations.

Did you know?:

- One in 10 Halton residents are in core housing need. Going into the COVID-19 pandemic, 17,500 households in Halton region (9.4 per cent) had at least one major housing problem relating to overcrowding, affordability or poor quality (Community Development Halton, 2018).

- Halton has some of the highest rental rates in the province. In 2020, the average apartment rental rate in the region was \$1,582 — the highest of all regional market rates in Ontario, including Toronto (CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2020).

- Housing prices in Halton have become, for many, unattainable. The average resale price of a home in Halton region was \$913,615 in 2020 (Real Property Solu-

decent housing has the power to change individual lives and transform the prosperity of our communities, by supporting stable employment, better physical and mental health outcomes, and increased access to educational opportunities.

But all too frequently for families with low income, it does not.

Since March 2020, we've witnessed how poor housing conditions, such as overcrowding and high density, are associated with the spread of COVID-19. Some of those hit

tions House Price Index), and it has only continued to go up. According to mortgage calculations done by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, this option is affordable for the top 10th percentile of all income earners (i.e. households earning \$267,000 or more per annum). Ask yourself, will your children be able to afford a house in Halton?

- Workers earning less than \$20.75 per hour are living in financial stress. Earlier this month, the Ontario Living Wage Network published the 2021 living wage rates, which represent the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs (food, housing, and transportation). At \$20.75 per hour, Halton's is the second highest in the province, driven in large part by housing costs.

Habitat for Humanity

Halton-Mississauga-Dufferin (Habitat HMD) is working hard to address the urgent need for innovative solutions across the housing spectrum, from building Tiny Homes in collaboration with our Indigenous partners to creating new equity building and affordable homeownership options for families.

As we approach National Housing Day (Nov. 22), Habitat HMD is going "Beyond the Build," and we want you to join us.

On #NationalHousingDay, show your support for increasing the supply of affordable housing in our communities, which is essential to a successful social and economic recovery from COVID-19.

- Shop. Visit one of our Restores in Burlington, Milton, Mississauga and Orangeville.

- Volunteer. There are so many ways you can get involved. Learn more at [https://habitatm.ca/vol-](https://habitatm.ca/volunteer/)

unteer/.

- Donate money. 100 per cent of every dollar you give goes to support our building programs.

- Donate gently used, resaleable goods. Instead of tossing your unwanted household items and clothes, donate them to Habitat. You will help save the planet and help us create affordable housing. Visit <https://habitatm.ca/donate/#donate-stuff> for more information.

- Identify land opportunities. Help us identify any vacant, abandoned or underused land or properties that could be repurposed for affordable housing.

Everyone deserves a decent place to call home. Together, we can build a stronger future for the next generation.

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