

GREEN GROUND BREAKING FOR HABITAT

by *stephen dupuis*

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Recently, however, I participated in a ground breaking that was special in many ways. First and foremost, it was for a 20-unit affordable home ownership project by Habitat for Humanity Toronto that will provide safe, decent and affordable homes for 96 men, women and children currently living in substandard housing.

With the support of its members, BILD is proudly sponsoring its sixth Habitat home at this site at 1500 Weston Rd. This was my first opportunity to meet the mother of the family of four who is eagerly looking forward to moving out of shared space with her sister into a newly built home where she can better face the challenges of raising two autistic children.

It's at moments like these that the importance of giving back to the community hits home, literally and figuratively. Having just met that courageous mother, the comment made by local MPP Laura Albanese that all the partner families are "rich in dignity and aspirations" seemed so appropos.

This particular ground breaking was of the shiny-shovel variety but the occasion was more about Habitat breaking new ground as a Green builder than it was about turning over some sod. Not only will this be Habitat's first GreenHouse certified development, but it will also be one of the first developments to take advantage of Ontario's new Green Energy Act through an innovative solar technology component.

GreenHouse is a label, which denotes that Habitat will be integrating energy efficiency, indoor air quality, resource (including water) conservation and material waste reduction into the project. The homes will be built to ENERGY STAR standards resulting in 25 to 30 per cent lower operating costs for the homeowners, not to mention a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of between two and three tonnes per unit.

As for the solar dimension, the project will feature roof-mounted solar panels that will feed power back into the grid, taking advantage of new provincial government incentives for renewable energy. The revenues will flow back to the condo corporation reducing the monthly fees for all the homeowners.

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Having never heard of Burgundy Brick and figuring I might be able to sell them a membership, I approached the youthful representatives whereupon I learned that it is actually a non-profit organization founded by a group of university students who want merely to give back to the community, particularly in the area of affordable housing.

I went to www.burgundybrick.org and loved their call to action, which is "One brick at a time we can help to change the city we live in by helping the people who live in it." If the inspiring young people behind that mission statement can raise enough money to sponsor a home, there must be corporate donors out there who can step up to join BILD, Burgundy Brick and our fellow home donors by sponsoring the last three available units. That's my call to action. For more information visit www.torontohabitat.on.ca or e-mail me at sdupuis@bildgta.ca.



Stephen Dupuis is the President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD). He can be reached by e-mail at president@bildgta.ca, or by fax at 416-391-2118.

Habitat breaks 'green' ground at latest build

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BILD AND HABITAT LEND A HELPING HAND



Habitat for Humanity Toronto CEO Neil Hetherington (centre) with (l-r) Alexandra Nikolajev, Melanie Cammalleri, Alexandra De Gasperis and Alana De Gasperis of Burgundy Brick.

FOR THE PAST six years, BILD has been a proud community partner of Habitat for Humanity Toronto, a partnership which flourished in 2009.

Attendees at BILD's July 2009 charity BBQ witnessed a rare off-site dedication ceremony (Habitat term for turning over the keys) at which our fifth partner family received the keys to their new home at the 736 Kingston Road site. This particular development was masterfully constructed on a modest 30-foot wide lot, previously housing only two units. The clever folks

at Habitat managed to leverage this space into eight homes with enough space left over for a delightful parkette.

Later in 2009, groundbreaking took place on a 20-unit affordable homeownership project at 1500 Weston Road, where BILD is sponsoring its sixth Habitat home and family. This site is Habitat's first GreenHouse-certified development and one of the first developments to take advantage of Ontario's new Green Energy Act through an innovative solar technology component.

ONE BRICK AT A TIME

CHANGING THE CITY

In the Spring of 2007, sisters Alana and Alexandra De Gasperis, along with their friend Stephen Lecce, chose to reach out to their community.

Fast forward to 2010 and Google their names. Chances are, you'll stumble upon a foundation called Burgundy Brick. Talk about "just reaching out!"

When these three students first got the idea to do something positive in their city, they had no idea they would create a non-profit organization striving to raise awareness and funds for, among other things, affordable housing. The foundation has been working with Habitat for Humanity Toronto by volunteering in construction and fundraising sectors.

"We try to do a little bit of everything," said Alana De Gasperis. "It's a new foundation so we're not really specific in terms of our job, but we really have a passion for helping Habitat for Humanity. We've worked with them for the past three years."

The foundation is a full-time home donor at Habitat's site at 1500 Weston Road and is frequently mentioned alongside well-known names such as BILD, Scotiabank and Mercedes-Benz.

Burgundy Brick's first taste of success came in Summer of 2007 following a charity event that raised over \$75,000. It has since continued to hold events despite the heavy workload that comes with university life.

"It's really hard to organize, just because all our followers are students and are busy with school, so we usually plan them for after May," De Gasperis explained, adding that something is already in the works for this year.

In 2009, due to the state of the economy, Burgundy Brick decided to take a more hands-on approach to fundraising, which did not require people to spend money to get involved. During the holiday season, the foundation organized a coat drive for a local youth shelter, which proved highly successful, bringing in around 150 coats, 50 sweaters and numerous boots, scarves and other winter gear. The clothing was donated to Horizons for Youth just as the cold weather settled in the city.

Visit burgundybrick.org to find out how to donate or get involved with the foundation.



Top: Stephen Dupuis of BILD with partner family at Habitat for Humanity's Weston Road site; middle left, Toronto Star Chair John Honderich addresses guests at the annual Holiday Breakfast; middle right, Dupuis welcomes Kingston Road partner family to their new home; bottom, industry members attend the Party for Humanity fundraiser.



HOMES & CONDOS

NOTEBOOK

Habitat townhouses go solar-powered

Hundreds of supporters gathered earlier this month to break ground for Canada's first solar-panel technology Habitat for Humanity homes at 1500 Weston Rd.

Twenty townhouses will be built at the Toronto affiliate's William's Way development, providing safe, decent and affordable homes for 96 women, men and children currently living in substandard housing.

The solar build will also showcase GreenHouse certified construction standards and will be 25 to 30 per cent more energy efficient than those built to minimum Ontario Building Code standards.

"As a nonprofit homebuilder that has adopted a 'green' building model, Habitat Toronto is setting an example for housing solutions and the larger building community," says Habitat for Humanity Toronto's chief executive officer, Neil Hetherington.

"Our model is about sustainability — social, economic and environmental. Our decision to build GreenHouse homes is about protecting both the pocketbooks of our partner families and the environment for future generations."

The Home Depot Canada Foundation, the newly established charitable arm of the Home Depot Canada, is title sponsor of the build and has a two-year, \$550,000 commitment to Habitat Toronto for this site as well as the upcoming 4572 Kingston Rd. site. TD Bank Finan-



From left, Mayor David Miller, Maple Reinders Constructors Ltd. project director David Mason, Habitat for Humanity Toronto CEO Neil Hetherington, district vice-president of TD commercial banking Sara Thomson and Habitat for Humanity Toronto board chair Toni Rossi, break ground on Habitat's new home on Bermondsey Rd.

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ergy and Environmental Design) Silver specification. Adaptable plans will allow for potential expansion, additional green space, and a daycare centre.

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sense of community within the Habitat family, but will also build hope for the organization in realizing its mission to serve families in need in the future."

● Go to www.torontohabitat.on.ca for more information on Habitat for Humanity as well as details on how to volunteer.

TALK ABOUT LUXURY

The Residences at The RitzCarlton opened their new presentation centre at 174 Front S.W. recently to an overwhelming response.

The sales centre and model suite were both designed by multi-award-winning Munge Leung Design Associates and are elegant showpieces for the new contemporary flair of The RitzCarlton brand.

"There is a real New York feel to the surroundings, which is perfect for international high-end buyers looking for sophistication and timelessness in design," says Alessandro Munge. "The building is an architectural gem on the outside, making a dramatic statement on the skyline, while the inside is truly residential, offering the warmth and comfort of home."

The model encompasses 2,300 of the 5,700 square feet at the presentation centre.

Among the artwork in the presentation centre is an amber-colored sculpture on the ceiling by local glassblower Jeff Goodman.

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Revenue received from the solar



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(BLD president Stephen Dupuis comments on Habitat's green build on page H12.)

• It's been a busy time for Habitat for Humanity Toronto, as it broke ground on its own new home.

The building — described as sim-

ple, decent and affordable — is at 155 Berrmondsey Rd. (near Eglinton Ave. E. and the DVP), will integrate their existing offices, ReStore facilities and Home Building Factory.

Developer Maple Reinders has ensured that the new space will stay true to the Habitat building model, using affordable building materials, much of which will be donated. This will be an eco-conscious space boasting LEED (Leadership in En-

ergy and Environmental Design) Silver specification.

Adaptable plans will allow for potential expansion, additional green space, and a daycare centre.

"We are also thrilled that in centralizing Habitat Toronto's workspaces we will be able to bring together staff, volunteers, partner families and donors under one roof," says Hetherington. "This change will not only build a greater

sense of community within the Habitat family, but will also build hope for the organization in realizing its mission to serve families in need in the future."

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Among the artwork in the presentation centre is an amber-colored sculpture on the ceiling by local glassblower Jeff Goodman.

Construction is so far along on the iconic building that topping-off is slated to occur before the end of the year. There are only a limited number of units remaining. Visit www.theresidencetoronto.com or call 416-591-1000 for information.