

**Homecoming Community Choice Coalition**  
c/o 805 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON

**BACKGROUND**

**MEDIA CONTACT**  
[homecoming@rogers.com](mailto:homecoming@rogers.com)

**HOMECOMING: "CREATING WELCOME COMMUNITIES"**

HomeComing Community Choice Coalition's mission is to promote the rights of people with mental illness to live in the communities of their choice.

In 2003, the coalition was formed in Toronto due to the increasing "Not-In-My-Back Yard" discrimination that was violating the rights of people with mental illness. Supportive housing providers, mental health consumers and survivors, city planners, human rights lawyers, mental health agencies and other citizens joined together to:

- Ensure city planning practices do not become a platform for discrimination, prejudices and fears
- Identify potential human rights abuses and take legal action against them
- Help supportive housing providers create new housing, without compromising the dignity of the people they house
- Mobilize citizens to support new housing for people with mental illness.

HomeComing's focus is people with mental illness, where the discrimination is most acute. However, their goal is to ensure no-one is stopped from living where they want because of "Not-In-My-Back-Yard" discrimination.

**Achievements**

In May, 2004 HomeComing was presented with the 2004 Canadian Mental Health Association Public Service Award by the Hon. James K. Bartleman, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. The award recognized HomeComing's "ground-breaking work in battling stigma and creating welcoming communities."

We have:

- Published *Yes, In My Back Yard: A Guide for Ontario's Supportive Housing Providers*. This tool kit has reached over 1500 housing providers, community groups and decision-makers at all levels of government.
- Worked closely with the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) and the Dream Team on potentially precedent-setting cases.
- Met with senior staff from the City of Toronto's Chief Administrative Officer, Planning Department and Diversity Office.
- Submitted a brief on the City of Toronto Official Plan.
- Convened a group of twelve mental health, housing and community groups to ensure Toronto's new zoning by-law - the amalgamation of 41 different zoning by-laws - does not enable "people-zoning." (MORE)

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- Developed and led workshops for the:
  - Canadian Conference on Homelessness
  - Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
  - Canadian Institute of Planners/Ontario Professional Planners Institute
  - City of Toronto's SCPI Training and Support Program
  - City of Ottawa's Learning About Development Series
  - Inter-faith Homelessness Action Group
  - Making Gains Conference
  - Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
- Engaged almost all of the City of Toronto's planners in discussions of human rights and planning through brown-bag lunch sessions in each of four district offices.
- Participated in City of Toronto's review of the public's role in planning decisions. Our goal is to make sure the City's progressive affordable housing agenda takes precedence over the prejudices and fears voiced by community opponents.
- Worked with the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association to research a systematic solution to NIMBY inspired by US Fair Housing legislation.

### **SUPPORTERS**

Steering Committee: Peggy Birnberg, Co-Chair  
Phillip Dufresne  
Suzanne Gibson  
Angie Hains  
Anne Hertz  
Adair Roberts  
Joey Slinger  
Brigitte Witkowski, Co-Chair

Advisory Committee: Zanana Akande  
Paul Bedford  
Paul Beeston  
Alan Broadbent  
Gordon Cressy  
The Hon. David Crombie  
Roberta Jamieson  
Dr. Joseph Y.K. Wong

HomeComing also provides information and advice throughout Ontario and across Canada. For more information or questions, please see the website or contact Homecoming by email.

09/11/2009