



By Jeffrey Kerr



A New and Exciting Option for Independent Accessible Living

It is no secret that accessible housing options can be very limited. But there is a new alternative that is gaining in popularity. Co-housing.

Chances are you have not heard about co-housing. In fact, according to Shelley Raymond, President and Founder of Solterra Co-Housing Ltd., the whole concept of shared housing and shared home ownership is on the cusp of becoming the next new and exciting venture for the housing market in Canada.

Solterra has developed the co-housing model for seniors to enable them to age in the comfort of their own home with the help of support services. But the concept has merit for individuals looking for an accessible home that would include attendant services.

The idea of shared housing is definitely thinking out of the box. Individuals looking at this opportunity can be flexible. For instance, there is no set figure for the number of potential owners. Owners could be individuals or couples.

Co-owners would have the advantage of sharing some common expenses while still ensuring they have their own private living space. Every owner would have their own unique suite, providing an accessible bedroom, washroom, storage area and individual temperature controls. Each private accessible washroom would include a roll-in shower, roll-under vanity and grab bars around the toilet. The house would feature spacious accessible common areas including kitchen, dining, and living rooms.

The individuals would be tenants in common – each owning an undi-

vided interest in the home, providing each owner with a long-term real estate investment. Co-owners own an interest in the **whole property**, not just their exclusive use area.

In a traditional assisted living situation, the facility is responsible for overseeing all of the attendants. In a co-housing arrangement, the owners would control and together share in the decisions and costs around hiring and managing that element of their care.

The co-owners of the home would remain totally independent of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Co-housing provides independent living for the co-owners who share the costs of home maintenance and personal assistance.

Co-housing was recently discussed at a committee meeting that I attended. I could immediately see the potential for individuals who need accessible living options. This is an opportunity for those who require attendants and who want to protect their independence. And of course there are many individuals who want to own their own homes.

The concept of 'shared homeownership' has already taken root in Australia and is gaining in popularity throughout North America and abroad.

Many people who need accessible housing and even assisted living supports hate to give up their independence – and why should they? Co-housing offers the advantages of community living and shared resources while still providing personal privacy. Owners maintain total control over their finances and their personal living space.

Shelley Raymond is a pioneer. "This concept worked so well for my dad and the other co-owners he lived with, that it has become my goal to spread the word. Co-ownership provides an exciting option for people of all ages who may need support for activities of daily living but who want to maintain their independence."

What do you think of the co housing option?

Would it be a good option for you?

I would love to hear your feedback and talk with anyone who wants to explore co-housing as an option for his or her own housing needs.

For more information please contact:
Jeffrey Kerr, Broker, RE/MAX Unique Inc.
Tel: 416-424-2222

Website: www.AccessibleHomeFinder.com

Email: info@AccessibleHomeFinder.com ●