



## How The Mount Community Centre opened its doors to Peterborough

Through the power of community finance and visionary thinking, The Mount Community Centre transformed a historic 132,000-square-foot building to address the growing needs for affordable housing in the area.

In 2011, the Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network (PPRN) decided to do something big.

The network of 40 non-profits, including community service agencies, food agencies and shelters, wasn't satisfied with incremental measures to address poverty. They boldly decided to create a community hub to provide affordable housing and poverty reduction services to help people live in dignity in Peterborough.

The group found a property to match their vision in 2013. The former Mount Saint Joseph Convent in downtown Peterborough had a rich tradition of supporting the community. For more than 100 years, the Sisters of St. Joseph ran a hospital, educated children, and supported countless community initiatives.

PPRN believed they could honour the convent's past and use its property to carry on its social justice work.

To redevelop the property, PPRN created a charity, The Mount Community Centre. They purchased the property and made plans for how to use it—including the creation of affordable housing, a food centre, a co-working space for community organizations and community rooms for health and social services & arts, cultural and recreational activities.

At this point, The Mount had spent all its capital to purchase the property and didn't have anything left to redevelop the space. But that didn't stop the charity's momentum. When it counted most, The Mount dug deep and turned to its greatest asset: its community.

Stephen Kylie, the chair of The Mount's board of directors, suggested that The Mount find a way to enable community members to invest in the project.



The Mount's mortgage was registered in the name of one person to be held in trust for all the investors. The Mount's investors were issued bonds and received annual interest payments, in this case 3%, which was competitive with market rates at the time.

The community enthusiastically embraced the bond. Within seven months, 67 individuals and organizations invested \$2 million in Mount bonds. Many investors were even able to buy bonds through self-directed RRSPs: "That took us a long time to put together," says Kylie, "we approached an administrator, which agreed to hold the RRSP funds for us." (Out of the \$2 million raised, about \$400,000 came in through self-directed RRSPs.)

With this capital, as well as grants and low-interest loans, The Mount Community Centre was able to build 43 affordable apartment units (with more on the way) and provide social, recreational and therapeutic programming for older adults. It was also able to pay out the bonds earlier than anticipated. At the time of purchase, The Mount's property was valued at \$5.2 million –today, it is worth \$10 million.

## BY THE NUMBERS

\$2M

invested by

67

community supporters to build

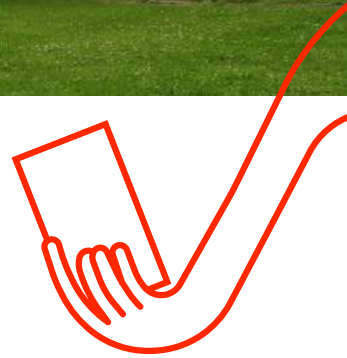
71

affordable housing units as of 2019

## THEY SAID IT BEST:

"We were a lead investor in The Mount's social finance program. Our participation was enabled by a visionary donor wishing to advance the Foundation's purpose of building a vital community, for everyone, while also lending momentum to this pioneering social finance venture and encouraging participation by other community-minded investors."

John Good, The Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough

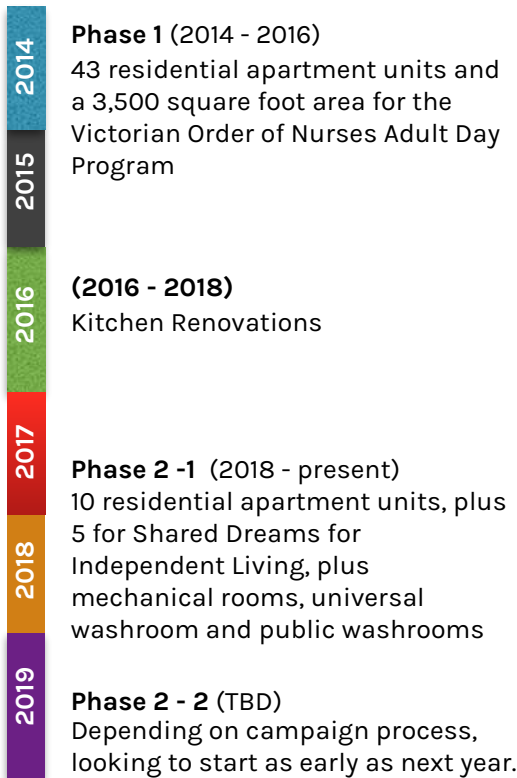


# KEYS TO SUCCESS

Several factors came together to have the PPRNs campaign come together as such a huge success. Below we've outlined the most important factors to the ongoing success of this project and what contributed to ensuring the Mount was built.

## Take a phased approach

TMCC did not try to tackle the community centre project as one large endeavour. Instead, the project was broken up into a series of phases to make the build and the raise more manageable.

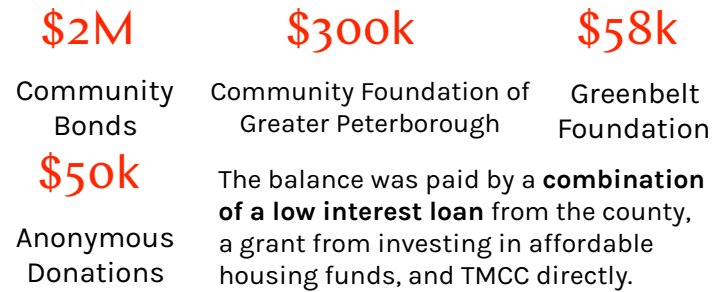


## Allow for self-directed RRSPs

In considering how the community bonds can be made more attractive to investors, exploring the requirements for self-directed RRSPs should be one. For citizen investors, having a long-term financial vehicle with a steady return is perfect for retirement investments!

## Leverage diverse financing sources

Purchasing and renovating The Mount Community Centre required a wide spectrum of financing sources. One of the cornerstone of this funding strategy was Community Bonds, which both brought awareness to the project and helped to galvanize the community and government partners, ensuring the success of the campaign.



## Get creative with revenue generation

TMCC wanted to put the organization in a solid financial position, both for the long-term health of the organization and so they would be able to pay the principal investment back to bond holders. The organization reviewed its internal resources and got creative!

-  Leased office space to 20+ organizations
-  Community rooms rented out for events and programs
-  Community Food Centre and Cafe
-  Offsite Catering Services

Thank you to the participation of:

Sponsored By: