



## Owen Hart Home Owners Program

**Report to:**



**2017 Annual Report**

**March 31, 2018**

## Introduction

The Owen Hart Home Owners (OHHO) program is celebrating its 19<sup>th</sup> year of increasing participants' financial well-being by:

- setting financial goals and creating a realistic home buying action plan;
- implementing new financial behaviours;
- and improving financial stability by reducing debt, improving credit, increasing savings, and obtaining a home.

This innovative program is an extension of Momentum's initial matched-savings programs. The OHHO program allows Calgarians living on a low-income, measured at the Core Income Needs Threshold (CINT), to obtain a home of their choice in Alberta. The CINT measurement tool is commonly used in affordable housing programs across Canada, and takes into account local housing market prices when determining a participant's income level.

Throughout the program, participants individually save up to \$250 per month in their own account for a total of \$3000 in 12 months. During the year, they attend home ownership education and financial coaching sessions. Upon completion, they are matched at a 2:1 rate, equalling \$6000. A total of \$9000, plus additional savings from previous matched-savings programs and from their own resources, is used toward the purchase of their home.

In 2017 some highlights include: five homes were purchased, nine out of nine participants graduated from the program (Group 26), and fourteen participants were recruited for the new group that began this past October (Group 27). To date, 96 homes have been purchased with assistance from the OHHO program. In combination with the other matched savings programs, the total number of homes purchased through Momentum since 2000 is 159.

## Results

Goals for 2017	January – December	
	#	%
15 new participants in the program	14	93%
7 houses purchased	5	72%
80% of participants save at the maximum towards a down payment for a home	OHHO26: 100% OHHO27: 89%	95%
80% of participants have applied the skills and knowledge they learned at Momentum to build their assets and income	OHHO26: 8/8	100%
80% of participants are more confident and/or feel more hopeful about the future	OHHO26: 8/8	100%
80% of participants are developing supportive connections and/or expanding their networks	OHHO26: 8/8	100%
80% of participants purchase an asset	OHHO22: 8/9 OHHO23: 7/9 OHHO24: 3/5	78%
100% of participants with children have opened an RESP	OHHO26: 9/9	100%
Participant Satisfaction: 90% of participants are satisfied with Momentum	OHHO26: 8/8	100%
Participant Satisfaction: 90% of participants would recommend Momentum	OHHO26: 8/8	100%

## **Program Activities**

### **Selection of Participants**

All applicants to OHHO must have graduated from an initial matched savings program at Momentum (Fair Gains, Family Saves, Savings Circles, or Youth Fair Gains) within the last five years. Selection criteria includes:

- Regular attendance in their previous matched-savings program
- Demonstrated ability to regularly save
- Potential to qualify for a mortgage based on their income, debt, credit rating & net worth

### **Current Participant Profile**

OHHO group number 27 began in October with 14 new participants. Demographics include:

- 2 single individuals
- 4 are single parents
- 8 are dual parent families
- 12 are immigrants to Canada

### **Program Delivery & Account Management**

Participants meet once every 6 to 8 weeks. Each month they are expected to provide monthly bank statements as proof of their savings. In 2017, participants saved 100% of their maximum amounts, and thus maximized their matched savings.

Topics covered by the OHHO facilitator and by professional volunteers are:

- Introduction to Home Ownership
- Home Energy & Green Efficiency
- Mortgages and Mortgage Brokers
- Real Estate Law
- Working with Realtors
- Final Evaluation & Review
- House Hunting
- Words of Wisdom Celebration
- Home Inspections & Maintenance

### **Home Purchase**

When participants have an accepted offer to purchase, they then provide Momentum with their legal documents for verification. Momentum processes a cheque for their lawyer, in trust. Under OHHO's funding contract with Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs (AHUA), a legal caveat is registered with Alberta Land Titles, stating if participants sell their home within ten years, a portion of the HUA matched savings will be repaid. In 2017 \$9,126 was returned to the fund as two of the homes were sold. These funds are available for future participants. In 2017, participants cashed-out a total of \$64,865 for the down payments toward the purchase of five homes. There are currently 18 graduated participants who have yet to purchase their homes and have a total of \$238,335 in matched funds allocated to them.

### **Funding and Partnerships**

Momentum continually seeks to find diverse funding streams for the program apart from the contributions of the Owen Hart Foundation. A portion of 2017's budget revenue came from The United Way. Momentum also continues to have qualified volunteers as guest workshop presenters.

## Program Impact

The OHHO program provides an opportunity for participants living on a low-income to earn a physical asset in the form of a home, leading to an increase in their overall net worth. The program also provides participants with opportunities to move towards a sustainable livelihood. Some key areas of asset increase identified by participants are:

- Increased sense of self
- Increased confidence
- Increased courage to ask questions
- Increased sense of overall well-being
- Increased home maintenance skills
- Stronger network of support and community

Graduates of the OHHO Group 26 provided the following feedback through their final evaluation forms:

- Everything about OHHO is excellent.
- I am so grateful to be part of Momentum's OHHO program, and I have and will promote Momentum to everyone I know.
- I appreciate both great Facilitators. They were very supportive, as well as all the guest speakers.
- I enjoyed being in a cohort and that we are all walking together in a journey towards homeownership. I do not feel so alone.
- Thank you, Momentum Staff and Funders, for giving me the spirit to keep going to get a physical asset and build wealth for my two young daughters. As someone living in low-income, I wouldn't be a homeowner without your help.

## Success Story

Calgary born and raised AJ\* was well acquainted with poverty. She was raised by a lone mother working two survival jobs and suffering isolation because of having moved around a lot because of evictions. "I am now grounded but I flow" AJ affirmatively told the Facilitator. Six years ago, while pregnant, AJ decided to leave domestic violence and lived in a women's shelter. Five years ago, with a new-born infant in tow, AJ saw a way out of poverty through the Savings Circle program at Momentum, which launched her and her baby son into a new trajectory. AJ had the strength, courage and determination to complete the OHHO program despite managing her major depression. AJ is grateful to be rooted for the first time in her life having purchased a home and everything a home symbolizes - homeownership education, discipline, regular savings patterns, and self-actualization.

*\*alias used for privacy purposes*