



Owen Hart Home Owners Program

Report to:



2013 Annual Report

March 28, 2014

Introduction

The Owen Hart Home Owners (OHHO) program operates within the Financial Literacy Department at Momentum, which is in its 15th year of delivering Money Management and Asset Building programs. The Financial Literacy department worked with 3079 participants in 2013. A total of 10 new individuals were selected to participate in the OHHO program in 2013 bringing the total numbers in the program to 38 for the year.

Homeownership is often just a dream for most people living on low-incomes, as they simply cannot afford to save for a down payment or navigate through the complex banking and real estate system. Hence, the OHHO program strives to close this gap. It is offered as a second year extension of the Fair Gains (FG) or Family Saves (FS) program. Family Saves was introduced as an additional asset building program in early 2013, specifically to meet the needs of busy parents. In the FG and FS program, participants saving towards diverse asset goals are grouped together to learn about financial management education and matched savings.

Upon completion, the participants' maximum savings of \$630 are matched either 2:1 (FS) or 3:1 (FG) by Momentum. Some graduates cash out their maximum amount of \$2,400 towards a down payment on a home or another asset goal. Other graduates apply to the OHHO program for an additional 12 months of learning and saving, which can bring their cash out for home ownership to a total of \$11,400 in matched funds and \$3,000 in participant savings.

The OHHO Program continues to meet or exceed all outcome targets. To date, 72 homes have been purchased with assistance from the OHHO program. In 2013, 10 program graduates became homeowners. This brings the total number of homes purchased by FS, FG and OHHO participants combined to 117 since the year 2000.

Results

Goals for 2013	January to December 2013	
	#	%
10 new participants in the program	10	100%
6 houses purchased	10/6	167%
90% of participants save at the maximum towards a down payment for a home	OH 22 98% OH 23 95%	97%
80% of participants complete a plan to purchase their home with their facilitator	7/11*	64%
80% of participants increase their assets in two or more areas	9/9	100%
Participant Satisfaction: Helped by Momentum	8/9	89%
Participant Satisfaction: Would recommend Momentum	9/9	100%

* 3 of the 11 participants had already purchased their home prior to their final class

Program Activities

Selection of Participants

All applicants to OHHO must have graduated from the FG program or the FS program at Momentum. In 2013, 16 FG and 4 FS graduates applied to the OHHO program. 10 candidates were selected based on the following criteria:

- They successfully graduated from either FG or FS and attended the core money management sessions
- Demonstrated that they have saved regularly
- Demonstrated they would qualify for a mortgage based on their income levels, credit rating and net worth

Current Participant Profile

OHHO group 23 began in October with ten new participants. Their demographics are:

- 8 females, 2 males
- 7 single mothers ,3 dual-parent families
- Age range of 32 to 48 years
- 8 are immigrants to Canada, 2 Canadian born, 1 with Aboriginal background

Although determined and resilient, the new group has been faced with a few challenges:

- Two participants have lost their employment:
 - one is still searching for new employment but maintains a positive attitude and is able to still submit savings deposits
 - the other gained a new job at the end of November
- One participant had a vehicle accident in November which has caused some financial strain and her savings have been temporarily put on hold

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 2013, participants saved 97% of their maximum amounts in 2013.

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

- Introduction to Home Ownership
- Home Inspections
- Mortgages and Mortgage Brokers
- Home Repairs
- Working with Realtors
- Final Evaluation & Review
- House Hunting
- Words of Wisdom Celebration

On December 11, the OHHO Words of Wisdom dinner event was held at Momentum. The evening consisted of dinner, inspiring speeches, and a buzz in the room filled with engaging conversations about the challenges and triumphs of home ownership. 34 people attended, including: current participants, graduated participants who have yet to purchase a home, two volunteer Realtors, eight OHHO home owners dating back to 2009 and as current as October 2013, and special guest, Martha Hart.

Home Purchase

When participants are ready to purchase a home, they provide the OHHO facilitator with the appropriate legal documents in order for Momentum to process a cheque which is sent to their lawyer, in trust. Under OHHO's funding contract with Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA), a legal caveat is registered with Alberta Land Titles, stating that if participants sell their home within ten years, a portion of the HUA matched savings must be repaid.

Since the beginning of the OHHO program in 2000, the highest number of homes sold in a year was in 2005, with 11 purchases. 2013 had the second highest number with 10 purchases.

OHHO Group 21

- 10 graduates completed the program in November, 2012
- 3 homes purchased in 2013 & 1 in 2012
- 4 participants have been enrolled to receive an additional six months of matched savings through the Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs funding and have a new purchase timeline extended to April 2015
- 2 participants have been given an extension until November 2014 to purchase their homes, to coincide with their specific financial and educational/career goals

OHHO Group 22

- 11 graduates completed the program in September, 2013
- 3 homes were purchased in 2013
- The remaining graduates continue to save independently and hope to purchase a home in 2014.

Furthermore, after various circumstances and extensions, 2013 also had four long term participants purchase their homes after being in the program for two or more years.

Program Enhancements

Workshop Development & Process

The OHHO program continually finds ways to improve its program. Last year, a final evaluation and review class was introduced for the participants to have a sense of completion after a year of classes and savings. It included a potluck dinner, program evaluation forms, a review of the process when purchasing, and completing a home purchase plan and timeline.

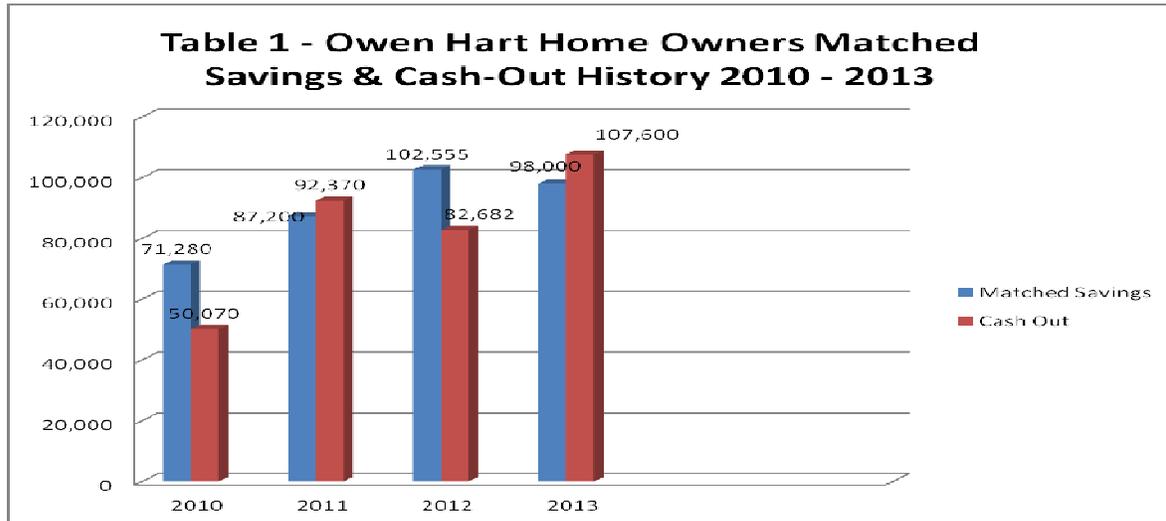
In the past year, a participant handout was created to assist understanding in the qualification and application process for potential applicants. Another handout/checklist was made in regards to the cashing out process and its required documentation. Lastly, the intake application form was revamped to improve the selection process.

Funding and Partnerships

Momentum continues to receive additional funding from Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs for OHHO's matched savings. Momentum also partners with The Home Program Alberta, enabling qualifying OHHO participants to receive up to an additional \$3000 in down payment assistance. Each year, Momentum continues to have qualified, professional volunteers participate as guest workshop presenters.

Program Impact

The OHHO program provided \$98,000 in matched savings to the participants in 2013. The program participants cashed-out a total of \$107,600 for the down payments toward the purchase of 10 homes. Table 1 displays the trend of matched savings and cash outs over the last four years.



The OHHO program provides an excellent opportunity for low-income participants to gain physical assets in the form of a home, leading to an increase in their 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

The following participant feedback from graduates of the OHHO 22 program highlights the impact of the program:

- It has made a far off dream a reality and possibility. I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn about money in Fair Gains and to have such great support in the process to home buying and savings.
- It will allow my family and I to have a house and it will help us to settle in Canada and improve our quality of life.
- It is really good for me, I am very new to own my house. It is one of my dreams that I buy a house in Canada.
- It's a big part of my paid amount. Thank you so much. I would always want to be a member of Momentum.

- To know all the differences that I need to buy a house in Canada. It is not the same as back home. Thank you to Momentum, guest speakers, the facilitator, partners, etc. for giving us this wonderful opportunity.
- It allows me to start saving regularly. The program is wonderful idea for people who don't have a great support system and just need a little assistance to reach some goals.

Success Story

Alex's journey to home ownership and peace: Born in Cambodia, Alex came to Canada in the 1980's as did many other Cambodians after the civil conflict. Growing up in Calgary, Alex got into a lot of trouble with drugs, alcohol and mischief. He eventually moved to Vancouver and began to deal drugs on a full-time basis. In his twenties, Alex was diagnosed with schizophrenia. One night while on drugs, he heard voices in his head that caused him to aggressively scratch at his eyes, leaving him legally blind in both. After, being hospitalized and on the road to recovery, Alex decided to come back to Calgary to be close to his parents. He later took a trip back to Cambodia and met his now wife and her son. After living in Calgary for a while, he eventually found out about Momentum and the Fair Gains program.

Alex graduated from Fair Gains in the spring of 2012 and began OHHO 22 a few months later. After three diligent months of home hunting with one of Momentum's volunteer Realtors and a couple of failed Offers to Purchase later, Alex successfully purchased a townhouse in Calgary.

Alex has expressed much gratitude to Momentum and other community resources such as the Canadian Institute for the Blind and The Home Program. A now spiritual and religious man, he stated that he now has freedom and the space in his very own home to do things to feed his soul. Alex has an entrepreneurial edge to him and hopes to create a quality foot stool for guitarists and spends time at home designing it. He meditates and prays on a daily basis, plays guitar, and sits in his new yard to relax while thinking about life.