

Our House is NOT in Order: TCHC Tenants Call on Council to “leave no one behind”

Toronto - Contrary to Mayor Ford’s statement that he has been able to achieve order in Toronto Community Housing (TCHC), Tenants for Social Housing announce **Our House is NOT in Order**. This follows a harsh report by Toronto’s Ombudsman finding callous treatment of seniors and disabled.

The Ombudsman’s report confirms that tenants are not the first priority of TCHC. This is evidenced by yet another tenant death which has resulted from one of the far too many unfair evictions from TCHC. TCHC is not following its own policies and tenants, like Mr. B and Al Gosling before him, are the ones who are paying the price with their own lives.

In a media conference late last week, Mayor Ford promised that he is “not going to leave one person behind” and yet TCHC CEO Gene Jones confirmed that the evictions of seniors will continue. Tenants demand that not one tenant is left behind and that oversight of TCHC is necessary, given the eviction of seniors and disabled highlighted in this report is only a small part of the eviction inconsistencies in TCHC and the problem extends to the broader vulnerable tenant community.

Susan Gapka, one group member states, “We applaud the Ombudsman for confirming what we already know; a decrease in management sensitivity in understanding our lives and our concerns and an increase in the gap between tenant decision making and management policy”. Gapka adds, “The Ombudsman’s report is yet another example of how our house is not in order.”

Doris Power, a senior living in TCHC, says, "TCHC must never assume that it is the tenant's fault when there is a delay in getting the paperwork for their regular income verifications. Staff needs the patience to remember that tenants may be having difficulty accessing paperwork from other governments and agencies, and staff also needs the training to provide, or refer to, supports. TCHC has to be reminded that theirs are not the only hoops that seniors and disabled are being asked to jump through, and the added insecurity and stress greatly affects the mental and physical health of vulnerable people." Power also reinforced that tenants do already supply the necessary forms for annual reviews and that it will be a breach of privacy for any landlord to obtain this information from anyone other than tenants themselves.

Tenants cite a rise in eviction notices and evictions, increasingly longer wait lists to get into social housing, a serious capital repair backlog, and threats by City Council and management to sell-off our homes as evidence that in fact the TCHC house is not in order.

Tenants for Social Housing will be at the June Council meeting for the presentation of the Ombudsman’s report to call on the City of Toronto to hold TCHC accountable for their actions and to provide the oversight necessary to respect tenants and their privacy. Tenants for Social Housing will be at Council to ensure that not one more tenant death is attributed to a mismanagement of the tenant eviction prevention policy.

-30-

For more information:

Susan Gapka
647-882-2776

Effie Vlachoyannacos
416-706-4405