

Housing and Homelessness

December 3rd is the International Day of Disabled Persons. The theme of this year's day, **Nothing About Us Without Us**, recognizes the need for persons with disabilities to take a lead role in the decision making process. To highlight the importance of this day and theme, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) is releasing a series of four fact sheets throughout the month of November.

'Nothing About Us Without Us' requires people with disabilities to recognize their need to control and take responsibility for their own lives. It also forces political-economic and cultural systems to incorporate people with disabilities into the decision-making process and to recognize that the experiential knowledge of these people is pivotal in making decisions that affect their lives.¹ ~ James Charlton

² Charlton, J. (1998) *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment*. London: University of California Press. Page 17.

Fact:

- ❖ Almost ½ of the homeless population has a disability. ¹
- ❖ **1 in 7** persons with a disability has affordability problems with respect to housing. ²
- ❖ According to the 1986 census, more than ½ of the owned households where a person with a disability lived earned less than \$30,000 per year, and over **80%** of rented households where a person with a disability lived earned less than this. ³
- ❖ **37.5%** of persons with disabilities living in Toronto are living in poverty. ¹
- ❖ Most shelters cannot accommodate individuals who need support with daily living, and the structural accessibility of shelters continues to be a barrier for persons with disabilities. ⁴
- ❖ **1 in 5** people with disabilities need housing adaptations of some kind. ²
- ❖ Cost is the most commonly cited barrier for adults with disabilities not acquiring needed adaptations. ²
- ❖ Although most individuals with disabilities facing obstacles to obtaining adaptations cite financial support as a barrier, landlord resistance is also cited as a significant barrier. ²
- ❖ Persons with disabilities in rental accommodations and rooming or boarding houses are least likely to be satisfied with their accommodations. ²
- ❖ A majority of persons with disabilities who express an interest in moving would opt for home ownership if it was a viable option. ²
- ❖ Cost has been cited by persons with disabilities who wish to move yet cannot as the major barrier preventing relocation. ²

¹ United Way of Greater Toronto (2002) [United Way Facts: Helping People with Disabilities Live Independently](#).

² Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Housing Conditions of Persons with Health and Activity Limitations in Canada, 1991: A Retrospective. [Research Highlights: Socio-economic series Issue 58](#).

³ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (1992) [Research and Development Highlights](#). Issue 9.

⁴ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2003) Housing Options for Elderly or Chronically Ill Shelter Users. [Research Highlights: Socio-economic series](#).

Solutions:

- ❖ The following have all been identified as necessary actions to support the housing needs of persons with disabilities: increased information and resources; accessible housing inventories; support in the search for suitable accommodations; and adequate funding for community-based organizations. ¹
- ❖ No one knows the needs of persons with disabilities more than people with disabilities themselves; people with disabilities have to take a lead role in the design and implementation of solutions for housing and homelessness issues.
- ❖ Independent Living Resource Centres have experts in the areas of universal design, accommodations, adaptive aids, and housing options for persons with disabilities. They can assist city planners, builders, landlords, and other community organizations to ensure the housing needs of persons with disabilities are being addressed in each community.

¹ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2003) Examining the Housing Choices of Individuals with Disabilities. [Research Highlights: Socio-economic series](#).