

# Housing crisis pulls community into lasting partnerships

“ If you don't have safe and adequate housing, all the other areas in your life are going to be at a crisis point... ”

—Carla Feltz—

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Carla Feltz is a community outreach coordinator for Vancouver schools.

In early December 2014, 16 households in one rental property received notice that they would be evicted by the end of the month. The rental property, which had been a housing source to low income families and people with health challenges was under new ownership and would soon undergo renovation. The notices were just the first wave in what would ultimately affect the entire complex.

The evictions mobilized the community to assist the families in finding new housing; this was not easy to do in Vancouver, which has single-digit vacancy

rates, and especially difficult in the middle of winter.

The Council for the Homeless and a local elementary school held a fundraiser to generate first and last month's rent for evicted individuals and families. Community health workers became a key resource, going door-to-door and assisting residents with health issues who were housebound.

“Housing is a metric for how healthy you can be. Because if you don't have safe and adequate housing, all the other areas in your life are going to

be at a crisis point,” said Carla Feltz, a community outreach coordinator for Vancouver schools.

Andy Silver, executive director of the Council for the Homeless, is very familiar with the intersection of health and stable housing. As a participant in the Accountable Community of Health in the region, he is also keenly aware of the innovative change that's possible through collaboration.

What worked in this situation was “getting everyone to the table: payers, providers, people

from the community, to start having those conversations of how we transform how we deliver care in a more whole-person way,” Andy said.

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