

Poor People's History of Neighborhood

For close to two centuries East Downtown Toronto has welcomed the unemployed, homeless and working poor. Infrastructures to support the unemployed, some of which date back to the establishment of Toronto first poor house to the 1830's, are now being threatened and dismantled by the city to make room for Toronto's more affluent residents. Working poor and the unemployed in East Downtown Toronto have a long history of resistance. In the 1890's the unemployed organized against policies that forced them to crack stones for the

relief. In the 1930's thousands of unemployed gathered in Allan Gardens in hard fought free speech battles. The unemployed in the 1930's also organized to protest living conditions in overcrowded city shelters and demanded that the city provide them with cash relief to rent rooms. In the 1990's East Downtown Toronto became a battle ground against Mike Harris cuts to social programs. Thousands of people have taken part in militant direct- actions out of this neighborhood such as squat actions, raise the rates demonstrations, and more.

Join the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)

OCAP has been based in the Downtown East neighborhood, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Canada, for over 20 years. We have fought for many things in this neighborhood and had many victories throughout the years. We know that in the coming years we will face a hard battle as poverty grows and developers try to take over the area. We need to come together to push back against upscale development and fight for the things that poor people need and deserve - affordable housing, community spaces, services, and adequate income. We are membership based - meet every two weeks, we are open to anyone who wants to be part of this work. Join OCAP - be part of defending the Downtown East and Fighting to Win!

To get involved:
Email – ocap@tao.ca
Call - 416-925-6939
Office: 157 Carlton St
(behind St.Lukes Church)

Fighting Back Works



Save the Schoolhouse Shelter

This Community is Under Attack but we are Taking it Back!

As governments reduce spending on social programs and housing, upscale redevelopment sweeps through the Downtown East. Poor and homeless people are being pushed out by condos, cutbacks and cops.

OCAP has been fighting back against austerity and 'revitalisation' in this neighbourhood for a long time but, in the last while, that fight is getting sharper. We mobilized to prevent the closing of the School House Shelter and we took action to stop the removal of the Friendship Centre. We've shown that community mobilization can produce victories but we also know we have a very tough fight ahead of us if we are defend the Downtown East.

Today, September 22nd 2013, we are kicking off a campaign that we call Taking it Back! We

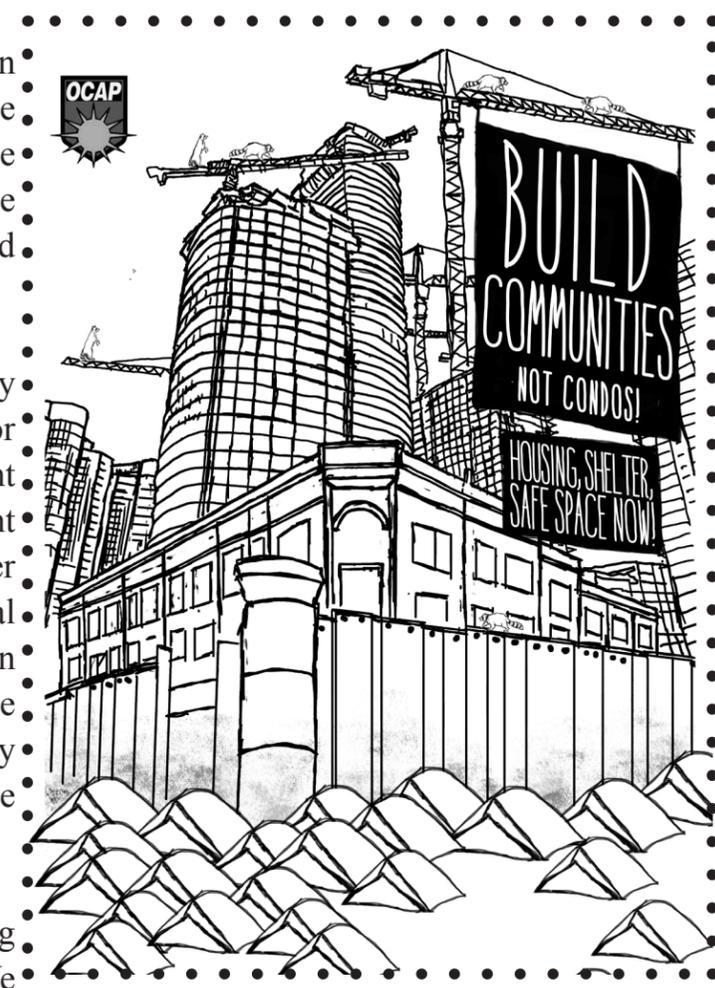
want to step up the scale and power of community action in this area. The people who make their lives in this area are not going to be abandoned our pushed out. We are going to unite and mobilize



for the right to decent income, shelter, housing and community services. The fight we are taking up today will continue and grow. This is a community with a long history for fighting back and we intend to take that fight to a new level. Only through sustained community mobilization and taking direct action can we stave off the onslaught of gentrification, claim space, and win real demands. Join us!

GEN•TRI•FI•CA•TION

A process by which middle-class and affluent people take up residence in a traditionally working-class or poor area of a city, changing the character of the area.



This is Indigenous Land

While taking any action to (re)claim spaces for poor people in the DTE, we must acknowledge that we do this work on stolen Indigenous land. We must integrate indigenous solidarity and anti-colonialism into our actions. Doing so means working from an understanding that poverty is deeply connected to racism and colonialism on this territory and globally.

The impact of on-going colonization means that many of the people living in poverty in the DTE are indigenous to this land. Others are migrants who fled or were forced out of their homelands by war, environmental destruction and brutal economic policies. As we fight for spaces and services, we must also join in struggles of indigenous people, migrant justice, environmental justice and other connected movements.

Building Drina's House — Taking it Back: Expropriate 230

On December 17, 1985 Drina Joubert, a 41 year old homeless woman was found dead at the back of 230 Sherbourne Street. She was one of hundreds whose lives have been taken by homelessness and poverty. The building where she died was a rooming house as far back as the First World War and generations of poor people have called it home. For the last several years, it has stood empty as have many other such buildings in this area and through-out the City. While homeless shelters overflow and a housing crisis threatens to put ever more people on the streets, property owners board up buildings that could and should be housing people in need while they wait for an offer from a condo developer.

Cities in Ontario have the power to expropriate property and Toronto has previously used it to take back a neglected property at 1495 Queen Street West, which was opened as Edmund Place in 2011. We are calling on the City of Toronto to take such action here and ensure that this building and adjoining lots provide housing and services for poor people in this hard pressed neighbourhood. It would be only fitting to name such a project on this site after the memory of one woman for whom housing came too late, Drina Joubert.



Photos show tragic 1985-85

**We Remember
Drina Joubert:
December 17,
1985**

EX•PRO•PRI•A•TION

Taking out of an owner's hands (especially taking property by public authority).

**Sign on to this Statement today: you as individual, your organization or social agency can sign on to the demand for the expropriation of 230 Sherbourne. Email: ocap@tao.ca or call 416-925-6939*

History of 230 Sherbourne

- House was originally built as a semi-detach in 1871/1872
- William Dineen was the primary owner after it was built - he was a wealthy furrier and clothier (made hats).
- Long history as a rooming house: In 1914 two reservists were listed as renting rooms at the house – possibly the first time this property was used as a rooming house
- On September 6, 1930, an ad was listed in the Daily Star advertising “spotlessly clean rooms, housing keeping optional...\$4”. This suggests that at least by 1930 the house was fully being used as a rooming house
- Picture found from 1973 which has a sign on the front door advertizing furnished rooms for rent
- December 17, 1985: Drina Joubert, a 41 year old homeless woman, was found froze to death in an abandoned truck at the back of the 230 Sherbourne. There were protests and an inquest was held in February 1986. Out of this inquest came recommendations for housing. There was no subsidized housing for single adults at the time. The housing at 315 Dundas was built as a result.
- Was run in the neighborhood and known as ‘Rita’s rooming house’ until it was closed down around 2008

What do you want to see in the neighborhood?

More and better shelters? A 24 hour drop-in? Safe Consumption Site? Be part of the ‘Taking it Back’ Campaign and let your voice be heard!

- Heritage House Designation: in 2011 the City of Toronto allowed for the demolition of the other houses beside 230 Sherbourne (226 and 224) and there was a demolition order on 230 as well, but that was withdrawn when the building was given ‘Heritage Status’ because of its history being owned by William Dineen and its architecture.
- Estimation of 30 plus rooms
- Current condition: needs about \$100 000 of work
- Owners have been absentee. No work has been done on the property in years and it is sitting empty despite being in a neighborhood with one of the highest concentrations of homelessness. In 2003 time period, it was owned by Jerry and Gina Ross. Currently owned by: Taneja Bhushan who lives in High Park.



Drina's House: 230 Sherbourne St.