

START SPREADING THE NEWS

2011/2012

OPINION

Featured opinion writer:
Ian MacDonald,
President,
Compassion House Foundation
Board of Directors



Four very determined women from our community, along with a campaign cabinet and a volunteer board of directors came together to care about women from outside our city. Together, with an absolute passion to help women coming to Edmonton for breast cancer treatment, they built something newsworthy—Sorrentino's Compassion House. And they had a lot of help. Venture into the house for a tour and see the donor wall—a who's who of those familiar caring people and companies in our community that always seem to step up when needed.

That was ten years ago. And since the opening, hundreds of women from over 150 communities across Alberta and beyond our provincial borders have had their lives changed forever when they stepped into unfamiliar territory and became part of the fabric of this special house. And hundreds more have been turned away because we simply didn't have a room for them.

It may look on the surface that we offer accommodations to women from out of town as they are receiving treatment for breast cancer. But that is only the physical space part. The other part—the support and the incredible connection that occurs when guests meet and quickly realize they are not alone. That there are other women on a similar cancer journey. That they can be themselves. They can open up. Or hide out. That is the power of compassion at work.

And here we are at the end of an incredibly busy year. It is a year full of exciting change. We are embarking on a new journey to more than double the size of the house. A campaign cabinet was formed, and a goal of \$5 million was set. And we're happy to say we are well on our way. We have received an overwhelming \$1 million gift from the Eldon and Anne Foote Fund to name the new expansion wing. And we have obtained generous funding from the communities we serve including Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, and Yellowknife.

And there is no way any of this could have happened without our Executive Director Mellissa Kraft and her staff, our hard working and determined Board of Directors, support from our community and the communities we serve, and the more than 100 volunteers who commit to our organization every year.

We are thankful, yes. But we need your help. We need your help to start spreading the news about Sorrentino's Compassion House. We need your help so we can make our financial goal. And by raising the funds we can realize our organization's goal. To say yes to women who need us. Yes, we have room for you. Yes we can accommodate you. Yes we can help you in your time of need. Yes.

I can't imagine what those four maverick women were feeling 10 years ago when their idea became this house. Maybe it is similar to what I'm feeling today. I am so excited and proud to watch this expansion idea become a reality.

There are so many things to talk about in a year. But in my opinion it all comes down to one thing. Helping people. That's what we do here. And with your support we can ensure that more women can be helped.

visit us online at
compassionhouse.org

FEATURE

What if one day you woke up, turned on the television to the morning news and the host said "sorry everyone. No news. We've got nothing to say." Or worse, what if you woke up every morning to the same news. "In case you missed it over the past few years, here's the news...again..."

The latter is true with breast cancer. Same news. Almost the same number of diagnosed women every year (22,000). That's one in every nine women in Canada who will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. It's the number one diagnosed cancer in women, year after year.

And the news about Sorrentino's Compassion House hasn't changed for years either. Full. Past full. Waiting lists. Turning away women who need the help, support, and accom-

modations as they face breast cancer treatment in Edmonton.

The news doesn't seem to change.

Until now.

Says Executive Director Mellissa Kraft, "we've been turning away women since we opened our doors in 2002. There is nothing worse than getting a phone call from a woman who needs our help and we have to say sorry, we're fully booked. The sound in their voice—it's heart-breaking. But we mean to change all that."

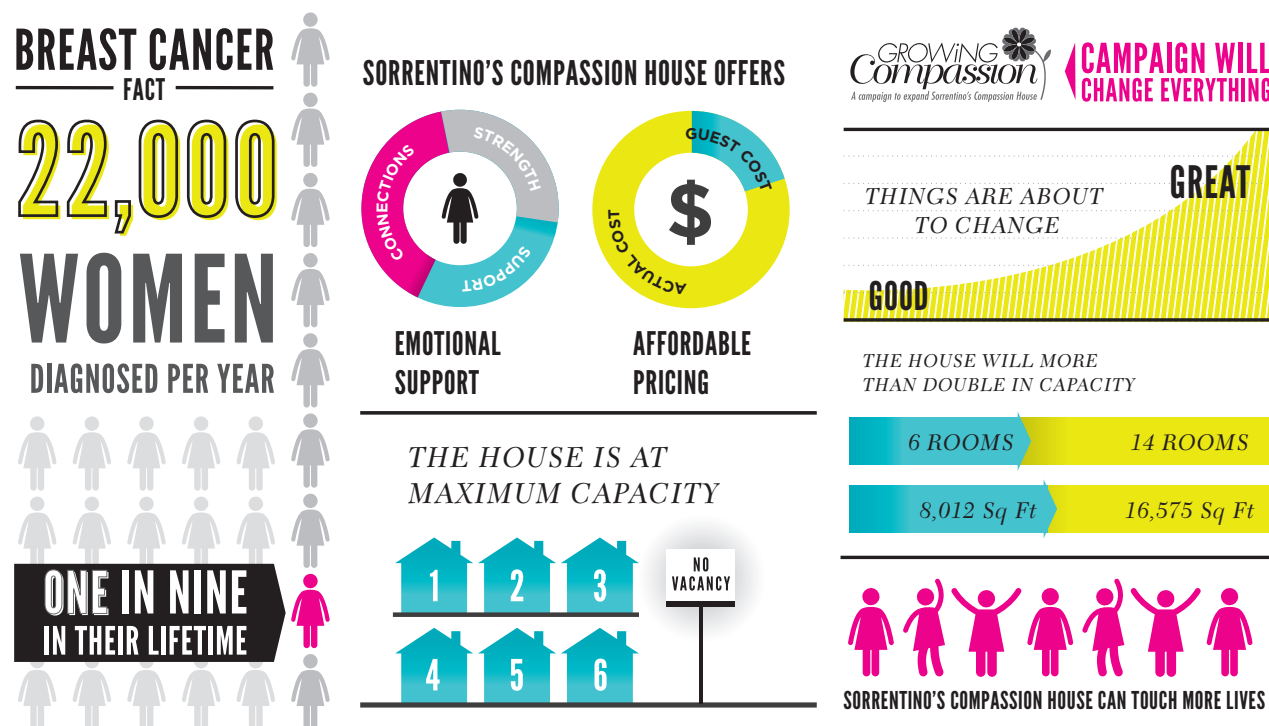
In 2011 Compassion House Foundation launched Growing Compassion, a \$5 million campaign to expand and renovate Sorrentino's Compassion House to more than double the capacity. From six suites to fourteen,

an expanded kitchen and dining area, a wellness centre, entertainment room, and an elevator that ensures the house completely accessible, the new house will mean everything to the strong women who come to the city to fight cancer.

And a campaign like this can only occur when people come together with these women in mind, and make a difference by raising funds to make change happen.

Says Shannon, a former guest, "When people ask me 'how are you feeling?' I tell them I'm tired. I tell them I'm sore. But I tell them that emotionally I am stronger than ever because of what happened to me at Sorrentino's Compassion House."

So there is news. Good news. This news changes everything. This news changes lives.



HOMES



Situated in the heart of the charming McKernan neighbourhood in Southwest Edmonton, the Sorrentino's Compassion House expansion will encompass three to five lots, and while it may be one continual connected property, it will appear to be three very distinct houses.

Included in this home will be warm and comfortable surroundings and really nice people, quality finishes throughout, and an elevator for your convenience.

Each suite will come completely furnished including two beds,

table, television, and private washroom.

The house will be move-in ready. And while we hope you never need to stay here you can rest assured we will be ready for you.

Sorrentino's Compassion House is only blocks away from the trendy Whyte Avenue area, with grocery stores, restaurants and other retailers within walking distance. Public transit is right outside the house for your convenience and connects you to the LRT system. So the city is at your doorstep.



Developer:
Sorrentino's Compassion House

Builder:
Cormode & Dickson

Architect/Engineer:
Stantec

Square footage: 16,515

Suites: 14

Parking: Stalls for 16 vehicles

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FINANCE

Compassion House Foundation remains grateful for the support it receives from both the community in which we reside and those that we serve. In the coming year we will continue to increase our fundraising efforts in order to further realize our vision.

Copies of our annual audited financial statements are available upon request by contacting our office at 780-425-7224.



Reports suggest Compassion House Foundation had a newsworthy year.

Read all about it.



CONTRIBUTORS

It takes a lot of people to make this kind of news. Every contribution makes the Sorrentino's Compassion House story better. Would you like to be a contributor? Call the newsroom at 780-425-7224.

GROWING COMPASSION DONORS

Thank you to the following individuals and companies who have made a \$100 or more commitment to our expansion campaign:

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The following list includes gifts of \$500 or more made from March 2011 - February 2012. We gratefully acknowledge and value all the donations we receive.

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LETTERS

Dear editor:

"I was excited to get to the house and see that it was such a modern, new facility. It felt a bit like a vacation actually – getting to eat when I wanted, to sleep in the afternoon, to go for long walks and have time to reflect. I can't imagine what it would have been like to stay anywhere else."

Bev, a former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House

Dear editor:

"When I first walked in, it felt like a mansion. I thought, I've never been in a house this big before! And the kitchen was great—it's where everyone hangs out, cooks meals and shares their stories."

Jennifer, former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House

Dear editor:

"I'm very thankful for my experience there and I hope they can grow and expand. Sorrentino's Compassion House was a big part of being able to stay positive. It would be sad to have to turn women away. I can't imagine what that would feel like."

Judi, former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House

Dear editor:

"It doesn't take long to bond with the women. You try to explain what chemo feels like to friends and family and it's so hard to put it into words. To be around people who understand, it makes such a difference. I walked in the door for the first time and was welcomed like I was an old friend coming home. I couldn't tell who were paid staff and who were volunteers -- everyone was so warm and welcoming."

Katherine, former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House

Dear editor:

"I totally believe Sorrentino's Compassion House was a huge part of my recovery. It's such a great place and it needs to continue and grow. I hope I never have to go back to stay there, but just knowing it's there if I need it is a big comfort."

Lorna, former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House

Dear editor:

"It is so important to be in a good place when you are going through such a bad thing. Women need a place to be allowed to talk about it. We need to be treated with respect and dignity. We're still the same people, even if we're missing a body part or two."

Patti, former guest of Sorrentino's Compassion House



Compassion Daily

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2011-2012 EDITION



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