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Recommendation that CFUW OC endorses OWN's Living in Place Campaign

I attended a North Toronto meeting early last year about the Older Women's Network's (OWN) Living in Place Campaign. Kate Chung of OWN's Housing Committee presented information about the campaign and the concept of Universal Design. The campaign advocates for Universal Design to be implemented in all new multi-unit residential buildings.

The premise is that barrier-free housing is a human right. Also, to consider is that over 22% of Canadians live with a disability. Universal design, once implemented as standard at the design stage in new construction, is not costly - less than 1% more.

Many organizations endorse the Living in Place Campaign, including City of Toronto, Open Architecture Toronto, The Architect Builders Collaborative, Right to Housing Coalition, ARCH Disability Law Centre, to name a few. More recently, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has signed on.

For National Housing Day last November, the Ontario Human Rights Commission endorsed Universal Design. Here is the OHRC position and call:

Universal design makes housing accessible and adaptable not just for people with disabilities, but for everyone. Accessible housing makes social, economic sense. On National Housing Day, the OHRC calls on the government to mandate “universal design” in housing to ensure new housing developments are fully accessible. The OHRC calls for amendments to Ontario’s Building Code Regulation to require all units in new construction or major renovation of multi-unit residences to meet universal accessibility standards.

I propose that CFUW Ontario Council add our voice to this campaign by endorsing it. There will be a lot of new construction going on in Ontario over the next few years, so it makes sense to implement these new standards ASAP.