

DEOHAEKO SUPPORT NETWORK

Deohaeko is a small group of families who came together in 1988 in Toronto, Canada to develop support for their sons and daughters with a disability. They received a government grant to design and build a housing co-operative, Rougemount, which became a 6-storey 100 unit housing co-operative. The families did not want a residential service for their sons and daughters with a disability. They were looking to develop an intentional community in which people with a disability would live with people without a disability. Rougemount became the "where". The Deohaeko Support Network became the "how" – a Board of families who employ paid workers to work individually with each person with a disability, some of whom require 24 hour support.

FROM THE DEOHAEKO ARCHIVES:

"At the heart of Deohaeko, is the belief that; people who have never been able to dream of having homes of their own, will come to live in those homes among other people who will welcome them. In discovering and nurturing everyone's gifts, a strong community will evolve, so that the dignity, uniqueness, freedom and participation of each individual will be honoured and facilitated in a natural, neighbourly fashion and that the community will be seen as a preferred place to live. Like all members of our community, each of the individuals supported through Deohaeko has unique gifts to be offered. Deohaeko is committed to inviting, encouraging, welcoming and sustaining a level of community inclusion, participation and friendship making caring for on another a natural part of life in both the co-operative and greater community.

Firstly, Deohaeko will assist members of Rougemount Co-operative to foster a spirit of mutual neighbourhood support – the principle upon which this co-operative is established. All community members will find ways to welcome the gifts and talents of their neighbours. Secondly, on an individual basis, each participant will be supported by family, friends, new neighbours, and personal supporters, if needed, to establish a home and share in both the co-operative community and the larger Durham Region community. Deohaeko sees the creation of a support network for each individual as a way to make possible the welcoming, the initial relationship building, the discovery of gifts and the nurturing of community".

HOW IT WORKS:

Physically: Rougemount Co-operative, a place called "home" is:

- A housing co-operative of six storeys with 105 one, two and three bedroom units in suburban Ontario founded by the families of Deohaeko
- Home to about 250 people representing the typical mix of people in the region looking for housing – singles, families, single parents and of all levels of income, different cultures, ages and abilities – among them 6 of the sons and daughters of the Deohaeko families
- An INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY where people seek to be good neighbours to one another.

The Co-operative is situated on a bus route, next door to a library and within easy walking distance to shops and amenities.

The Support Network: A family-governed, person-centred approach:

- Deohaeko supports only a small number of people, just their own sons and daughters
- The Board membership is small, made up essentially of parents. It makes decisions about allocating all funds received by the families from the government according to the support plans for the individuals.
- Families hire support people directly for their family members.
- A co-ordinator works for their whole group, as well as for each individual and their family. She helps set the vision and helps families deal with times of transition and change. She meets regularly with each person being supported, some weekly and some daily depending on the need, which may change with time.

The role that Deohaeko Support Network takes in the lives of the people they are supporting includes:

- Ensuring quality day to day support.
- Planning for and recognizing opportunities for new relationships.
- Providing a home that is safe and secure, unique, individual and welcoming to others.
- Ensuring a community presence which is legitimate and valued, occurring on a frequent and regular basis.