

CHBA Central Interior's Annual Training House & Y-Dream Home:

A Kamloops Tradition

An Interview with Executive Officer CHBAI, Rose Choy



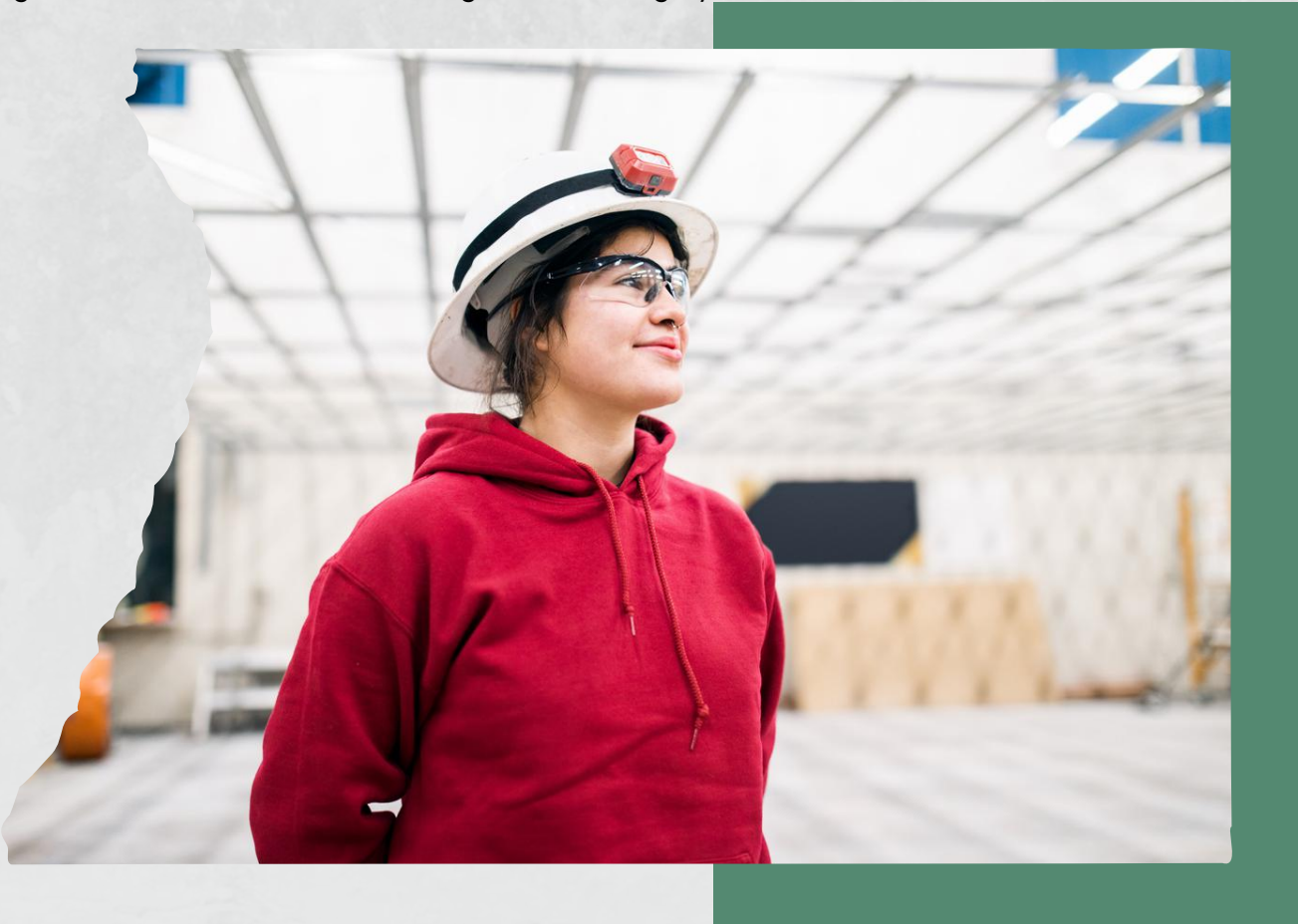
Y-Dream Home



By: Ross Harrison

Educating Tomorrow's Builders

One of the great struggles in the field of education has always been transitioning students from the theoretical knowledge they acquire in the classroom to the sort of practical knowledge that can only be properly gained from real world experience. Despite the more hands-on nature of trades, such as carpentry, electrical, and plumbing, they too can present a challenge when it comes to bridging educational theory with on-the-job know-how. However, for the past thirty-two years, The Canadian Homebuilders' Association Central Interior, along with the Thompson Rivers University School of Trades and the local YMCA/YWCA of Kamloops B.C. have been working diligently on an annual project that melds in-class education with the attainment of real-life workplace skills. And their collaborative work is consistently garnering awards and accolades; the Training House won the 2022 Georgie Award for Best Public and Private Partnership, and it is again nominated for the 2023 Georgie in this category also.



Rose Choy, the Executive Officer of the Canadian Homebuilders' Association Central Interior, explains the details and origins of this important public-private-partnership between these three organizations. "It's a very unique project called the Training House. The year, 2022, marks the 32nd year of our partnership with Thompson Rivers University (School of Trades & Technology) and 26 years in partnership with the local YMCA. Every year, we build one training house where we partner with the university and train their trades department. The first-year carpentry apprentice students work on the house and that way when they go out and look for a job, they have that real-life experience. Usually, when you attend carpentry class at a university, you learn how to build a house or a shed inside the classroom; this way you learn in real-life with challenging factors like the weather, the location of the project, and so on." Rose reveals that the students don't simply benefit by learning to engage with real-life challenges but also through the opportunities for mentoring and networking that the Training House project provides them. Students are able to receive instructions not just from professional builders and carpenters but from plumbers and electricians as well.



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The Y-Dream Home

Of course, it is not just the TRU students who gain something from the annual Training House Project; the YMCA/YWCA of Kamloops benefits from it as well. While the students provide some of the labour involved in the construction project “the rest of the house,” Choy explains, “is built by CHBA Central Interior’s members. We go to our membership and they sponsor and donate to the project; whether it’s in the form of supplies, or labour, or a new innovative product that is out there that we can showcase through this house. We finish the house and because of the sponsorship and the donations, we are able to sell the house to the YMCA at a lower-than-market-value cost.” At this point the Training House becomes “The Y-Dream Home.” The Kamloops’ YMCA/YWCA holds a lottery in which anyone can buy a ticket for one hundred dollars for a chance to win the Dream Home. “The proceeds from the lottery fund the local YMCA for a whole year,” Rose informs us.



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Reflecting on her own positive experiences with the Training House/Dream Home project, Rose extols the ways in which the annual public/private partnership helps the whole community. Our partnership with a local charity and the university positively impacts the industry. Having been a part of the Canadian Homebuilders' Association Central Interior for 15 years, it's a privilege to be part of this successful program and help many people. Every year in Kamloops, incredible things unfold, making it truly amazing.”



A Shout Out to Sponsors



Besides the aforementioned benefits the project provides, Rose explains that the volunteer builders also gain much from the endeavour: “We have member carpenter/builders who came from this program years ago. Now, they have the chance to give back to the program that trained them, while also witnessing new, young talent. Many members contribute each year because they truly believe in the project, and it has touched their lives in various ways. Some approach me and say, ‘Rose, I benefited from this program when I was young, and now my kids are doing the same. They participate in swimming lessons and other programs at the Y. This is my way of giving back.’ It’s truly amazing.”

While the Dream Home project is very much a local community event, it is by no means a small affair. “It’s awesome the support we get from the community,” Choy comments. “Last year, they sold seventeen thousand tickets in 24 hours.” Equally impressive is the number of businesses involved in the project. “We have 65-80 companies helping out as sponsors for the Dream House.” In 1990, Armin Krenz became the president of CHBA Central Interior. He owned Anchor Door and Window. Since then, he has been generously donating the garage door for the training house, a tradition that continues to this day.

The Dream Home project benefits everyone involved, including the students, the Kamloops YMCA, contributing businesses, and the lucky lottery winner. It also helps the local housing market. During the three-month lottery period, the YMCA holds open houses every weekend, attracting around 25,000 to 30,000 visitors each year. These visitors, who are looking for a new home or renovation ideas, bring more attention to the subdivision and boost the local housing market.

Y-Dream Home



A Community Affair

Besides the many organizations that contribute to the project's success, Rose believes the local community itself is a major part of what makes the whole annual affair work so well. "I would just like to acknowledge that Kamloops is a very unique community. People in Kamloops are very generous, and I think that is what makes this program very successful year after year and why we're entering into our 33rd year for 2023."



Y - Dream Home



As this article was being completed, the CHBA CI received a 2023 Georgie Award for Best Public and Private Partnership. The Canadian Construction Journal congratulates everyone involved on the Dream Home project on their win.



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