



NEWS PHOTO IAN SORENSEN
Murray Prokosh's 'Classic Communities' provide affordable and attainable housing for people who might otherwise be shut out of the joys of home ownership

Mayor praises Murray Prokosh as man with 'philanthropic heart'

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The work of Classic Communities has garnered much praise. With a self-sacrificing approach to attainable housing, president Murray Prokosh and the rest of the Classic Communities team works hard to allow as many people as possible to become home owners.

On every occasion possible, Mayor Garth Valley sings the praises of Prokosh and the concept Classic Communities has developed, all without government funding or subsidies.

"Mr. Prokosh is driven by the idea that everyone should own their own home," said Valley. "Talk about a man with a philanthropic heart. He took it upon himself to figure out how to make (affordable housing) work and it's working. We're so fortunate to have him living here."

Not only is Classic Communities lending a helping hand to the purchasers of its attainable housing, the Medicine Hat Housing Society is benefiting, as well. A sum of \$18,300 from the profit of each house sale is placed in a special account belonging to the housing society and it administers the subsidized payments each month.

Prokosh said by the end of the developments in Medicine Hat, that account will have as much as \$8 million in it. The interest earned from the account directly benefits the housing society.

"Many of the government programs we tap into require we come up with some of the equity ourselves. We'll be able to put on other homeless and affordable housing initiatives with this money," said Darren Rudd, executive director of the housing society. "Our minds are trained that people don't

give you something for nothing. I know Murray and his company's philosophy and he just wants to help others."

Rudd said what Classic Communities is doing is unique in Medicine Hat, Alberta and all of Canada.

"There is just not a contractor around that I know of that is willing to give up their own profit to put people in their own home," said Rudd. "It's almost hard to wrap your head around."

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In communities where Prokosh is hoping to expand, the interest accumulated from the subsidies will be given to local charities.

"The community has been very good to us and it's our way of giving back to the community," said Prokosh.

Hatters who have purchased Classic Community homes have positive things to say about the transaction and the homes in general. Affordability is listed as the No. 1 reason why the

developments are so great.

"I probably wouldn't have been able to afford to buy a home or enter the market otherwise," said Matthew MacPheat, who lives in a Classic Communities neighbourhood in Crescent Heights. "That's the biggest thing."

With no desire for a lawn and no large family, the size fits his lifestyle. Floor plans start at 1080 sq. feet. As days and months go on, MacPheat is building equity.

"Rent is getting so high these days, it's better to get into your own property and start making some money," he said.

Another woman said it's a great starter home and likes the fact that it's maintenance-free.

"Plus, the subsidies will make a nice selling feature if I ever decide to move," she said.