

What was once a dream...



*...is now a reality.*

# BLUE LIONS

*By Diane Nelson / Photos Submitted*

**T**wo buildings are being built by Westman Youth For Christ at 705 Lorne Avenue. Once complete, they will serve many needs in the community, and will help those who need a stable and secure place to heal and create a future different than their past.

"We have young people who are trying to get out of addictions and they have a negative community around them, so it's hard," said Dwayne Dyck, executive director for WYFC.

"They get clean, and then they get back into old routines with their peers and their families or whatever it is, and they slip back into addictions.

“So we wanted to create a safer space for them where they could live. We’re building two apartment blocks. In those two blocks will be a total of 30 units and fourteen of those units will be more secure housing on the third floor.”

The third floor apartments – seven in each building – will be designated specifically for youth trying to stay on a healthy, addiction-free path.

“They can live there for years,” Dyck said. “We have a mentor living on the same floor offering onsite support as well as 24/7 access to Life Skill Coaches. There are also locked doors to the third floors – no buzzers – so it’s a more secure space. If somebody really wants their friends to come up, well, they can do that, but it’s not easy. And if people just want to bring them back into a lifestyle they’re trying to avoid, they can just stay up in their apartment, turn their phone off and ask the mentor or a peer for support in holding to their decisions.”

Westman Security & Automation Ltd. has ensured tenants gain access to their buildings and rooms with RF fobs rather than keys. The company has also installed a high-



definition camera system inside and outside both buildings, and will also monitor the fire alarm system.

The main floors in each building feature barrier-free affordable housing, while the second floors offer additional affordable housing – two-bedroom apartments that might especially appeal to single parents with children because of their location. With Prairie Oasis, the YMCA and New Era school close by, residents will have plenty of options for support right in their own neighbourhood.







Samson Engineering, which completed the design, focused on meeting the various needs of users of the building. One of the main goals was to create a sense of community throughout, such as the centrally shared main entrance used for both buildings. Samson also incorporated highly insulated walls, roofs, floors, and minimal thermal breaks. The innovative design creates privacy for the residents with rotating floor plans on each floor.

Funding for 85 per cent of the project came from various levels of government. And WYFC is still in the process of raising the other 15 per cent, which is \$900,000. Dyck said local citizens and businesses have been incredibly supportive.

"We've had people come in everywhere from a hundred bucks to \$50,000," Dyck said. "It's been really great."


One such entity is Excel-7 Ltd., which is the general contractor and design builder for the project.

"Excel has been a supporter of Westman Youth for Christ for a long time and is excited to see this project come to fruition for the local chapter," said project assistant



**GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
DESIGN BUILDER**

**ExcelDesignBuild.ca**

4000 Richmond Ave East • Brandon, MB  
204.726.0400 • info@excel7.ca • 







# WESTMAN

SECURITY & AUTOMATION LTD.

*"YOUR SECURITY PROFESSIONALS"*

- ❖ **Locally owned and operated**
- ❖ **Free alarm switch overs with 3 months of free monitoring**
- ❖ **Commercial and residential alarm systems**
- ❖ **High definition surveillance camera system for your home or business**
- ❖ **Automation systems to control your lights, locks, and thermostats from anywhere in the world**
- ❖ **Access control and intercom systems**
- ❖ **Burglar, fire, low temperature, panic, and CO monitoring**
- ❖ **Live person operated ULC listed monitoring station - Never deal with voice prompts**

## 204-717-5599

www.westmansecurity.ca • info@westmansecurity.ca

514 11th st. East Unit B, Brandon MB, R7A 7H4





Stephanie Dornn. “Youth programs are so important for our community, particularly those assisting teens and families through difficult life situations. As a contractor, we get to appreciate all the local builds we are part of in growing our community. It is special to be a part of a project for a program with YFC’s values.”

Both Dyck and Dornn are particularly excited about the fact the buildings are not only visually appealing, but thanks to Samson Engineering’s design, extremely energy efficient, which will ensure long-term maintenance costs will be lower.

“This building is 55 per cent above code, so it’s significant,” Dyck said. “A square box is probably more energy efficient than lots of corners. But lots of corners look better. So we’ve gone with something that’s attractive and hits some really aggressive energy markers – our greenhouse gas reduction is 82.7 per cent. The engineers have done a great job on it.”

The colour palette for the buildings is blue and grey, in tribute to a former director of WYFC’s U-Turn program





(which serves homeless youth). He was a professional photographer, and his company was called Blue Lion.

“He died of cancer a few years back,” Dyck said. “So to honour him and continue his legacy, we’ve named the project – the two buildings – Blue Lions. And that’s why we went with a blue colour scheme.”

As mentioned, the apartments will be self-contained and each will have a bedroom or two, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room. Affordable housing rates are set by the province, and Dyck said those are “warm rates,” which include hydro and heat. But WYFC owns the buildings, and will therefore be the landlord.

Blue Lions should be ready for occupancy in October, but while people have been generous thus far, WYFC could still use more financial help to reach its \$900,000 goal. Anyone interested in more information or to contributing to the building project can contact Dyck at [Dwayne@wyfc.ca](mailto:Dwayne@wyfc.ca).



**SAMSON**  
ARCHITECTURE | ENGINEERING

Innovative  
Solutions by Design

*Multi discipline firm including  
architecture, civil, structural, mechanical  
and environmental engineering.*



204-727-0747



[info@samsonengineering.com](mailto:info@samsonengineering.com)



[samsonengineering.com](http://samsonengineering.com)