

WORLD FAMOUS SPIRITUAL HEALER
 Palm Reader - Pandit Nandhaji
 Solve Any Problems in 24 Hours (Black Magic)
 • Health • Business
 • Evil Spirits • Voodoo
 • Oilya • Witchcraft etc.
 Nobody can break my work
Give Life Long Protection
647-822-9607
 212 Queen St. E., Brampton

SOFTRON
 Tax Courses/Job Opportunities
Open Year Round!
 Over 50 Locations to Serve You
 Pick up your FREE TAXTRON Software at any Softron Location
 905-273-4444 www.taxtron.ca
www.softron.ca 905-796-5555

School names disrespectful

Brampton teacher Debbie White wants cultural appropriation to stop being promoted in schools through sports team names, logos and mascots, calling it disrespectful. **See page 3**



Final salute to The Hip

It was a nation-wide, historic event, and Brampton residents gathered Saturday night to watch what is expected to be the final concert by The Tragically Hip. **See page 30**

Bronze medal finishes in Rio

Soccer players Kadeisha Buchanan and Ashley Lawrence, along with sprinter Brendon Rodney, returned home from the 2016 Olympics in Brazil this week - with bronze medals. **See page 33**



Facebook: The Brampton Guardian
 Twitter: @BmptGuardian

Living in despair

Neglected maintenance in Peel Living townhouse had toilet water flushing into kitchen



Monica Ferguson wipes away tears as she describes the battles she had with affordable housing officials over the condition of her home. Stephen Uhraney photo

By Roger Belgrave
[@rbelgrave1](https://twitter.com/rbelgrave1)

A significant portion of Monica Ferguson's disability pension was spent on disinfectant to clean the dirty toilet water leaking into her kitchen from the upstairs bathroom in her affordable housing unit.

Like so many who turn to social housing for shelter, life hasn't been easy for the 51-year-old who said she has been diagnosed as bipolar.

At one time, she was a mother in an abusive relationship.

Other debilitating health issues have her physically unable to work and stuck in society's low-income bracket.

Ferguson has been in the same Peel Living townhouse on Brampton's Garden Gate Circle for the last 14 years.

It has been an admitted struggle to make a home for herself and the eight-year-old granddaughter she adopted at nine months because

her sickly daughter wasn't able to cope.

Another 26-year-old daughter, who is trying to finish college, and 24-year-old son also live with her and help take care of their mother and niece, according to Ferguson. Her son's children, ages 1 and 4, are frequent visitors.

But the living conditions in this municipally owned property have become unbearable for a woman who said her only other option would be the streets.

Continued on page 16

3 BENEFITS OF TOYOTA OIL & FILTER SERVICE

Performance * Fuel Efficiency * Less Engine Wear

Toyota Menu Lubrication Service (Oil And Filter) plus 11 Point Inspection

5W30 OIL CHANGE **\$45.95** (+TAX)

Tires are 10.00 each

0W20 SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE **\$60.95** (+TAX)

Tires are 10.00 each

TOYOTA | NORTHWEST TOYOTA

www.northwesttoyota.ca
2 MARITIME BLVD.
TEL: (905) 791-3600
Toronto Line
(416) 548-5738

SERVICE HOURS
 MON-THUR 7:30 AM-7 PM
 FRI 7:30 AM-6:30 PM
 SAT. 8 AM-4 PM

Each service includes a FREE WASH.

COMPETITIVE PRICING FROM NORTHWEST TOYOTA. Offer expires September 30, 2016

Peel Living reviewing maintenance procedures after seeing dilapidated unit

By Roger Belgrave
@rbelgrave1

Peel's municipally operated housing provider began scrambling last week to improve living conditions for a 51-year-old Brampton woman and her children after Metroland Media alerted officials to the deplorable state of disrepair in the family's social housing unit.

Peel Living says it has now launched a system-wide review of maintenance procedures.

All indications are Peel Living has neglected the upkeep of Monica Ferguson's Garden Gate Circle home for years.

For some time now, she has been living with an upstairs toilet that leaks wastewater into her kitchen, a broken refrigerator, water damage in her basement, mice and numerous other maintenance issues.

Conditions in the townhouse have been left to deteriorate to a shocking state despite repeated service requests, said Ferguson.

After Metroland Media contacted Peel Living with questions about the situation, senior regional government and Peel Living officials visited the home.

"I think we can all agree that the condition of that unit is not acceptable," said Peel Region Human Services Commissioner Janice Sheehy.

General contractors have been brought in to assess the extent of maintenance problems and a schedule is being developed for a long list of repairs.

A contractor has already fixed most of the

plumbing issues, according to a spokesperson for Peel Region, but problems with the upstairs washroom were still to be remedied late last week.

Other work was expected to begin last Friday. In the meantime, Peel Living has replaced the broken fridge and a pest control company is scheduled to visit this week.

Potential electrical hazards identified by a city bylaw officer have also been corrected, according to Peel Region.

Peel Living offered to accommodate Ferguson and her family in a hotel while the extensive maintenance work is being completed, but she declined the offer.

"I think as a landlord we have to acknowledge that we failed this tenant and her family," Sheehy said bluntly.

Housing Operator and Tenancy Management Manager Bruno Colavecchia confirmed the superintendent for that housing property conducted annual maintenance inspections as scheduled and required – the last one in April.

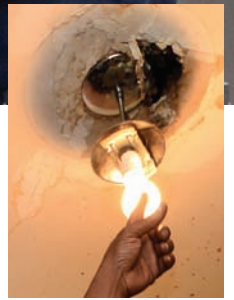
"He basically said things were in working order," according to Colavecchia.

Both Colavecchia and Sheehy acknowledged the problems they saw in the home should have been flagged during an annual inspection.

Those inspection records have raised serious concerns about whether necessary maintenance has been carried out at other units on Garden Gate Circle as well as the other Peel Living property Superintendent Hyran Broad-



Reporter Roger Belgrave (left) confronts Peel Living superintendent Hyran Broadway who said he never received work orders to conduct major repairs at the Garden Gate Circle townhouse that has raised concerns about maintenance procedures followed by the region's social housing provider. At right, a light fixture in the kitchen where the upstairs bathroom leaks toilet water into the kitchen. Stephen Uhraney photos



way is responsible for on Chamney Court.

Broadway said he never received any work orders for major repairs and cannot legally enter a tenant's unit without that written consent.

According to Broadway, the last work order for Ferguson's unit was in February to fix a leaky sink in a downstairs bathroom.

"It's got to be called through (to the maintenance hotline)," explained Broadway, who has been with Peel Living for 22 years and has handled maintenance at the Garden Gate Circle location for a decade.

"I know Monica very well," he added. "There's no reason we're not going to be sorting her out."

Born in South Africa, Broadway said he would never treat Ferguson unfairly.

"The reason my parents brought me to a

neutral country is because of being treated unfairly," he said. "There's no way I would do that. If I know about it, then it will be done."

Officials are now preparing to start re-inspecting all units at the two Brampton social housing properties.

"We're looking at our systems across the board to determine whether this is an isolated incident or whether there is a general failing in our system," said Sheehy, who noted Ferguson had recently communicated her problems to a Peel Living tenant service representative in person.

However, when that representative passed on those issues in an email, a work order was never produced.

"We're looking at our system and what we have in place to ensure that it doesn't happen again," Sheehy insisted.

Long list of repairs needed in Peel Living unit

Continued from page 1

"Every time when the toilet flushed upstairs the water comes down into the hallway ceiling and it comes right into my kitchen," she sobbed.

Wastewater from the toilet seeped into the kitchen ceiling light fixture.

The metal fixture fell to the floor recently, exposing a soggy hole around the ceiling light and a bed of maggots in the decaying human waste, according to Ferguson.

"The place smells of feces," she said.

There are also signs of mould in the basement where rainwater creeps into the unit.

The basement, with cracked concrete walls darkened by the penetrating water damage, is a more livable space for the mice in the unit than Ferguson and her family.

A broken refrigerator makes it impossible

for Ferguson to keep perishable food for more than a few days.

She can't afford to keep replacing milk and other essentials every few days, so Ferguson and her granddaughter have had to turn to the local food bank for regular meals.

There is a long list of repairs needed in the unit, which is part of a complex with 18 townhouses and 46 walk-ups that opened in 1992.

"I can't afford (to move)," confessed Ferguson, who has been trying to make the best of these conditions for years.

While her home shows obvious shortcomings in housekeeping, the awful state of disrepair is clearly the result of long-term neglect by property management.

Ferguson insisted she has repeatedly com-

plained to the superintendent.

"I've complained to him many times, even in-person because we live in the same complex, but different units," she remarked.

She said she has also reported the maintenance issues to her tenant services representative and submitted work requests through Peel Living's central maintenance phone line.

"I have not received a phone call. I have not heard from anyone or seen anyone coming to do anything," Ferguson said.

She worried exposing conditions in the social housing unit could bring a backlash from Peel Living – resulting in eviction or the loss of custody of her granddaughter. But she feels there are no other options.



Monica Ferguson