

Norma Gamble

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Norma Gamble – Bio/backgrounder

A South African immigrant to Canada in the late '70s, Norma settled in Oakville some 42 years ago. Norma majored in English and Speech & Drama at University and her post graduate qualifications are in English and in Business Management. Decades of international experience on THREE continents allows her to draw on a vast reservoir of work & life experience.

Oakville Chamber of Commerce: Employed in Membership Development in early '80s. Membership grew from just over 300 to 700 in 18 months, taking the organization out of 'the red'. Started the Oakville Chamber Women's Network, (likely the very first formal network started in Canada) - well before networking became a word we understood & used. Owned and managed a **Marketing and Advertising Agency** – late '80s, early '90s

Novice real estate developer - Bought, renovated, staged, and sold over a dozen homes in Oakville over the decades but in the late '70s and '80s also bought larger homes in Hamilton and repurposed them into multi-unit buildings. 7 properties converted with 24 units in total.

International **communication specialist, professional speaker, & corporate trainer**, with a long list of blue-chip clients including Microsoft, Lucent, and Bombardier. - Consistently rated "Excellent" as a **motivational speaker** and a **corporate trainer**, Norma has also produced, hosted, & won awards for an innovative local T.V. series. She's also guest lectured for Cunard Cruise Lines around the world, including a world cruise on board the prestigious QE2. – late '90s & early 2000s

Norma was chosen in 1996 to lead a team of goodwill ambassadors for Rotary International's Group Study Exchange program to Austria and the Czech Republic. In recognition of her local & international humanitarian contribution, she is a FIVE-time recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow, Rotary's highest honour.

In 2003 she received Oakville's prestigious ATHENA Award, for social entrepreneurship, business excellence, & mentoring. Nominated for Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, as well as Halton Woman of the Year awards. In 2017, in honour of Canada's 150th, Norma received Halton's "Honouring 150 years of Exemplary Women" award.

As a social entrepreneur, Norma has initiated multiple social housing programs in Halton, and Caledon.

'Final Stage Housing' – initiated and managed this highly successful, totally volunteer driven, program providing safe, beautiful, nurturing homes for women and children leaving Halton Women's Place shelter. Norma brought multiple partners together to tackle this challenge, namely Rotary (provided the budget); Sheridan College (provided students from the Interior Design Program); Major décor suppliers, including Home Depot (donated product), Cogeco TV station, Burlington, plus dozens of volunteers. The goal was to break the cycle of domestic violence! Women & children who were victims of domestic violence, would often return to a violent home because they had no options. We gave them a safe, beautiful, nurturing environment, and NOT ONE of the 18 individuals/families we served over a THREE year period returned to a violent home!

We effectively broke the cycle of domestic violence!! Had national press: Globe and Mail - half page; City TV, CBC noon radio, Macleans Magazine, and loads of local press. Also TWIFT (Toronto Women in Film and Television) made a documentary on the success of the program!

Result: 18 units successfully completed over 3 years. Budget of \$18,000, with hundreds of thousands provided in kind.

Home Suite Hope: Norma initiated this very successful community response to homelessness in Halton. In our first year of operation we purchased a townhouse, renovated it, and housed 5 local homeless individuals who could then focus on recovery and reentry into society.

Caledon home for women with addictions: Norma initiated and managed this large project including 24 students from the Interior Design Program at Sheridan College who were involved in transforming this 25 acre estate into a beautiful safe house for a half dozen women.

Currently, Norma is the Executive Director of

suiteLiving360 Affordable Housing: a not for profit focused on creating affordable co housing for women 55+ with limited means. The not for profit is also an innovative catalyst for other affordable and environmentally focused housing.