



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2003

Improved access to new housing for downtown homeless

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, April 04, 2003 — Individuals at risk of homelessness and families with low incomes will have more access to permanent housing, emergency shelter beds and support services when an innovative new development is completed in downtown Vancouver.

Construction has begun on the new Dunsmuir House at 555 Homer Street. Owned and operated by the Salvation Army, the development will replace the existing Dunsmuir House for men. Set to open in spring 2004, the development will provide over 200 spaces, including residential units, emergency shelter spaces and dorm beds, and offer expanded services for tenants.

This project combines contributions from the three levels of government, including funding from the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, and funds raised by the Salvation Army.

"The Government of Canada is working in partnership with the provincial government and other groups to bring quality affordable housing to people in B.C.", said Hedy Fry, MP for Vancouver Centre, on behalf of David Collenette, Minister of Transport and responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "Successes like the new Dunsmuir House are key to developing strong communities, not just here in British Columbia, but throughout Canada."

"This development is an excellent example of how we can work in partnership to serve the needs of our most vulnerable citizens", said provincial Housing Minister George Abbott. "The Salvation Army has shown incredible vision in creating this unique development, and I congratulate them for their hard work."

The new Dunsmuir House will provide a variety of employment training and social services to help tenants become more independent. Classrooms and communal spaces will encourage social interaction and help break the cycle of loneliness many tenants face.

"Since 1950, Dunsmuir House has opened its doors to people with nowhere else to go", said Lt.-Col. Donald Cople, divisional commander of the Salvation Army's B.C. South Division. "Many people are coping with addictions, some suffer from mental illness, and others have lost families and careers when their lives took a wrong turn. We do our best to make people feel cared for and ensure no one is cold or hungry. We will be able to support more people in need at the new development, and we want to thank the people of Vancouver for their generosity in contributing funds to expand the project."

"The Salvation Army does excellent work at Dunsmuir House and the City of Vancouver is pleased to support the creation of additional affordable housing and shelter beds for men and women at risk of homelessness in downtown Vancouver", said Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell.

The Salvation Army has raised more than \$16.2 million for the new development. The province, through BC Housing, is providing \$6.3 million in annual operating subsidies over 35 years, and the federal government is contributing

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\$390,000 through the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement to fund 30 of the housing units. The City of Vancouver contributed \$1 million by buying the site for project and selling it to the Salvation Army at a discount. Human Resources and Development Canada is contributing \$1 million from its Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative program.

The Salvation Army is the largest non-governmental social service agency in the province. The organization is devoted to helping people in need, including families in crisis, single parents, children, seniors and those experiencing hunger, homelessness, addiction and abuse. The Salvation Army offers a range of programs, such as addiction services, community and family service centres, continuing care facilities, correctional services, employment and income assistance services, free food services, free or low-cost goods, housing, legal and court services, missing-person-tracing service and seniors programs. In addition to Dunsmuir House, the B.C. South Division operates Kate Booth House and the Homestead for Women.

The new Dunsmuir House is made possible by the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement. The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute \$88.7 million over the next five years towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide \$29.7 million annually to subsidize the costs of units built under this agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for vulnerable British Columbians.

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