



PRESS RELEASE



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Touchstone Youth Centre Celebrates Major Renovations

TORONTO, Ontario, June 23, 2003 - Touchstone Youth Centre of Toronto celebrated the official opening today of its newly renovated 30-bed emergency shelter for homeless youth aged 16 to 20 who are often experiencing abuse and violence. All levels of government provided funding to make the renovation and ongoing operation of Touchstone Youth Centre a success.

"This project is an excellent example of how the Government of Canada is working with non-profit groups to help in providing safe and secure accommodations for youth," said Dennis Mills, Member of Parliament for Toronto-Danforth on behalf of the Honourable Steven Mahoney, Secretary of State responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). "Federal strategies that deal with homelessness as a result of violence and family breakdown are helping those most in need at the community level."

"Homelessness is a complex issue, and it is encouraging to see all three levels of government and Touchstone working together to make a positive difference in these young people's lives," said Brenda Elliott, Ontario's Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

"It is exciting to see the Federal and the Provincial Governments working closely with the City of Toronto and our other partners to provide shelter and essential services for homeless youth in our city," said Councillor Case Ootes, Ward 29 Toronto-Danforth, Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto.

"The dedication and passion of everyone involved in this project enabled us to better provide homeless and at-risk youth with opportunities to become self-sufficient, putting them back on the road to independent living," said Sabine Wood, Executive Director of Touchstone Youth Centre. "As a result of the renovation, we are able to provide enhanced services to our community."

The Government of Canada, through CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program, committed over \$526,000 towards the project. The Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) assists in repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for women, children and youth who are victims of family violence; and in acquiring or building new shelters and second-stage housing where needed.

The National Homeless Initiative (NHI) provided a total \$128,000 in funding from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), \$78,000 SCPI Youth funding administered by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and \$50,000 in SCPI funding for building improvements, administered by the City of Toronto. HRDC, through its Skills Development Program, also provided almost \$87,000 for youth at risk.

The Government of Canada launched the NHI in December 1999 to support communities' efforts to help Canadians out of homelessness. Building on the success achieved by communities, the February 2003 budget announced \$405 million for three years to continue its commitment to addressing homelessness in Canada. The Government of Canada National homeless Initiative is making a difference by encouraging the development of flexible, community driven solutions to

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help alleviate homelessness.

The Ontario Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services provides approximately \$429,000 annually for Touchstone Youth Centre's operating costs.

The City of Toronto's Homeless Initiative Fund, provides \$40,000 per year for drop-in services as well as \$17,000 towards a housing and follow-up worker from the Hostel Redirect Program. Through Hostel Services, the City funds Touchstone \$242,000 annually for ongoing shelter costs.

Touchstone Youth Centre, established in 1991, operates as a non-profit organization devoted to providing shelter and crisis services for youth at risk of homelessness and housing insecurity.

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