



PRESS RELEASE



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New Housing and Support for Downtown Eastside Women and Children

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, November 25, 2003 — The new YWCA Crabtree Corner, which combines transitional housing and support for women and children with a unique emergency licensed child-care centre, opened today in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The complex also provides a community kitchen and the Sheway program, which offers medical care, counselling and support services to pregnant women with substance use problems, and single mothers and their children.

YWCA Crabtree Corner is a multi-partnership initiative with contributions from the federal and provincial governments, under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, the National Homelessness Initiative, and the Vancouver Agreement through Western Economic Diversification Canada. The development also received funding from the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development, the City of Vancouver, and various private donors through significant fundraising efforts by the YWCA.

"This innovative project is a compelling example of how governments can work together to provide compassionate, affordable housing and support services for people trying to move forward in their lives," said Steven Mahoney, Secretary of State for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "Successes like YWCA Crabtree Corner are key to developing strong communities, not just here in B.C., but throughout Canada."

"YWCA Crabtree Corner is a testament to the power of successful partnerships," said George Abbott, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. "Three levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors have integrated their programs and funding into a single project with a common purpose: to give women and their children better access to transitional housing and basic support services."

YWCA Crabtree Corner assists the children living in this impoverished community by offering the only emergency licensed child-care centre in Vancouver, where 24 children ages six weeks to six years are cared for and given nutritious meals while their mothers take part in support programs.

"The YWCA has raised \$7.1 million including \$4.34 million from three levels of government and \$2.76 million from private donors and their families," said Janet Austin, CEO of the YWCA of Vancouver. "We are now able to offer a continuum of innovative and unique services under one roof. Our new building will be a resource for hundreds of women and children at critical turning points in their lives for years to come."

"The City of Vancouver is pleased to be a partner in this project which will provide much needed services to women in the Downtown Eastside," said Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell. "It is a good example of prevention, as promoted by the City's Four Pillar approach to substance abuse, and a good example of the kind of project we hope to see more of in the city, region and province."

Under 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

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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.

This year, the provincial government will contribute \$153.3 million in funding to subsidized housing. Since June 2001, the government has committed funding for construction of about 3,400 housing units across B.C. To date, over 2,850 of these units have been completed, and about 550 units are currently under development.

In 2002/03 the Government of Canada also provided over \$226 million for housing in BC, including on-going support for some 76,700 households in existing social housing and housing renovation programs for low-income British Columbians.

Through the National Homelessness Initiative, the Government of Canada has also contributed to B.C. more than \$51 million since 2000 as well as committed another \$44 million over the next three years to assist communities to implement their plans to reduce and prevent homelessness. Funding for this Initiative is provided for in the February 2003 federal Budget.

This news release is available online at www.bchousing.org.

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