



PRESS RELEASE



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New Affordable Housing for Seniors

VICTORIA, British Columbia, September 7, 2004 — Seniors in Esquimalt with low- to modest-incomes have more housing options with the opening today of 39 units of new supportive seniors housing at Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge.

This multi-partnership project is made possible with contributions from the federal and provincial governments, under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, as well as the Municipality of Esquimalt, working with the Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

"Supportive housing projects such as this one in Esquimalt help seniors live more independently," said the Honourable David Anderson, Member of Parliament for Victoria on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Multi-partnerships, under the affordable housing agreement, also ensure that all levels of government and our local partners contribute to the well-being of our aging population."

The development is operated by the Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society and offers apartments adaptable for seniors with wheelchairs and walkers. Sixty per cent of the units are geared to lower income seniors, with tenants paying one-third of their income for rent. Tenants in the remaining units pay 90 per cent of market rate for rent. Twelve units receive services from the Vancouver Island Health Authority: two meals a day, plus weekly linen and suite cleaning. The cost of these additional services is based on income.

"Seniors have told us they want to live in an environment that balances their desire for independence and privacy with ready access to support and personal care services," said Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. "Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge will provide quality, affordable housing and personal care to help seniors maintain their independence as they age."

The provincial government, through BC Housing, is providing an annual operating subsidy of \$3.8 million over 35 years. The federal government, through the Canada-BC Affordable Housing Agreement, provided a \$1.17 million grant. The Municipality of Esquimalt purchased the land valued at \$480,000 and has leased it back to the society for 75 per cent of the market value, providing a savings of \$126,000 to the cost of the development. The Municipality has also given the society a tax exemption on the land value for 35 years.

"The Township of Esquimalt is happy to have been able to participate in the provision of this quality, yet affordable housing for seniors," said Mayor Darwin Robinson, Township of Esquimalt. "This development will allow seniors to age in their own community, and the end result of programs like this is better health and a better quality of life for seniors in Esquimalt."

While some frail seniors need ongoing professional nursing care, the vast majority of seniors do not want or need 24-hour care in an institutional setting. Developments like the Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge add to the range of housing and care options currently available, and better suit a growing population of seniors who are living longer,

healthier lives.

"Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge is a good example of the new opportunities for seniors that they have never had before," said Veronica Doyle, regional director, Housing and Community Resource Development. "This middle option of housing with supports will allow seniors in Esquimalt and the region greater freedom and self-sufficiency in a supportive environment."

The Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society was formed a few years ago expressly for the housing project. The Society's members are all members of the Esquimalt Lions Club who have developed other housing projects for seniors in the past.

"The Lions Club of Esquimalt continually evaluates the needs of our elderly in the community and endeavours to fulfil those needs," said Ken Hill, chairman of the Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society. "Grafton Lodge is yet another achievement in a long list of our accomplishments – a home where our seniors can relax in comfortable surroundings, when they have their independence and know that their needs can be met."

Under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, the government of Canada, through CMHC, 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 those British Columbians with the greatest needs.

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

Media contact:

Naomi Brunemeyer
BC Housing
604 209-0013

Ken Hill
Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society
250 382-5348

Lee King
CMHC
250 361-6043

Backgrounder

Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society

Society Facts

The Esquimalt Lions Seniors Housing Society was formed expressly for the development of Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge in order to meet the need for more supportive seniors housing in the community. The society's members are all members of the Esquimalt Lions Club.

In 1973, the Esquimalt Lions Club also developed a similar project: the Esquimalt Lions Lodge. Once this development was complete, day-to-day management was turned over to the Victoria Senior Citizens Housing Society. The society anticipates a similar hand-off of management in about a year's time.

Development Facts

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Esquimalt Lions Grafton Lodge

Location: 506 Grafton Street, Esquimalt

Number of new units:

38 one-bedroom units

1 two-bedroom unit

39 total units of supportive seniors housing

All units are wheelchair accessible; two units are fully accessible.

Sixty per cent of the units are geared to income and tenants pay one-third of their income for rent. Tenants in the remaining units pay 90 per cent of market rate for their rent (i.e. \$563/month). Twelve units receive services from the Vancouver Island Health Authority: two meals a day, plus weekly linen and suite cleaning. The cost of these additional services is based on income.

Tenants began moving in on April 1, 2004 and the development is fully occupied.

Partnership Contributions

The capital cost of the development is \$4.5 million.

- The provincial government, through BC Housing, is providing \$3.8 million in operating subsidies over 35 years.
- The federal government, through the Canada-BC Affordable Housing Agreement, is providing a \$1.17 million grant.
- The Municipality of Esquimalt purchased the land valued at \$480,000 and has leased it back to the society for 75 per cent of the market value, providing a savings worth \$126,000 to the cost of the development. The Municipality has also given the society a tax exemption on the land value (not the building) for 35 years.