



PRESS RELEASE



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Tearing Down the Walls on Youth Shelter

TORONTO, Ontario, September 13, 2004 — The walls came tumbling down today as an official wall-breaking ceremony marked the start of construction to expand a shelter for homeless youth in Etobicoke.

With a little innovation and imagination, the possibility of expanding Youth Without Shelter will become a reality as two side-by-side buildings in Toronto's west end will be linked to create one 50-bed residence for homeless youth. A new stay-in-school program will be initiated to provide long-term transitional shelter and supports to enable youth to complete their education. Funding for the \$2 million project was granted through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program.

"This shelter expansion project is so vitally important to ensuring homeless youth have access to emergency shelter and the services required to help them succeed," said Etobicoke North MP Roy Cullen on behalf of Joseph Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "The Youth Without Shelter renovation and expansion is a good example of the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting those who are most in need in the community."

"I'm very pleased that the Ontario government is assisting Youth Without Shelter in expanding its facility and launching its Stay-in-School program," said Gerry Phillips, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, which made the land available for YWS's expansion through the Ontario Realty Corporation. "By helping homeless youth stay in school now, we are helping them to become responsible, productive citizens."

"Youth Without Shelter is so pleased to have received funding from CMHC, and appreciates the Ontario government making the land available for us to purchase," said Wendy Horton, Executive Director of Youth Without Shelter. "The expanded facility will allow us to implement a much needed stay-in-school program, in addition to our ongoing employment and life skills training for homeless youth."

Youth Without Shelter has also received operational funding through the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, Ministry of Community and Social Services, the City of Toronto, the United Way of Greater Toronto, and Trillium Art for Youth.

Since 1986, Youth Without Shelter has provided emergency, short-term accommodation and related supports to more than 10,000 homeless youth aged 16 to 24. With the help of public, private and not-for-profit partners, the facility also offers day programs, crisis intervention, educational programs, and community housing workers.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program offers financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for women and their children, youth and men who are victims of family violence as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing where needed.

CMHC is Canada's national housing agency with a mandate to help Canadians gain access to safe, quality and affordable housing. CMHC supports the Canadian housing industry and improves the living conditions of Canadians

Canadian Mortgage News - Tearing Down the Walls on Youth Shelter

through its lines of business in mortgage loan insurance and securitization, assisted housing, research and information transfer and the promotion of Canadian housing exports.

The Ontario Realty Corporation manages the Ontario government's real property, ensuring that its real estate decisions reflect the government's public policy objectives.

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Youth Without Shelter

With a vision to end homelessness for youth, one person at a time, one step at a time, Youth Without Shelter opened its doors in 1986 in response to the lack of safe, emergency housing for area youth in need. Youth Without Shelter is a short-term emergency residence and referral agency serving homeless youth ages 16 to 24, by providing shelter and support programs. Since opening, the agency has provided help and necessary programs and services to more than 10,000 young people.

Youth Without Shelter's doors are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to the young people who need support. Everyday, Youth Without Shelter provides a safe environment, a bed, regular meals, clothing, hygiene products and support to homeless youth, for up to three months. This timeframe can be extended if the situation warrants.

Investments

The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP), contributed \$2 million to the acquisition, renovation, expansion and linkage of two existing buildings located at 6 and 8 Warrandale Court in Etobicoke. As a result, an ongoing stay-in-school program for an additional 20 youth will provide transitional shelter and educational supports to allow students to complete their education.

The federal funding also includes \$30,000 through the National Homelessness Initiative, in addition to several groups ongoing funding toward operating costs of Youth Without Shelter including the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and United Way of Greater Toronto.