



PRESS RELEASE



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Hamilton Shelter Opens its Doors and Offers Spiritual Healing to Women at Risk

HAMILTON, Ontario, November 12, 2004 — The Native Women's Centre, a new 15-bed shelter for Aboriginal women and their children, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Hamilton today to mark its official opening. The centre was made possible thanks to funding from the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

"The construction of this shelter demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to address housing and homelessness for at-risk groups," said the Honourable Tony Valeri, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, on behalf of the Honourable Joseph Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "This project in Hamilton is a prime example that federal strategies — dealing with family violence and homelessness — are helping give those most in need an opportunity to build a better life for themselves and their families."

"Our government is committed to providing support for women and their children who are fleeing domestic violence," said Jennifer Mossop, MPP for Stoney Creek on behalf of Social Services Minister and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Sandra Pupatello. "It is essential that we provide a safe haven and support that meet the needs of women with diverse needs."

"We at the shelter recognize the benefits of safe, secure housing for Aboriginal members of our community," said Linda Ense, Executive Director of Native Women's Centre. "This project emphasizes the value of hard work and partnership in meeting those housing needs."

The federal commitment of \$1.2 million to the shelter was made through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP). The program assists in repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for women and children, youth or men who are victims of family violence, and in acquiring or building new shelters and second-stage housing where needed.

In addition, the Government of Canada contributed \$160,000 through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, and approximately \$563,000 in funding through the National Homelessness Initiative, to acquire the site and proceed with construction.

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) contributed more than \$600,000, in funding to the project. In addition, MCSS is providing \$150,000 in new operating funding for a total of more than \$495,000 in annual operating funding for the Centre.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Chapter of Native Women Incorporated, operating as Native Women's Centre provides emergency shelter for women and their children, regardless of age, ancestry, culture, place of origin, sexual orientation, with or without children who are in transition from abusive situations, addictions, homelessness or conflict with the law. Native Women's Centre offers other services including counseling in job placements, housing, education, cultural welfare, Aboriginal rights and childcare.

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

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(left to right) MPP Jennifer Mossop, Linda Ense, Executive Director Native Women's Centre, Lisa Roberts, President of Native Women Incorporated, Honourable Tony Valri, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and Beth Phinney, MP for Hamilton Mountain.