



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Seniors will Benefit from Assisted Living Development**

**KEREMEOS, British Columbia, JANUARY 18, 2005** — Lower-income seniors will soon have access to affordable housing, with the construction of a 14-unit assisted living development in Keremeos.

Today was the official groundbreaking ceremony for the South Similkameen Assisted Living Project. It will provide affordable apartments and support services for seniors and includes one two-bedroom market rent unit.

"The Government of Canada believes that healthy communities are vital to our personal and national well-being," said the Honourable David Emerson, Minister of Industry on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Through CMHC, we are providing communities, such as Keremeos, with a range of tools to create and preserve affordable housing. Projects such as these will allow seniors of Keremeos to stay close to family and friends in their community."

Thirteen of the 14 units at the South Similkameen Community Assisted Living Project are funded under Independent Living BC (ILBC), an innovative housing-for-health program that meets the needs of lower-income seniors as a middle option between home support and residential care. A benefit of the ILBC program is increased choice for seniors in their own housing in their own communities to maximize their independence.

"The Independent Living BC program provides our seniors with choices," said Dave Chutter, MLA for Yale-Lillooet. "By including assisted living options into our commitment to build affordable housing we are providing seniors with choices, which are especially important as care needs change."

"There is a need for more affordable housing and care options all across the province, including right here in the Similkameen," said Walter Despot, Mayor of The Village of Keremeos and Chair of the Lower Similkameen Community Services Society, the non-profit society which will run the development. "We're pleased that we can offer our seniors the opportunity to remain in the community as their care needs change. Many of them have spent their lives here. Many of them have roots here."

The Lower Similkameen Community Services Society adds this assisted living development to an established commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents of Keremeos. The Society, which is volunteer run, sponsors free services and programs such as a mental health drop-in centre, a literacy outreach program and a complement of volunteers for services such as meals on wheels and a volunteer driver program.

The assisted living development adds to the current range of housing and care options currently available and better suits a population of seniors who are living longer, healthier lives.

"This development provides a great option to our seniors in Keremeos to live as independently as possible for as long as possible," said, Alan Dolman, Board Chair of Interior Health. "Assisted living can improve the health of seniors who need some assistance with medications and mobility and it can open the door to social and recreational opportunities as

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well."

The ILBC program is managed by BC Housing in partnership with the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and the regional health authorities.

The Village of Keremeos also contributed to this development by providing waivers on various building and property-related costs making it a collaborative venture between all three levels of government. Interior Health is providing the funding for the personal care services and hospitality top up and is leasing the site for \$10 for 60 years. Okanagan Similkameen Regional Health District (OSRHD) and South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation (SOS Foundation) also contributed.

The Province, through BC Housing and the ILBC program, is committed to providing 3,500 affordable apartments with support services across the province by 2006. To date more than 2,660 ILBC units have been allocated, 76 percent of the program, in communities across the province.

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute \$130 million by 2008 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 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 British Columbians in greatest need.

### **Backgrounder follows**

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### **Backgrounder**

The Lower Similkameen Community Services Society (LSCSS) was established in 1976 with a federal government Local Initiatives Project (L.I.P.) Grant. A non-profit society and registered charity, the LSCSS was created to serve Keremeos and the surrounding areas of Olalla, Cawston and Hedley.

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The Society is directed by a volunteer board of directors which is committed to providing services that enhance the quality of life for local citizens. Many of the services provided are made possible through volunteerism.

The Lower Similkameen Community Services Society's mission statement is as follows:

"We are committed to promoting and maintaining independent living by efficient delivery of community based support service, and providing a supportive environment in the home and community, in a manner that enhances individual quality of life, dignity and sense of worth."

### **Development Facts**

The building will be a one-storey wood-frame apartment building with 13 one-bedroom assisted living apartments funded through the ILBC program plus 1 two-bedroom market suite. All assisted living units in this development will be wheelchair accessible.

Construction is expected to begin in early January and should be complete by October 2005.

Tenants receive two meals a day, weekly housekeeping and linen services, 24-hour emergency response, personal care services and social and recreational opportunities. Tenants pay 70% of their after-tax income for their units and services.

### **Partnership Contributions**

Capital cost of this project is \$3,272,938

- Total capital cost of the assisted living units is \$3,047,751

Partners and Funding:

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is providing a \$650,000 capital grant.
- The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide housing subsidy of \$2.2 million over 35 years.
- The Village of Keremeos is providing reductions on various costs. The value of the contribution is approximately \$137,460 (\$130,727 estimate of property tax waiver over 5 years; and \$6,733 for exemption from building permit fees.)
- Interior Health is providing the funding for the personal care services and hospitality top up and is leasing the site for \$10 for 60 years.
- The South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation (SOS Foundation) is providing a \$100,000 grant.
- The Okanagan Similkameen Regional Health District (OSRHD) has committed \$240,000 (\$186,000 for the assisted living units and \$54,000 for the market unit) to the project.

### **Funding Programs:**

Independent Living BC  
Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Program