



PRESS RELEASE



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Renovation Increases Safety of Women and Children

MANITOULIN ISLAND, Ontario, March 29, 2005 — Women and their children at the Mindemoya women's shelter will be safer as a result of the recent renovations to the 10-bed Haven House Shelter, which opened today.

The renovations to Haven House were made possible thanks in part to funding of \$193,556 through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP). The Honourable Brent St. Denis, Member of Parliament for Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasung, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, attended today's ceremony.

"Manitoulin Family Resources and the Haven House Shelter play a critical role in addressing the needs of women and their children in the local and surrounding community," said MP St. Denis. "The renovations to the shelter are a good example of the Government of Canada's support in dealing with homelessness, and giving those most in need the opportunity to build a better and safer life for themselves and their families."

Renovations to the existing shelter included a new addition that relocated the administrative offices, a meeting room, and washroom away from the children's play area in order to provide an increased level of security for the occupants. The addition also features a new entrance, a private conference room and counselling area, and a fully accessible washroom.

"The Government of Ontario is committed to protecting women and their children who are fleeing abusive situations. With these renovations, the Haven House shelter will be able to better provide safe and secure temporary housing, the first important step toward rebuilding their lives free of violence," said Mike Brown, MPP for Algoma — Manitoulin on behalf of Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Community and Social Services.

"After many years of living without counselling or program space, not to mention accessible washrooms and staff meeting areas, we are delighted and grateful to be able to offer women and children at the shelter more privacy, better play space, a quiet room for shelter residents to get away from the crowd now and then, and appropriate counselling and meeting spaces for our non-resident clients," said Elizabeth Forestell, Executive Director, Manitoulin Family Resources. "This expansion has been a dream on paper for nearly five years, and it's wonderful to finally see it realized. Many thanks to CMHC for their support."

Manitoulin Family Resources is a multi-service agency that provides free and confidential support and training programs to women and children from Manitoulin Island, Espanola, and the North-east shore of Lake Huron, as well as a wide range of early child development and parent support programs. Haven House Shelter offers safe accommodation and supportive counselling to women and their children escaping abusive home situations, while they take time to consider their options and plan for the future.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) 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

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

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The plaque presentation is (left to right): Ruth Farquhar, Vice President of Board of Directors receives the CMHC commemorative plaque from Member of Parliament Brent St. Denis



Ribbon Cutting (L to R): MP Brent St. Denis; Executive Director Elizabeth Forestell; Board VP Ruth Farquhar; Central Manitoulin Reeve Richard Stephens, and Christina Haddad (CMHC)