



PRESS RELEASE



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New Home and New Services for Salvation Army

ABBOTSFORD, British Columbia, October 1, 2005 — The Salvation Army's expanded Centre of Hope celebrated its official opening today. The new Centre provides all the Salvation Army's services under one roof, additional emergency shelter beds and 14 new units of supportive independent living.

"The Government of Canada is working on many fronts to address the housing needs of Canadians. Housing is the fundamental building block of inclusive, prosperous and healthy families and communities," said the Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh, Minister of Health and MP for Vancouver South, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Emergency shelter and transitional housing developments are essential and vital components of our national well-being."

The Thrift Store, Meal Centre, Drop-In Centre, Community Kitchen and Client Services have now moved to the new location at 34081 Gladys Avenue. The original 10-bed emergency shelter has also moved to the new centre, allowing clients to more easily access the other services, and will be expanded up to 20 emergency shelter beds depending on need and weather. New services at the Centre of Hope also include medical support, shower facilities, a laundry outlet and hair salon for individuals in need.

"This blended model of providing housing with the necessary support services will help people break out of a cycle of homelessness," said John van Dongen, MLA for Abbotsford–Clayburn. "The Salvation Army in Abbotsford has served our community for 20 years and this new improved Centre of Hope will allow them to expand upon their much needed outreach."

As well, the centre contains 14 new supportive independent living units for males in need of more stable affordable housing. The units are a step between emergency shelter and individual affordable housing. These units will provide individuals with safe, secure, affordable housing as they move towards independent living. The focus of the housing is to assist individuals to overcome barriers and move towards greater independence in the community.

"By expanding our mandate to provide supportive transitional housing and bring all of our services together under one roof, we are better able to serve those who come to us in need," says Commissioner M. Christine MacMillian, Territorial Commander, The Salvation Army Canada & Bermuda. "The Salvation Army of Abbotsford has a history of providing service and compassion to vulnerable members of the Abbotsford community, the Centre of Hope is our renewed commitment to meet their needs."

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute \$130 million towards affordable housing in British Columbia by 2008. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under the Canada–British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

For more information, please contact:

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Naomi Brunemeyer
Communications Specialist
BC Housing
Cell: (604) 209-0013

Captain John Murray
Divisional Secretary for Public Relations
The Salvation Army
Cell: (604) 551-5388

Lorraine Verokosky
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
(778) 772-0245

Backgrounder

The Salvation Army Centre of Hope

Emergency Shelter

The temporary 10-bed emergency shelter was located apart from all the other services of the Salvation Army. The new centre allows for an expansion to 12-20 beds depending on need and weather and expanded services such as medical support, shower facilities, a laundry outlet and hair salon. Many who stay in the emergency shelter go on to take part in the counselling services and training programs also offered by the Salvation Army.

Last year, the Emergency Shelter provided over 3,600 bed nights and 250 referrals to detox and treatment centres.

Supportive Housing

The Centre of Hope includes 14 new supportive housing units. These units are stable, affordable housing for men, allowing them to address barriers and issues, and move them towards greater independence. The length of stay for those residents in the supportive housing varies for each resident. Residents started moving in on September 1, 2005.

Meal Centre

The Meal Centre provides a nutritious free lunch six days a week to anyone who is hungry. A professional cook and many volunteers contribute to this program, in addition to local businesses who donate much of the food. The Meal Centre also hosts the Community Kitchen program, where participants learn to cook healthy, simple meals. The expanded space will allow more people to participate in these programs.

The Meal Centre served over 46,000 meals in 2004.

Thrift Store

Thrift Store will be expanded on the lower level to display more goods and accommodate more shoppers. With the Thrift Store located on the same site as the emergency shelter and the supportive housing, residents will also be able to access necessary affordable items. Abbotsford residents rely on the Thrift Store to help provide them with affordable options, but the funds generated from the Thrift Store support many of the other programs for the community.

Partners and Funding

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Capital cost of this project is \$3.6 million

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation contributed a \$250,000 capital grant through the Canada-BC Affordable Housing Agreement.

The province of BC, through BC Housing contributed \$250,000 towards the capital costs of the development.

The Salvation Army provided an initial cash equity of \$700,000.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is the largest non-governmental social service agency in the province. It has vast experience in social service programs, including housing and shelter. The British Columbia Division's operating budget is \$75 million.

The Salvation Army has been a vital part of Vancouver since the city's birth. The first ministry opened on the edge of Chinatown in 1887. Today, the Army estimates that almost one-third of British Columbians have been touched in some way by its work. Coinciding with opening of the Centre of Hope, The Salvation Army in Abbotsford is celebrating 20 years of service to the community.