



PRESS RELEASE



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6 New Social and Community Housing Units in Saint-François-d'Assise

SAINT-FRANÇOIS-D'ASSISE, Québec, October 24, 2005 — Modest and low-income families in the Saint-François-d'Assise area now have more affordable housing options thanks to the conversion of a former school into six social and community housing units. The Villa Saint-François is located on De l'École Street, in Saint-François-d'Assise.

This announcement was made today by the Honourable Jean-C. Lapierre, Minister of Transport and Minister responsible for Quebec, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, by Nathalie Normandeau, Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Regions and Minister responsible for the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region, and by Ghislain Michaud, Mayor of Saint-François-d'Assise. In addition to Minister Normandeau and Mayor Michaud, Roland Belzile, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Saint-François-d'Assise Municipal Housing Bureau, was present at the opening ceremony.

The recycling of this former school into a residential building, called the Villa Saint-François, required investments of over \$553,000. This housing project was completed thanks to the participation of public, private and community partners. The financial contributions for the development of this project, totalling \$504,113, were made under the Affordable Housing Agreement, in a proportion of 50 per cent by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and 50 per cent by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) and the community, including the municipality of Saint-François-d'Assise, which provided \$152,345. The other costs are being assumed by the Saint-François-d'Assise Municipal Housing Bureau, in particular through a mortgage loan secured by the SHQ.

Three of the six households living in these new housing units can benefit from the Rent Supplement program, which provides financial assistance to low-income individuals who would otherwise have to spend more than 25 per cent of their income on housing.

"An adequate home is one of the factors conducive to greater independence and a better quality of life," said Minister Lapierre. "Thanks to the flexibility of the Affordable Housing Agreement, the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec were able to work together with the municipality and members of the community to develop this project and provide quality homes and a healthy and affordable living environment."

"The development of the new housing units represents a concrete gesture made by the community in its will to enable low-income families to benefit from adequate housing. What is more, the conversion of this school into a residential building is a brilliant example of a successful partnership between governments, the municipality and the community sector," said Minister Normandeau.

The development of this project is part of the Government of Quebec's initiative to produce 18,600 social, community and private housing units for low- and moderate-income households. This initiative is notably supported by federal funds made available under an Affordable Housing Agreement.

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It should be recalled that an Affordable Housing Agreement was signed between CMHC and the SHQ in 2001. It provides for a total contribution of \$323.3 million to increase the supply of affordable housing in Quebec, with \$161.65 million from the federal government, \$104 million from the Quebec government and \$57 million from the municipalities participating in the program.

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