



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2005

Covenant House Unveils Renovations

TORONTO, Ontario, November 2, 2005 — Canada's largest shelter for homeless youth is now more accessible and healthier after the completion of extensive renovations. Covenant House today celebrated the official unveiling of the renovations and a new accessibility elevator.

Comprised of two buildings located in downtown Toronto near Yonge and Gerrard Streets, the adjacent structures that make up Covenant House were in desperate need of repair. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provided \$960,942 through the Shelter Enhancement Program for the renovations.

In addition, Covenant House received \$168,500 from the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), administered by the City of Toronto, and \$187,000 was raised through private funding. Ongoing operating funds are provided annually by the Government of Ontario and the City of Toronto.

"Providing a safe and supportive environment for our youth is vital," said the Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence and Member of Parliament for Toronto Centre, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "The renovation of the Covenant House facilities demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to providing housing for homeless youth."

"Partnerships with all levels of government and non-profit agencies are vital in helping our most vulnerable citizens find refuge and permanent housing solutions," said Councillor Kyle Rae, Ward 27 Toronto Centre–Rosedale. "Covenant House is one such place that provides safe accommodation for street youth who need our support. I am pleased that we were able to help Covenant House upgrade and enhance these much needed facilities."

"We are very grateful to the Government of Canada for the generous grants that have helped us with much-needed renovations and upgrades to our shelter, including our new accessibility elevator that will enable us to better serve disabled or injured youth," said Ruth daCosta, Executive Director of Covenant House Toronto. "Since we rely on donations for most of our funding, these additional funds enabled us to direct more money to taking care of our kids while we repaired our building."

Renovations and repairs to Covenant House's McGill Street building included the replacement of an emergency generator, heating boilers, windows and sills, and more than 6,500 square feet of rotted roof. Security was also improved with new doors, locks and security cameras.

At the Gerrard Street facility, a new accessibility elevator was installed, and rotted windows, sills, brickwork, and eaves troughs were replaced. The building's front entrance also received a facelift with the repair of cracked marble steps and flooring, and the 1,800 square foot worn carpet in the great hall was replaced with vinyl tile.

Established in 1982, Covenant House offers young people safe shelter and support services annually. Much more than a shelter, Covenant House gives young people the tools they need to build independent lives including counselling, health

Canadian Mortgage News - Covenant House Unveils Renovations

care, educational and employment assistance. At night, staff is on the streets to reach kids most at risk. Longer-term housing is also available.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program offers financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for women and their children, youth, and men who are victims of family violence, as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing where needed.

The Government of Canada launched the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) in December 1999 to support communities' efforts to help at-risk Canadians out of homelessness. By working in partnership with community organizations, the private and voluntary sectors, and other levels of government, the NHI is bringing all stakeholders together to develop local solutions that work to address the needs and challenges of its citizens. As part of the NHI, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative component, administered by partnering municipalities, is continuing to make a difference by encouraging the development of flexible, community-driven solutions to help alleviate homelessness and support those who are at-risk of homelessness.

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

For further information, please contact:

Rose Cino
Covenant House
(416) 204-7081

Beth Bailey
CMHC
(416) 218-3355