



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Affordable Housing Project Renovates Former Schoolhouse in Ituna**

**ITUNA, Saskatchewan, November 4, 2005** — An innovative project in Ituna has renovated a 1950s schoolhouse into four units of affordable housing, thanks to the help of federal, provincial, and municipal funding.

The former two-room school has been converted into one-bedroom apartments that will allow four high-functioning individuals with intellectual disabilities to live independently with some support services.

"Housing is so much more than just bricks and mortar, it's about the people who make it their home," Ralph Goodale, Minister of Finance, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, said. "The federal government is committed to providing affordable housing options that meet the needs of Canadians, particularly those who need a little extra help. So, I am encouraged to see innovative projects like this, which has strong roots in the local community, both past and present."

"This unique housing project will allow these individuals the degree of independence that they deserve," Community Resources and Employment Minister Joanne Crofford said. "This is another example of HomeFirst again providing people in Saskatchewan with appropriate affordable housing options that offer safety, security, stability, and dignity."

"The Town of Ituna welcomes and supports this partnership which contributes to the economy of the town and provides affordable housing for adults with intellectual disabilities," Ituna Mayor Bill Berezuk said. "We welcome and embrace the residents who are about to embark on their first taste of independence, something we all take for granted."

The project is supported through the Centenary Affordable Housing Program (CAHP), which is part of the Government of Saskatchewan's HomeFirst strategy. The breakdown of the CAHP contribution of \$176,000 consists of \$88,000 from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), \$72,000 from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), and an in-kind land and building contribution of \$16,000 from the Town of Ituna. A mortgage and other in-kind contributions of sponsors' equity will provide the balance of the funding.

The project was undertaken by Deer Park Villa Inc., a community based non-profit corporation run by a volunteer board of directors in Ituna. It operates three group homes, an activity centre, and Supported Independent Living and Supported Employment Programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The building is just over 2000 square feet in size. There are four suites ranging in size from 428 to 480 square feet, with one suite designed to accommodate a client in a wheelchair.

The clients will have the option of using community transportation and those able to walk will be able to access all amenities on foot. External support services will be provided by Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment's Community Living Division.

**For more information, please contact:**

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