



**PRESS RELEASE**



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## **Renovation Projects Boost Affordable Housing Commitments in Winnipeg to Over 3000 Units**

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba, November 22, 2005** — Renovations to a 42 year-old Elmwood apartment block and a north-end duplex will soon provide an additional 36 units of affordable housing for low-income Winnipeg residents. The projects are being made possible with the support of over \$419,000 in funding assistance from the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg, through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

With this funding announcement, which also marks the annual National Housing Day, the WHHI partnership has committed close to \$72 million that has or will contribute to the repair, rehabilitation or construction of over 3,000 housing units, as well as assist the homeless or those at risk of being homeless.

Today, also marked the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Housing Day, which focuses on the ongoing efforts to provide affordable housing solutions for Canadians who need shelter and the necessary support services. The announcement was made by the Honourable Raymond Simard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Internal Trade, Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Official Languages, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing; the Honourable Christine Melnick, Minister of Manitoba Family Services and Housing; and Peter De Smedt, Chair of the City's Standing Committee on Property and Development, and Councillor for the St. Charles Ward, on behalf of the Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz.

"National Housing Day is an opportunity to recognize the progress being made to address the housing and homelessness issues in Canada," said MP Simard. "I am delighted that the Government of Canada, the provincial and the municipal governments have together committed over 3,000 units of affordable housing for Winnipeg residents since the WHHI partnership began over five years ago."

"I am pleased that we are able to support these dedicated neighbourhood groups and their improvement plans that respond to the important need for additional housing for those with low and moderate incomes," said Minister Melnick. "Creating more affordable housing is a key to strengthening families, as we build communities."

"Over the past five years, the WHHI has made a significant difference," said De Smedt. "In marking National Housing Day, I'd like to recognize the efforts and commitment of our government and community partners to revitalizing neighbourhoods and to addressing housing and homelessness needs in our city."

Funding for the projects includes \$399,000 to Cosmopolitan Club Homes under the Rental Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) which is cost-shared 75/25 per cent by the Governments of Canada and Manitoba, and \$20,000 to Heart Housing Inc. through the provincial Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) program. The RRAP program in Winnipeg is delivered by the City of Winnipeg.

Cosmopolitan Club Homes, a non-profit housing group which has been providing affordable housing for over 40 years, will rehabilitate 34 units in an existing 42-year-old apartment building located at 541 Cosmo Place in the Elmwood neighbourhood. The project includes three one-bed units and 31 studio units. The property is owned by Cosmopolitan Club Homes and will be managed by SAM management.

Heart Housing Inc., with volunteer help, will purchase and completely rehabilitate a duplex at 381 College Avenue in the St. John's neighbourhood. The renovated units will provide a homeownership opportunity for two immigrant families through a Rent-to-Own model.

Heart Housing Inc. is a non-profit group that was formed to improve living conditions for low income new Canadians, families who have special disability needs and families who do not yet have the down payment to buy a home. The group's focus is on purchasing and renovating homes, as well as through education and practical hand-on experience, gradually transferring affordable home ownership to the residents. Total project costs are estimated at \$142,000.

The funding is coordinated by the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, a partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness, declining housing stock and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. Located at 361 Hargrave Street, the WHHI serves as a single-window office for community organizations to access information on government funded housing and homelessness programs. For information, organizations or citizens can call (204) 940-3070.

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Backgrounder**

**Heart Housing**

In July, 2005 Heart Housing Inc. (HHI) purchased a duplex at 381 College Avenue which is being completely renovated with volunteer help. This unit is in the St. John's neighbourhood which is one of the new neighbourhoods recently designated by Neighbourhoods Alive. This project provides homeownership opportunity for two immigrant families through a Rent-to-Own model.

Heart Housing Inc. was formed by a small group of people who are "test driving" a collaborative, non-profit, affordable housing project in Winnipeg. The target group is low income new Canadians, those families who have special disability needs and those families who do not yet have the down payment to buy a home. Another option would be enabling home ownership through a unique rent to own savings plan. By using volunteer labour and donations from the public, they are able to provide very low-cost housing.

The focus of Heart Housing Inc. is to improve living conditions for immigrant families in Winnipeg by purchasing and renovating a home, as well as through education and practical hand-on experience, gradually transferring affordable home ownership to the residents.

Total project costs are estimated at \$142,000. Neighbourhood Housing Assistance funding of \$20,000 has been approved to contribute to the acquisition and rehabilitation of this project. The balance of the costs are being funded with donations, mortgage financing and other sources.

### **Cosmopolitan Club Homes**

**541 Cosmo Place**

**Winnipeg, MB**

- Rental Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) funding of \$398,648, is being provided to rehabilitate 34 units in a 42-year-old building located at 541 Cosmo Place in the Elmwood neighbourhood of Winnipeg.
- The property is owned by the non-profit organization, Cosmopolitan Club Homes, and is managed by SAM Management Incorporated. Cosmopolitan Club Homes has provided affordable housing to low-income households living in Winnipeg for over 40 years.
- This property includes three one-bed units and 31 studio units that lease at rents that average below \$300 per month.
- The work includes upgrades to the major building systems including; electrical, plumbing and heating plus new windows and interior renovations. These renovations will ensure this supply of affordable housing for low-income households in Winnipeg is preserved.