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Affordable Student Housing Pilot Program Extended to Antigonish

ANTIGONISH, Nova Scotia, November 23, 2005 — Low income single parents attending St. Francis Xavier University will have access to affordable rental housing thanks to a student housing pilot program created under the Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing agreement.

Rodger Cuzner, Member of Parliament for Cape Breton – Canso, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and David Morse, Minister of Community Services, made the announcement today. Under the program, rent supplements will be provided for up to five single parent students attending the university full time.

"The Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement is designed to support innovative, community based solutions," said MP Rodger Cuzner. "By providing support to students attending St. Francis Xavier University, the Government of Canada is responding to the needs of this community."

"Access to affordable student housing will help relieve some of the financial pressures for low-income single parent students and their families while they attend university," said Mr. Morse. "As a result of the pilot, we hope to learn more about the needs of single parent students and how we can best support their efforts to attend university."

Single parent students attending St. Francis Xavier University are able to apply for a rent supplement to help them pay their housing costs. Rent supplements will be available for qualifying students whose apartments have been safety inspected and approved by the Eastern Mainland Housing Authority, allowing families to continue to live in their current place of residence.

To qualify for the student housing program, applicants must be enrolled full time at St. Francis Xavier University, and be a lone custodial parent who is eligible for public housing and approved for student income assistance.

"This project addresses the needs of student-parents who attend St. FX," said Jana Luker, vice president of student services with the university. "These students face the demands on every parent, with the added pressure and cost of attending university. We are pleased to work with the Department of Community Services to help alleviate some of the stress placed on these student-parents by providing access to affordable housing, ensuring a university education is possible."

The Department of Community Services has been working with universities in Nova Scotia to determine how to best support single parent students attending university. A similar student housing pilot program was launched in September 2005 at Acadia University.

To date, more than \$25.8 million has been announced by the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia and its partners for the construction or renovation of more than 593 units in the province. A total of \$56.18 million will be available under the Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.

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Information on the Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing agreement is available at local housing services offices or on the Department of Community Services website at www.gov.ns.ca/coms.