



PRESS RELEASE



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New Emergency Shelter Opens in Fort St. John

FORT ST. JOHN, British Columbia, May 26, 2006 — A \$1.01 million addition to The Salvation Army Fort St. John Care and Share Centre officially opened its doors today. Dignitaries, funding partners and community members were on hand to celebrate the 20 new emergency shelter beds which will help the homeless and families in crisis.

The Care and Share Centre, operated by The Salvation Army, was developed with funding from the Canada — BC Affordable Housing Agreement, through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative under the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.

"The Government of Canada is proud to support the Salvation Army in making a real difference in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens," said the Honourable Jay Hill, Member of Parliament for Prince George — Peace River, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

The new one-storey building includes 20 beds, 16 of which are short-term shelter beds funded under the Canada — BC Affordable Housing Agreement through the federal and provincial governments and four transition beds, funded by the provincial Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA).

"Through the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions the province is working with local communities to improve the facilities and services available for those in need," said Richard Neufeld, MLA for Peace River North. "The increased capacity and services provided at the Care and Share Centre will help more people turn their lives around."

The Care and Share Centre provides accommodation, hot meals, showers, laundry, and a welcoming, safe atmosphere for clients. Other services, such as The Salvation Army Community and Family Services Office, are available in the drop-in centre next door. Shelter clients are able to reside in the facility for up to a month, where they are able to work through the process of being put on social benefits, seek employment, or work with other local agencies to enter alcohol or drug rehab programs.

"City Council was glad to work with The Salvation Army to increase the capacity of the Care and Share Centre. We gave them a temporary place to run the shelter during renovations," said Mayor Jim Eglinski. The former site, also owned by the City, was subsequently sold to the health authority for a nominal fee. This site will be the new location for a 24-unit assisted living facility currently in development with BC Housing and Northern Health.

"Our shelter staff provide encouragement, basic personal counsel, referral services and other forms of basic personal assistance to make all clients feel as safe and comfortable as possible," said Captain Jim Coggles, The Salvation Army Fort St. John.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through the Provincial Homelessness

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Initiative, will provide \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under this agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians.

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Backgrounder

The Care and Share Centre

The Care and Share Centre will include 20 beds in total, with 16 short-term shelter beds funded under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative (PHI) and 4 transitional beds funded by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA).

Support services at the Centre include an intake room for assessment of those arriving at the centre, washrooms and showers, counselling services, meals, access to laundry facilities, and a drop-in amenity space. A Salvation Army Community and Family Services Office where clients can receive food, clothing, furniture assistance, as well as referrals to other agencies and basic counselling and assessment; Salvation Army Fort St. John Food Bank with a community lunch program that provides clients with a hot meal and fresh vegetables, pastries and other meal items from local retailers, and a thrift store that provides the community with a clothing and household goods recycling outlet.

The capital cost of the project is \$1,010,000, with funding from the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. Other funding partners include:

- \$250,000 grant from the federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- \$250,000 grant from the Province, through BC Housing.
- \$360,000 land value donation provided from The Salvation Army.
- \$102,000 grant from The Peace Regional Withdrawal Management and Emergency Shelter Society which includes a significant donation made by the Oil and Gas Commission.

The City of Fort St. John was involved in a unique way: the municipality enabled the shelter to temporarily relocate during renovations by providing the temporary shelter facility to the Army for \$1 year and covering all building maintenance and utilities for the last eight years at an annual cost of approximately \$10,000.

Canada Safeway provided \$10,000 and full consulting and project management services were donated by Way-Loe Consulting.