



PRESS RELEASE



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Health Minister Opens New Supportive Housing Residence

TORONTO, Ontario, May 26, 2006 — Federal, provincial and municipal government representatives joined today to celebrate the official opening of St. Jude Community Homes, a new supportive housing residence for persons living with mental health issues who were formerly homeless or precariously housed.

The Honourable George Smitherman, Health and Long-Term Care Minister, representatives of the federal and municipal governments, and community partners attended the official opening.

"The Government of Canada is proud to be a partner in helping provide inclusive affordable housing options for residents of Toronto," said the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, Minister Responsible for the GTA, and MP for Whitby — Oshawa on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

"Affordable and permanent supportive housing is fundamental to improving the quality of life for mentally ill people," Smitherman said. "This new housing unit will be a haven for mentally ill people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless."

"St. Jude has been providing housing and support for many people in this community," said Councillor Pam McConnell. "It's through partnerships with organizations like St. Jude, all orders of government and the community that we can ensure our most vulnerable people have access to safe and stable housing, and an improved quality of life."

St. Jude Community Homes is opening its new 30-unit Milan Street site in downtown Toronto. The site contains 29 self-contained bachelor units for residents and a one-bedroom unit for a live-in caretaker. In addition to the private living spaces, the residence also provides a life skills teaching area, meeting room, communal space and a landscaped patio.

The McGuinty government provided \$2.4 million in capital funding toward the renovation project, which also received more than \$660,000 in funding from the federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The City of Toronto, contributed \$310,000 in land asset by leasing this city-owned site to St. Jude Community Homes for 50 years.

"We are honoured to have the opportunity to breathe new life into this historic old stable and we are confident that the program and the residents will enhance the community mosaic," said Mr. Mario Nigro, President and Chairman of the Board for St. Jude Community Homes.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health, building a system that delivers on three priorities — keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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Backgrounder

St. Jude Community Homes Project

The Project:

St. Jude Community Homes (275 Ontario St.) will be a 30-unit affordable housing building for people with mental illness. The facility will include on-site support and programming such as counselling, life skills training, social and recreational programming, links to educational opportunities, and meal programs. The facility will have a live-in caretaker, and 24 hour emergency response.

St. Jude's History in the Community:

St. Jude's has operated a similar facility in the area for over 13 years with tremendous success. At 431 Dundas St., residents have been able to gain the skills and support they need to live and be fully integrated citizens of the community. The new facility will give this opportunity for a caring, safe, affordable place to call home to 30 additional people living with mental illness.

Funding:

\$2.4 million in funding for development is being provided by the second phase of the Ministry of Health's Homelessness Initiative. As well, the Ministry is providing funding for support services. The project will receive over \$660,000 in RRAP funding from CMHC and the property, worth \$310,000, was donated by the City of Toronto.

CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) provides financial assistance to owners of property occupied by low-income households to make necessary repairs to bring their properties up to minimum health and safety standards.

Partners:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Hong Fook South East Asian Mental Health Services
Schizophrenia Association of Ontario, Toronto Chapter