



PRESS RELEASE



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Supporters of New Women's Shelter Honoured

GRANDE PRAIRIE, Alberta, June 27, 2006 — Representatives of Odyssey House women's shelter hosted a celebration at Centre 2000 today to unveil a sculpture honoring the donors and supporters who helped make their new \$2 million emergency shelter a reality.

The facility, which offers a safe haven for women and children who are abused or in crisis, opened in March with 32 beds, with the potential to increase to a total of 40 beds. The project received funding from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as from local individuals and businesses.

"Canada's new Government is committed to working with our partners to provide access to safe and secure housing such as Odyssey House for Alberta's most vulnerable citizens," said Chris Warkentin, Member of Parliament for Peace River, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "We are proud to have played a part in helping countless women build better lives."

The breakdown of support consists of \$857,082 from the Government of Canada, \$426,625 from the Government of Alberta, and at least \$172,300 from the City of Grande Prairie. The remaining funds were raised locally through fundraising events as well as through the support of individuals and businesses.

"The Alberta government is pleased to partner with the federal and municipal governments and community supporters to make Odyssey House a reality," said Mel Knight, MLA for Grande Prairie – Smoky. "This great facility will serve the community for many years to come."

"The City of Grande Prairie congratulates the Board, volunteers and staff of Odyssey House for their dedication to improving the lives of women and children," says Mayor Wayne Ayling. "This new shelter is a testament to your commitment to breaking the cycle of family violence."

Kathy Sheppard, executive director of Odyssey House, says that the generosity of so many people means more privacy and dignity for the families seeking safety and support at the shelter. "We were so overcrowded before. Today when I walk in this shelter and see the bright, open space, and hear women talking and children playing, I know we have arrived in a good place."

Odyssey House provides emergency accommodation for up to 21 days for abused women with or without children, as well as those who are homeless or in crisis. Staff and volunteers man a 24-hour crisis line and provide telephone or in-house counseling to over 2500 people each year. The facility provides support and education programs to woman, children, volunteers, and the public.

For more information contact:

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Kathy Sheppard
Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association, operating
Odyssey House
Grande Prairie
780-532-2672

Sophie Dupuis
Senior Consultant
Communications and Marketing
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Calgary
403-515-2986

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Bart Johnson
Director of Communications
Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation
Edmonton
780-415-1841