



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **New Shelter to Help Victims of Family Violence**

**MEDECINE HAT, Alberta, August 10, 2007** —The Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society, three levels of government and community groups joined forces to make a difference in the lives of victims of family violence in Alberta. A special ribbon-cutting ceremony in Medicine Hat today marked the grand opening of Musasa House, a new second stage shelter for women and children.

The Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development; the Honourable Robert Renner, MLA for Medicine Hat; His Worship Garth Valley, Mayor of Medicine Hat; and representatives from the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society attended today’s ceremony.

“Canada’s New Government is proud to invest in such significant programs that provide safe and supportive housing to vulnerable women and children in Medicine Hat,” said Minister Solberg. “This funding will help Musasa House give women and their families hope, dignity and a path to a safer, better and stronger future.”

Funding for the project includes \$800,000 in federal assistance under Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) and \$500,000 from the Canada – Alberta Affordable Housing Program. The project also received more than \$300,000 from the provincially-funded Community Facility Enhancement Program, as well as land contributions from the City of Medicine Hat, private donations, and funding from the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society.

“Musasa House is more than bricks and mortar. It is a symbol of caring and hope that projects under the Canada – Alberta Affordable Housing Program have been able to provide,” said Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “We must continue to work with our partners from all orders of government, agencies and the community to find creative solutions that address the housing challenges that we are experiencing in Alberta.”

“Medicine Hat identified a need for longer term safe housing initiatives and in response a collective and cooperative effort between individuals, businesses, service clubs, and provincial and federal funding came together to create the Musasa House, the only second stage facility in Southern Alberta,” said City of Medicine Hat Mayor Garth Valley. “The courage, vision and dedication of many people made this happen, especially the members of the Phoenix Safe House Board. Medicine Hat has taken the initiative to address the safety and economic needs for families and empowered them with the ability to make choices that will ultimately enable them to travel the next road in their journey of life.”

The 10 townhouse units will provide housing for women and children during their transition from shelter living to independent living. The Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society provides a short term, safe and supportive environment for battered women and children and provides the opportunity to learn of services and alternatives for those women and their families to facilitate decisions about their future.

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“The Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society believes that no woman or child should be forced to remain in a violent or abusive environment due to a lack of alternatives,” said Natasha Carvalho, Executive Director of the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society. “We are attempting to rectify that problem in southern Alberta so that families will have not only a safe place to go, but the time in which to heal and adjust to independent living, thereby reducing the number of times they re-enter emergency facilities. It is our hope that Musasa House will provide families with that necessary bridge to an independent life, full of hope and trust, and free forever from the debilitating effects of family violence.”

CMHC’s Shelter Enhancement Program provides financial assistance for repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for women, children and men who are victims of family violence. Funding under the program is also available to assist in the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing where needed.

The Canada – Alberta Affordable Housing Program has assisted in the creation of sustainable rental housing for low- to moderate-income Albertans, through the construction of new or renovated affordable housing units. Under the program close to \$200 million was committed to affordable housing projects throughout the province that will lead to the development of close to 3,700 units.

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