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Ministry of Energy and Mines
and Minister Responsible for Housing
Government of Canada, Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada, City of Vancouver

Supportive homes for Aboriginal families open in Vancouver

VANCOUVER – With today’s official opening of the Aboriginal Mother Centre, Aboriginal mothers and children at risk of homelessness now have access to transformational homes that are linked to cultural traditions.

“Our government is giving a hand-up to Canadians with housing needs, and is helping those seeking to break free of the cycle of homelessness and poverty,” said Wai Young, Member of Parliament for Vancouver South, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. “We are pleased to celebrate the opening of the Aboriginal Mother Centre in Vancouver, which will provide Aboriginal women and children in need with access to housing and support services all under one roof.”

Located at 2019 Dundas St. in Vancouver, the \$7.8-million development provides 16 suites, a shared kitchen and program and amenity space for Aboriginal women and their children, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

“The Aboriginal Mother Centre will provide an important service for Aboriginal families in Vancouver,” said Rich Coleman, Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister Responsible for Housing. “This project brought together government as well as community partners and Aboriginal groups to create a unique housing development that is helping mothers who are at risk of homelessness build a healthy future for themselves and their children.”

The opening ceremony was followed by a traditional totem pole-raising ceremony with carving done by local artist Michael Dangeli. The days’ events were attended by prominent leaders and members of the local and provincial Aboriginal community.

“This innovative project meets a critical need in the community by providing safe, secure housing to Aboriginal mothers and their children who are at risk of homelessness,” said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson. “Culturally-appropriate social housing that respects Aboriginal traditions is essential to building community, and I am proud that the Aboriginal Mother’s Centre will be a gathering place for families in Vancouver.”

The Aboriginal Mother Centre also provides a community drop-in centre, a commercial kitchen, a 25-space community day care, office and program space as well as commercial retail units for rent. The day care and transitional housing units in the building will be managed and operated by the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society in partnership with Lu'ma Native Housing Society.

"Today's event marks the culmination of a lot of hard work from many individuals and groups," said Marge White, President, Aboriginal Mother Centre Society. "I want to thank all partners who were involved in making the Aboriginal Mother Centre a reality. Together we are making a difference in the urban Aboriginal community and we are proving just what we can achieve by working together."

"I'm proud today to see the product of a lot of hard work from many different members of our community," said Ken Clement, President, Lu'ma Native Housing Society. "Quality supportive housing with cultural supports will enhance the lives of vulnerable at-risk women and children."

The \$7.8 million in capital funding for this project came from many partners:

- The Government of Canada contributed \$373,412 through the Homelessness Partnership Strategy.
- The Province invested more than \$6.2 million (\$3.4 million, plus \$504,534 for the day care and the land valued at approximately \$2.3 million).
- The City of Vancouver provided a day care grant of \$70,000.
- Streethome Foundation provided \$500,000.
- Builders without Borders provided \$311,200.
- The Real Estate Foundation of BC provided \$300,000.
- The Central City Foundation provided \$35,017.
- The Aboriginal Homeless Steering Committee provided \$27,000.
- Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society provided cash equity of \$132,358.

In addition, Heatherbrae Builders Co. Ltd. donated their \$250,000 in fees back to the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society.

Quick Facts:

- Over the last decade, the Province has invested \$2.8 billion to provide affordable housing for low income individuals, seniors and families. This year, more than 95,000 B.C. households will benefit from provincial social housing programs and services.
- The Province invests in a wide range of Aboriginal housing options to improve access to safe, affordable housing:
 - More than 200 off-reserve units – to create safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing for youth, women, elders and those struggling with addictions.
 - Over 3,900 subsidized Aboriginal housing units available in B.C.
 - To support Aboriginal self-management, more than 1,000 Aboriginal Housing units have been transferred to the Aboriginal Housing Management Association.

- Lu'ma Native Housing Society was incorporated in 1980 to provide affordable housing to Aboriginal families and individuals with low to moderate income.
 - The society currently owns and operates an affordable housing portfolio in excess of 300 units and is the Community Entity for the Federal Governments' Homelessness Partnership Strategy in collaboration with the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee.

Learn More:

- About provincial programs and services to address homelessness: www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Creating/PHI
- For programs and services offered by Lu'ma Native Housing Society: www.lnhs.ca
- About the Aboriginal Mother Centre: www.aboriginalmothercentre.ca

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