

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITY OPENS DOORS

TORONTO—Today, members of the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, along with dignitaries, guests, tenants and community supporters cut the ribbon to open 20 new transitional housing units at 973 Lansdowne Avenue. Adjacent to the Christie Ossington shelter for men, these 20 bachelor units will help formerly homeless men make the transition from shelter life to more stable accommodations.

This \$1.9-million project, constructed on city land, received \$1.28 million from the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, as well as 20 rent supplements worth \$157,000 per year from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Both programs are administered by the City of Toronto. The Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre raised over \$300,000 and received a \$250,000 donation from private citizen Lou Odette, through the United Way. Mark Cullen, President, Weall & Cullen Gardens, provided expertise and financial support to design the gardens.

Attending today's ceremony were Davenport MP Mario Silva, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing; Davenport MPP Tony Ruprecht, on behalf of the Honourable John Gerretsen, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and Councillor Adam Giambrone, Ward 18 Davenport, on behalf of Toronto Mayor David Miller.

"Christie Ossington addresses several elements of the housing continuum that the Government of Canada feels should be part of a national framework—it's community-driven, flexible and provides excellent support mechanisms," said MP Mario Silva. "The Government of Canada is committed to working with other levels of government, organizations and groups to alleviate homelessness in all communities."

"Rent supplements are an important tool that municipalities can use to address homelessness, support the creation of new affordable housing and help build strong communities," said MPP Tony Ruprecht. "The McGuinty government has provided municipalities with a long-term funding commitment of \$50 million per year for rent-supplement housing units, and I'm glad that the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre can benefit from this program."

"I am glad to see this project come to fruition," said Councillor Adam Giambrone, Ward 18 Davenport. "Through partnerships with all orders of government, the public and private sector, we can help our most vulnerable citizens leave the streets behind and start a new life in a stable and safe facility."

“The model that we have developed builds on the strengths of our community members, especially those who are most vulnerable,” said Lynn Daly, Executive Director, Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre. “Through street outreach, shelter, transitional housing, and the long-term economic anchors of employment and housing, we have built a model that produces positive results. Let this be a beginning of greater things to come.

The Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre is a multi-service, community-based, not-for-profit, charitable organization that serves vulnerable community members of all ages. The Centre offers children and youth programs, drop-in and food security programs, and a men’s and women’s shelter in the community. In addition to these programs, the Centre also provides street outreach, housing, employment supports and, most recently, transitional housing.

The Government of Canada launched the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) in December 1999 to support communities’ efforts to help the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. As part of the NHI, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative program, administered by partnering municipalities, is continuing to make a difference by encouraging the development of flexible, community-driven solutions to help alleviate homelessness and support those who are at risk of homelessness.

Ontario’s Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program, which embodies the government’s commitment to building a strong and healthy Ontario, offers up to \$50 million a year to municipal service managers to assist low-income households. The Program empowers municipalities to quickly supply funding in order to provide a fundamental necessity—housing for those in need.

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