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HEALTH MINISTER OPENS NEW SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RESIDENCE

TORONTO – 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.

The Honourable George Smitherman, Ontario's Health and Long-Term Care Minister, City Councillor Pam McConnell, Ward 28, representatives from the federal government, 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 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 people with mental health issues," Minister Smitherman said. "This new housing unit will be a haven for those 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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