
news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2007

New Wigwamen Waabnong building provides affordable and transitional housing to Scarborough's Malvern community

TORONTO—Representatives from Canada's New Government, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto today joined guests, tenants and community supporters to celebrate the official opening of the new Wigwamen Waabnong affordable housing project in Scarborough's Malvern community. The building contains 92 affordable and transitional housing units, as well as an integrated place of worship.

Attending today's ceremony were the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development; Brad Duguid, MPP for Scarborough–Centre on behalf of the Honourable John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Bas Balkissoon, MPP for Scarborough–Rouge River; Toronto City Councillor Raymond Cho, Scarborough–Rouge River; and the Board and staff of Wigwamen Incorporated, including Bill Kinoshameg, President.

This \$13.38 million project received contributions of over \$2.5 million from the federal government's National Homelessness Initiative and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). In addition, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing contributed \$809,232 per year through their Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program. Both programs are administered by the City of Toronto, which also provided \$2.2 million in grants and loans from its Capital Revolving Fund, along with fee and permit waivers.

"The Wigwamen housing project will go a long way towards providing suitable and affordable housing for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless," said Minister Solberg. "This project demonstrates how Canada's new government is taking action to prevent and reduce homelessness, and illustrates how partnerships between all levels of governments and the community can make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens."

“The McGuinty government is committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable among us can obtain decent, affordable shelter,” said MPP Duguid. “The Wigwamen project is an excellent example of governments working with the local community to produce new affordable housing, and to create the kind of caring, compassionate society of which we can all be proud.”

“On behalf of Mayor Miller and City Council, I want to congratulate Wigwamen for its work in creating this important addition to the affordable housing community in Toronto. These homes represent a better future for residents,” said Councillor Cho.

“These new affordable and transitional homes are having a positive impact on the lives of our tenants and their families. It couldn’t have been done without the funding partnership of the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, as well as our generous individual and corporate donors,” said Angus Palmer, General Manager of Wigwamen.

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This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

For more information:

Homelessness Partnering Strategy: www.homelessness.gc.ca
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: www.mah.gov.on.ca
City of Toronto: www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing
Wigwamen: www.wigwamen.com

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backgrounder

March 30, 2007

Government of Canada contributes over \$2.5 million to Wigwamen Waabnong housing project

The Wigwamen Waabnong housing project received \$2 million from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). Also providing funding to this project was Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), with a contribution of \$74,778 from the Proposal Development Fund (PDF), along with the provision of mortgage loan insurance.

The building was constructed on land previously owned by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario, and transferred to the City of Toronto for a nominal amount of one dollar. These properties were estimated to be worth \$675,000, with the federally owned parcel of land valued at \$506,250, and the provincially owned parcel at \$168,750.

The federally owned parcel of land was provided through the Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative (SFRPHI) component of the NHI. The SFRPHI makes surplus federal property available to community organizations, the not-for-profit sector, and other levels of government for projects to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Partners in the SFRPHI include Public Works and Government Services Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and CMHC.

The City of Toronto contributed \$2.2 million in loans, grants and waivers to the Wigwamen Waabnong housing project.

National Homelessness Initiative

Canada's New Government recently announced that the NHI, scheduled to end in March 2007, will be replaced by an improved strategy, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), on April 1, 2007. This strategy, with its clear goals of improved partnerships, enhanced sustainability and tangible results, will provide concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The new HPS will provide \$269.6 million over two years to help communities across Canada combat homelessness more effectively.

The HPS focuses on a housing-first approach to homelessness because the federal government recognizes that housing stability is essential to self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society. With its clear goals of improved partnerships, enhanced sustainability and tangible results, the new Strategy will provide concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

CMHC has been Canada's national housing agency for over 60 years and is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable homes, while making vibrant, healthy communities and cities a reality across the country.

Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program

Ontario's Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program represents the government's commitment to building a strong and healthy Ontario. It offers up to \$50 million per year to Municipal Service Managers to assist low-income households. This program empowers municipalities to quickly supply funding in order to fulfil a fundamental necessity of providing housing to those in need.

Wigwamen Incorporated

Wigwamen Incorporated has a total of 403 units scattered throughout the City of Toronto including: 92 units in the new Wigwamen Waabnong apartment building; 102 units in an apartment building for seniors; plus 209 other family housing units (mixture of single family units, semi-detached units, duplexes and triplexes).

The Wigwamen organization began in 1970 when community members, who wanted to provide better housing for Native people in the City of Toronto, formed a committee that met at Toronto's Native Friendship Centre.