



Ontario



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 25, 2006**

INNOVATIVE HOUSING SUPPORTS SENIORS, PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

TORONTO – Federal, provincial and municipal officials joined community agencies today for a ground-breaking ceremony to celebrate the construction of a first-of-its-kind apartment complex that will provide supportive housing to seniors and people with HIV/AIDS.

The three levels of government are working with Fife House, an AIDS service organization, WoodGreen Community Services, a social service agency, and the Wellesley Institute to build and operate a 12-storey, 112-unit supportive housing project, the Wellesley Central Residences Inc (WCRI).

This \$19 million initiative received nearly \$4 million from the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), a component of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's mortgage loan insurance, also facilitated the financing of this project. With CMHC's mortgage loan insurance, the project benefits from a larger mortgage loan at a lower interest rate than would be possible without insurance. As well, when this project was in the early planning stages, it received an interest-free CMHC loan in the amount of \$100,000 to help offset some of the upfront costs of developing the housing project proposal. The Government of Ontario provided \$1.8 million in capital funding for WoodGreen and Fife House programs in this building. The City of Toronto provided \$3.7 million in grants. They also waived fees and approved a property tax exemption for 25 years.

In addition, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will provide \$792,199 in new supportive housing health services to residents once this building is opened in 2008. More specifically, WoodGreen Community Centre will receive \$632,199 to serve 75 frail and elderly seniors and \$160,000 for Fife House to serve 30 additional residents with HIV/AIDS.

"The Government of Canada recognizes that homelessness is no small challenge," said Gary Goodyear, Member of Parliament for Cambridge. "Wellesley Central Residence is just one example of how this government is taking action to meet that challenge, as well as the needs of senior citizens and people living with HIV and AIDS. Not only will this residence provide safe and supportive housing, for those who need them, it will also provide the necessary skills development to succeed within the community."

"The Wellesley Central Residences is an example of how governments and the community sector can come together to support people facing unique challenges," said George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "By helping residents of this project lead more independent lives, we are strengthening families and the community."

"This initiative will help the elderly and those with HIV/AIDS to live in a familiar neighbourhood while receiving the care they need," said Toronto Councillor Kyle Rae. "It is an important facility for downtown residents as it helps to keep families together. This initiative also highlights how important SCPI funding is to Toronto's affordable housing program."

Fife House provides supportive housing and support services to people living with HIV/AIDS and currently operates four housing sites across Toronto. WoodGreen's mission is to deliver services that promote wellness and self-sufficiency, reduce poverty and inequality and build sustainable communities. Services provided by both organizations include assistance with bathing, dressing, shopping, appointment escorts, security checks and essential homemaking.

"This project helps address the critical need for more secure and affordable supportive housing and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS in Toronto," said Ruthann Tucker, Executive Director of Fife House. "It also represents a great opportunity for Fife House to work with other agencies in the delivery of important services to the community."

"WoodGreen is proud to bring its expertise in supportive housing to the Wellesley Central Residence project to complement the expertise at Fife House and the Wellesley Institute," said Brian Smith, President and Chief Executive Officer of WoodGreen Community Services. "Supportive housing is the key to the maintenance of health and well-being for seniors because it reduces the need for hospitalization and gives our seniors the choice to remain safely in their own homes."

"This vital project represents another building block in the Wellesley Institute's continuing commitment to revitalizing the historic Wellesley Central Hospital lands by funding WCRI in addition to other facilities and a community park," said Rick Blickstead, Chief Executive Officer of the Wellesley Institute.

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