

Canada



Saskatchewan



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New facility opens to aid homeless Aboriginal women and children in Saskatoon

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN— The local group Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) celebrated the official opening of Infinity House, its new supportive housing facility today. Thanks to a partnership involving the Government of Canada, the Province of Saskatchewan and CUMFI, Aboriginal women and their children, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless have a new place to turn to for help.

Participating in the grand opening were the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Coordinator on Homelessness; the Honourable Chris Axworthy, Saskatchewan Minister of Justice and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Honourable Glenn Hagel, Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services; His Worship James Maddin, Mayor of Saskatoon; and Bob McLeod, President of CUMFI.

“The Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.’s commitment to establishing the appropriate services for those who are homeless in the Aboriginal community is evident in how quickly they have brought this facility to life,” said Minister Bradshaw. “We are pleased that our partnership with CUMFI and the Province of Saskatchewan will help to ensure that Aboriginal women and their children will have access to a safe haven that protects them from having to endure an unsafe living environment. Together we are making a difference in ways that are responding to those most in need here in Saskatoon.”

“The Province of Saskatchewan congratulates the Central Urban Métis Federation on the opening of Infinity House,” said Minister Axworthy. “We are committed to ensuring safe, secure shelter for all residents, and we are pleased to partner with the Federation and the federal government on this worthy initiative.”

Infinity House, at 127 Avenue Q South, is opening its doors only six months since funding was announced for this project. The building houses 12 transitional housing units, 3 emergency accommodation units and a service office.

The project was developed through CUMFI's Métis Community Homelessness Initiative. Funding partners involved in this project were the Government of Canada and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund.

The Government of Canada contributed \$532,065 through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). A further \$63,200 was committed through the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP), which is cost-shared by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Province of Saskatchewan. SEP is helping to have a positive impact at the community level, by assisting in repairing, rehabilitating and improving existing shelters for women and children as well as youth who are victims of family violence. The Province administers SEP in Saskatchewan.

The Clarence Campeau Development Fund provided a further \$100,000. This fund, supported through Saskatchewan gaming profits, is designed to provide financial assistance to Métis individuals and communities in Saskatchewan for economic and small business activities.

"The grand opening and name unveiling of CUMFI's transitional home is the first phase of a multi phase plan towards creating self-sufficiency and a healthy community for the Métis people of Saskatoon," said Mr. McLeod.

Mayor Maddin said that the housing facility will have "more than a roof." He also added "I congratulate the partners in providing much needed programming in addition to shelter. This initiative represents another success for Saskatoon's leading edge social housing program."

CUMFI is a non-profit organization designed to promote Métis heritage, culture and the economic, educational and social well-being of the Métis community in Saskatoon. CUMFI provides and implements educational programs, economic development, social housing, recreational initiatives and other such activities that support Métis people in their efforts to become more independent.

The National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) works in partnership with community organizations, the private sector and all levels of government to help Canada's homeless people by bringing together various partners to encourage the development of local solutions that work to address particular homelessness needs and issues. Through this coordinated approach, the following programs are available to support communities across Canada: the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative; Urban Aboriginal Strategy; the youth component of the NHI; the Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative; and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Renovation and Conversion Programs, as well as the Shelter Enhancement Program.

The National Homelessness Initiative is making a difference in addressing this issue by encouraging the development of local solutions to help alleviate homelessness. Funding for the Initiative was provided for in the December 2001 federal Budget and is built into the existing fiscal framework.

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit our web site at www.hrdc.gc.ca/homelessness

For more information on CMHC's and the Province of Saskatchewan's Shelter Enhancement programs, visit the Saskatchewan Social Services web site at www.gov.sk.ca/socserv/housing/programs/list_descriptions.html

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