



medicine hat community housing society

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Canada

news release

FOR RELEASE

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MEDICINE HAT COMMUNITY HOUSING SOCIETY PROVIDES \$149,938 TO ESTABLISH LOCAL YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER

MEDICINE HAT, ALBERTA—The Medicine Hat Community Housing Society has provided \$149,938 to McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association, through the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, to establish a "pilot project" youth emergency shelter in Medicine Hat. Named "The Inn Between," the shelter is located at 178 Southridge Drive SE in what has come to be known as the "green house" because of its exterior colour.

"I am so pleased to see local solutions at work in communities all across Canada," said the Honourable Anne McLellan, Minister of Health, on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness. "The hard work of community groups within Medicine Hat is an example to be shared on how we can work together to help those individuals who are at risk of homelessness."

"Medicine Hat has long debated the need for a youth emergency shelter," commented Peter Wilde, President and Chairman of the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society. Wilde added, "In addition to providing the required supports, we will be able to track the number of homeless youth and the factors that led them to become homeless."

Chris Christie, Southeastern Alberta Executive Director of McMan Youth, Family and Community Services comments that, "This shelter will provide youth with basic needs and assist them in developing and carrying out a plan for their future. Ultimately, we hope to return all youth who use our shelter to their home. But we also recognize that, for some of the young people, returning home is not an option and we have to make other arrangements for their care."

The need for a youth shelter was identified in community consultations held by the Society in 2001, as the Salvation Army Family Support Centre is neither licensed nor equipped to house youth who are not accompanied by an adult guardian. Young people staying at the shelter will be required to participate in some daily activity such as school, work, and efforts to resolve their crisis. They will be required to adhere to strict curfews and house rules. “We will review the usage data collected in this project in early 2003. If the data supports the concept, we will endeavour to secure operating funds from various other sources to continue the service beyond March 31, 2003,” added Christie.

The funding for this project has been provided under the youth component of the National Homelessness Initiative. The funds are then administered by the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society to meet the specific needs of Medicine Hat.

“We recognize that homelessness is an important and misunderstood issue in our community. While these projects represent a good start, we will continue, with the financial support of the Federal and Provincial governments, to further the cause of addressing the needs of the homeless or near homeless in Medicine Hat,” concluded Peter Wilde.

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

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