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# news release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 16, 2001**

## **Iris Kirby House Expands Second Stage Housing for Women**

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**ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND** –Newfoundland women without dependants who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless will soon have more services available to help them. The Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness along with the Honourable Brian Tobin, Minister of Industry, today announced that funding of \$264,359 under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) will be allocated to Iris Kirby House. This will provide additional second stage housing.

“This is exactly the type of shelter improvements we envisioned when we unveiled the National Homelessness Initiative”, said Minister Bradshaw. “I am pleased that we will help to improve shelter capacity, and I know that the women seeking refuge from abusive situations will welcome the enhanced level of support that will now be available through Iris Kirby House,” she added.

“I am delighted to see this facility moving forward in such a positive and meaningful way. I want to commend the Board of Directors of Iris Kirby House, especially the Administrator, Deborah Keats and her staff for working so diligently on behalf of women and their children, who are making very courageous decisions about the future direction of their lives,” said Minister Tobin.

The Honourable Oliver Langdon, provincial Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs also participated in the project announcement with a total funding contribution from the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation of \$86,000. St. John's City Councillor (At Large), Shannie Duff, announced in-kind support from the City of St. John's. Private sector partners of Iris Kirby House, Ed Martin of Petro Canada, Neil Mills, of Sobey's Square and Stavanger Drive Zellers Department Stores and Steve White of the Fairmont Newfoundland also participated in the event.

Minister Langdon praised the efforts of those involved in this project. "Meeting the needs of women who are in urgent need of safe and appropriate shelter is what this project is all about. I am pleased that my department has played a role in making this a reality," he commented.

Shannie Duff, Councillor (At Large) with the City of St. John's also praised the work of Iris Kirby House. "The City of St. John's has supported Iris Kirby House through a wide array of in-kind assistance. We recognize the importance of this additional second stage housing and applaud the leadership of Iris Kirby House in its efforts to meet the needs of women in various stages of transition," she said.

Iris Kirby House will undertake significant improvements to the living standards of single women who have experienced abusive relationships. The Iris Kirby transitional housing facility will provide 5 self-contained apartments that will help to address the urgent housing needs of women with no dependent children. It will ensure safe and affordable housing to help women, who are victims of abuse, improve their health, social and economic well being.

Ed Martin of Petro Canada expressed his company's commitment to the objectives of Iris Kirby House through Petro Canada's National Community Investment Program. "Over the past number of years, Petro Canada has been able to contribute to the enhancement of facilities at Iris Kirby House," he stated. "Employees of Petro Canada and Terra Nova Development are pleased to be associated with Iris Kirby House," he added.

Steve White, Director of Operations of the Fairmont Newfoundland said his company's "Adopt a Shelter" program has been a mutually beneficial undertaking. "We are delighted to be associated with and to salute the efforts of the staff of Iris Kirby House. We are very aware of the invaluable work being done by the staff and we are pleased to be able to lend our support throughout the year," he said.

Neil Mills with Zeller's Department Store said, "The decision to extend our Sobeys' Square and Stavanger Drive Stores' support to Iris Kirby House was unanimously adopted by our employees. It is indicative of the important work that Deborah and her staff do for women in need every day," he commented.

Deborah Keats, Administrator of Iris Kirby House, said, "This is an exciting day for our organization. The provision of additional second stage housing will help us to provide appropriate and enhanced services for those women in urgent need of adequate, affordable housing. I want to thank everyone involved for their welcome support and partnership, which has helped to make this project a reality."

The SCPI enables communities to bring together various partners to develop local solutions to their particular homelessness needs and issues. The National Homeless Initiative is making a difference in addressing this issue by using a community-based approach to help develop solutions that work.

In December 1999, the Government of Canada approved more than \$753 million for Youth, Aboriginal and SCPI projects across the country.

Funding for this project was provided for in the federal February 2000 budget and is therefore built into the existing financial framework.

**For more information on the National Homelessness Initiative, visit the web site at <http://hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nsh-snsa>**

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