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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
Fraser Health

### **NEW RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTRE FOR B.C. YOUTH**

VANCOUVER – British Columbia youth challenged by addiction will soon be able to receive long-term residential care at a new treatment centre near Keremeos, about 55 km southwest of Penticton.

“Research shows that the longer a young person stays in treatment, the greater the likelihood they will remain drug and alcohol free when they return to the community,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “This project – the first of its kind in British Columbia – is an example of the community and government working together to ensure our young people receive the services they need.”

Two community organizations, From Grief to Action, a parent support and advocacy group, and Central City Foundation (CCF), have been working with the Ministry of Health and the health authorities to create a program for young people between 14 and 24 years of age.

Young people would enter the program after withdrawing from drugs and alcohol, then stay in the residential program for six months to a year, depending on their needs.

“Addiction can unexpectedly strike in any home and, when it does, the whole family is thrown into turmoil,” said Susie Ruttan of From Grief to Action. “This program will give hope to families in crisis and help young people reclaim their future. We believe this program will save lives.”

CCF will contribute The Crossing, a 58-acre property near Keremeos, to use for the treatment centre, and will lead a capital fundraising campaign to raise the \$6 million needed to renovate and retrofit the existing buildings on the site. The Ministry of Health, through Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health, will contribute \$2.4 million annually to cover operating costs and costs associated with reintegrating young people back into the community when they complete the program.

“Central City Foundation has been helping people in need from the inner city for the past 100 years,” said CCF board member Peter Spencer. “We purchased the land near Keremeos in response to the very serious need in B.C. for services for youth and their families and in hopes of jump-starting a long-term residential treatment centre much like The Crossing will be when it is complete.”

Portage Program for Drug Dependencies will operate the centre. Portage has been successfully treating young people since 1973, and operates similar programs in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

The capital campaign will kick off in late September, with renovations expected to be complete by early summer 2008.

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