



PRESS RELEASE



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Affordable Housing Created from Former Drug House

VICTORIA, British Columbia, September 7, 2006 — A newly renovated former Victoria drug house opened its doors today, offering a unique blend of housing and support services for a homeless family and single parents whose children have left home, and who find themselves at risk of homelessness.

“This unique project represents a new beginning for Victoria families who have been struggling with homelessness,” said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. “Canada’s new Government is proud to be a part of this local success story.”

The Georgian Apartments underwent \$640,000 in renovations to provide five new affordable housing units. This unique conversion is a result of partnerships between several levels of government and the Pacifica Housing Advisory Association.

“The Province is working towards providing families who are vulnerable to homelessness the opportunities to access stable housing and support services,” said Community Services Minister Ida Chong. “The Georgian will offer a brighter future for families in need of affordable homes.”

The renovated apartment building includes four units that will provide affordable housing for single parents whose children have left home and who cannot afford typical market accommodation. Pacifica has identified this need and is addressing it with the Georgian Apartments.

In partnership with the Burnside Gorge Community Association’s Homeless Families Outreach Program, the Georgian’s fifth unit will provide housing and support services including advocacy, life skills development and program referral for a homeless family.

“The Georgian is an important addition to Victoria’s supply of affordable housing,” said Victoria Mayor Alan Lowe. “We’re pleased to be able to convert a formerly troublesome building into a place of hope for at-risk families in our community.”

“The Capital Regional District sees its involvement in the initiative as an opportunity to contribute to affordable housing for at-risk families as part of an innovative partnership with the federal and provincial governments, the City of Victoria, and Pacifica Housing Advisory Association,” added Dean Fortin, Chair of the Regional Housing Trust Fund Commission. “We are happy to be a part of this.”

“The mission of our organization is to provide innovative affordable housing opportunities and support to people in need of such services,” said Pacifica’s Board President Neilane Mayhew. “The Georgian is yet another opportunity for us to reach our goal of helping families in our community in need of housing.”

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Today's announcement reflects the federal and B.C. government's goals of providing affordable housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

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Backgrounder

The Georgian Apartments

The Georgian Apartments, located at 2821 Irma Street in Victoria, provide five affordable housing units. The renovated building is a two-storey wood frame walk-up. Tenants in the three units for single parents whose children have left home will \$355 rent, the one family unit will rent for \$555 and the fifth unit will rent at \$595.

Pacifica Housing Advisory Association

The Pacifica Housing Advisory Association is a registered non-profit society established in 1988 to provide housing for low-income persons and families in Greater Victoria and Nanaimo. The Society is governed by a board of Directors and encompasses two divisions: Pacifica Housing Advisory Association, a charitable society that owns and manages the housing portfolio; and Pacifica Housing Services, which provides outreach and support services to homeless and hard-to-house individuals in the community. In addition to this development, the association houses over 550 tenants in 23 developments.

Partnership Contributions

The capital cost of this project is \$640,000, with funding provided through these partners:

- \$120,000 grant through CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program;
- \$75,000 one-time grant from the Province, through BC Housing;
- \$75,000 grant through the Capital Regional District's Housing Trust Fund;
- \$50,000 grant from the City of Victoria's newly established Municipal Housing Trust Fund;
- \$50,000 grant from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia;
- \$50,000 in cash equity from the Pacifica Housing Advisory Association.