



PRESS RELEASE



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Shelter House Celebrates Opening of New Shelter

THUNDER BAY, Ontario, September 25, 2006 Shelter House today celebrated the opening of Rotary House Thunder Bay. The new 42-bed shelter will provide temporary accommodation for women, men, youth and families.

The \$2.59 million dollar project received federal government funding of \$500,000 from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Shelter Enhancement Program, \$158,100 from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), as well as municipal funding of \$318,303 from the City of Thunder Bay and \$350,000 from the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB). In addition, the Rotary Club of Thunder Bay donated \$210,000 and Shelter House raised money for the construction costs through donations from Thunder Bay organizations and individuals.

"Rotary House will help ensure that the most vulnerable citizens of Thunder Bay have access to the housing and services they need," said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "This project is an excellent example of how Canada's new Government is committed to assisting Canadians in need of shelter."

The City of Thunder Bay is also supporting the new shelter by leasing the land at 420 George Street to Shelter House for 30 years at an annual fee of \$200.

"City Council approved a major contribution to the new Shelter House in recognition of this facility's important role in addressing the community challenge of homelessness," said Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson. "Congratulations to the many, many people and organizations who have come together to build this new facility and improve service to community members who find themselves in need."

"By making a contribution to the new building, Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board recognized the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Ontario Works (OW) recipients and John McKee, Woodworking Trainer, who trained OW recipients to build and install all the cabinets for the new shelter. By establishing a rapport with all members of community we have been able to work for the collective good of all," said Iain Angus, Chair, TBDSSAB.

For 20 years Shelter House has provided short-term relief to those in need of shelter, food and clothing in Thunder Bay. In addition to the shelter, their services include a soup kitchen, referrals and outreach, and a free clothing depot.

Shelter Houses' existing shelter at the corner of Simpson Street and Victoria Avenue was at the end of its usefulness and ability to support the organization's mission. Renovation of the existing facility was not a practical option. Rotary House Thunder Bay will provide 13,875 square feet of barrier-free space for temporary accommodation, the preparation of meals, storage and work space for employees and volunteers.

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“This is a giant step forward for the homeless and impoverished citizens of our community,” said Karen Poole, Chairperson, Shelter House Board of Directors. “This new facility will provide a dignified and respectful environment worthy of our clients, volunteers and staff. Rotary House was made possible through the tenacity of the Shelter House Board of Directors, the compassion of our community and the generosity of our many donors and partners. The many businesses, organizations, groups and individuals should be proud of what they have achieved. On behalf of the Board of Directors I extend a special thank you to our City Council, the Thunder Bay District Social Services Board, the federal government, Rotary Clubs of Thunder Bay and our many funders and donors.”

The Government of Canada launched the National Homelessness Initiative in December 1999 to support communities' efforts to help at-risk Canadians out of homelessness. As part of the initiative, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative program, administered by partnering municipalities, is continuing to make a difference by encouraging the development of flexible, community-driven solutions to help alleviate homelessness and support those who are at risk of homelessness.

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program offers financial assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for victims of family violence, as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters and second stage housing where needed.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has been Canada's national housing agency for more than 60 years. CMHC is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable homes, while making vibrant, healthy communities and cities a reality across the country.

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