



**PRESS RELEASE**



*Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2007*

## **New Shelter Offers Hope for Nanaimo's Homeless**

**NANAIMO, British Columbia, June 01, 2007** — Federal, provincial and local representatives gathered in Nanaimo today to celebrate the official opening of the Salvation Army's New Hope Centre, a new \$4.2 million housing development aimed at helping Nanaimo's population.

New Hope Centre is one of 61 transitional housing developments being built across the province as a result of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions. Other major partners in the project include Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Vancouver Island Health Authority and The Salvation Army.

"Canada's New Government is committed to helping those who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless," said James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo – Alberni on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "The New Hope Centre will help ensure that vulnerable individuals and families in Nanaimo can access the housing and services they need."

"New Hope Centre will be the turning point in the lives of homeless men and women in Nanaimo" said the Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister responsible for Housing. "By providing safe and secure shelter and round-the-clock support, residents will have immediate stability, and can start to prepare for the future."

"The Vancouver Island Health Authority funding for residential care and assisted living workers will provide 24-hour, seven-days-a-week coverage so clients have the necessary supervision and support at all times," said Marg Fraser, manager of Mental Health and Addictions Services in Nanaimo. "A supportive drop-in centre will provide a central location with co-ordinated services to this underserved population."

New Hope Centre has 23 shelter beds and 16 separate, self-contained studio units for men and women to provide them with a secure and comfortable environment. The four-storey building has been built beside the Salvation Army-operated Community and Family Services Centre, which allows for direct access to support programs and resources.

"With approximately 300 homeless people in Nanaimo, providing transitional housing is vital," said Nanaimo Mayor Gary Korpan. "The City of Nanaimo is proud to support this initiative to help break the cycle of homelessness in our city."

"The Salvation Army is pleased to be a part of the Provincial Homelessness Initiative, which is an opportunity to expand our continuum of care," said Major Bill Blackman, Divisional Commander, Salvation Army British Columbia. "New Hope Centre will offer safe appropriate transition housing for men and women who are at risk of homelessness as they move on to more stable living situations."

The Provincial Homelessness Initiative is an integral part of the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC. The strategy includes a commitment to build new supportive housing units as a continuation of the ongoing work of the

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Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions. The Province has committed to creating 2,287 new housing units under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. The Province's budget for shelters and affordable housing is \$328 million — nearly triple what it was in 2001.

Through the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy, a federal government program which came into effect on April 1, 2007, \$270 million will be provided over two years to help communities across Canada combat homelessness more effectively. The Strategy focuses on a housing-first approach to homelessness, recognizing that housing stability is essential to self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society. With its clear goals of improved partnerships, enhanced sustainability and tangible results, the new Strategy will provide concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million by 2010 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

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### Backgrounder

#### New Hope Centre

The Salvation Army New Hope Centre in downtown Nanaimo provides 39 beds, including 23 shelter beds for homeless men, and 16 self-contained studio units for transitional and supportive housing. Each studio and dorm room has a full, private bathroom.

The new four-storey, masonry and wood-frame addition to the existing two-storey Community and Family Services Centre, includes:

- A drop-in Resource Centre with showers and laundry facilities,
- A Living Room – quiet sitting space,
- Offices for Vancouver Island Health Authority and Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance staff, and other community agencies,
- six men's dormitory rooms containing 21 shelter beds,
- two family units with bathroom each containing 3 shelter beds,
- two sleeping units, and
- 16 small studio suites.

A meal program available to shelter and transition residents as well as drop-in guests is operated out of the ground floor of the existing building.

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The capital cost of the development is \$4.2 million.

- The federal government provided \$800,000 under the Canada - British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and \$300,000 in homelessness funding.
- The Province of BC, through BC Housing, provided a \$1.1 million grant and \$346,000 annually for operating funding.
- The Vancouver Island Health Authority is providing \$242,584 in annual operating funding for the support to the 16 housing units and the resource centre.
- The Salvation Army is providing \$375,811 in cash equity, and the land, valued at \$1,089,700. The land value includes \$460,000 in equity from upgrades funded by the federal government through the National Homelessness Initiative.
- The City of Nanaimo is providing \$300,000 in land equity and development cost charge (DCC) forgiveness and reduction of levies totalling \$120,518.
- The Real Estate Foundation of B.C. is providing a \$50,000 grant.

The Salvation Army is the largest non-governmental social service agency in the province. It has vast experience in social service programs including housing and shelter. The B.C. division's operating budget is \$75 million.