



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Our Place Opens to Help Homeless in Victoria**

**VICTORIA, British Columbia, June 24, 2008** — Representatives from all three levels of government and local partners celebrated the official opening of Our Place, a \$14 million development helping to break the cycle of homelessness in Victoria today.

“The Government of Canada is committed to making affordable housing more available in British Columbia and for those who need it most,” said the honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources and MP for Saanich – Gulf Islands, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. “The creation of these units will allow lower-income individuals in Victoria to live in safe, quality housing at an affordable cost, helping them to start a new page in their lives.”

“Helping people overcome homelessness requires both housing and strong integrated services, and Our Place has both,” said Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development. “It is a community of support within itself, providing a home to 45 people and a place where many more can have meals and access the social and health services they need.”

Our Place provides 45 units of supportive housing for the neediest residents in Victoria. The development is funded through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative and also provides a broad range of support services to tenants and people who frequent the drop-in centre, including meals, lockers, washrooms, showers, phones, computers and other services.

“Our Place is the kind of comprehensive, integrated, client-centred model of support for the most vulnerable in our society that was highlighted in the Mayor’s Task Force report released last October,” said Victoria Mayor Alan Lowe. “Through partnering with government and community organizations, an increased level of supports will be available to people most in need in Victoria.”

The development is a result of partnerships between all levels of government, non-profit societies and members of the Victoria community. Our Place is managed by the Our Place Society with Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) providing operating funding for day and residential programs as well as outreach services.

“Integrating and enhancing mental health and addictions services is a key priority for VIHA,” said Alan Campbell, director of mental health and addictions services for VIHA. “We are committed to ensuring clients have timely and appropriate access to a range of addictions and mental health services.”

“Our Place is home to 45 people who would otherwise have nowhere to live and it is a safe place for countless other people to come during the day to have a meal and to connect with help and support,” said Reverend Allen Tysick, executive director, Our Place Society. “More importantly, Our Place is a family where people who have literally nothing can find hope and a way off the streets.”

The Province has committed to creating more than 4,000 new and upgraded supportive housing units in communities across B.C. under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. Budget 2008 increased the amount the Province invests in

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affordable housing and shelters to more than \$380 million a year, more than three times as much as in 2001.

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million towards affordable housing in this province.

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## Backgrounder

### Our Place

Our Place, at 919 Pandora Avenue, is a five-storey concrete building providing 45 units of transitional housing, meal services for tenants and the homeless, a drop-in centre, and support services.

### Partners and Funding:

The capital cost of the development was \$14,942,338. Funding contributions include:

- \$3.375 million capital grant from the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- \$559,000 grant from the Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiatives (SCPI) through Service Canada. SCPI also provided \$235,000 in non-capital start-up funds
- \$7.41 million capital grant from the Province of British Columbia
- \$745,000 grant from the B.C. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
- \$300,000 grant from the Real Estate Foundation of B.C.
- \$50,000 grant from the City of Victoria
- \$1.4 million land value donated by the Our Place Society and cash donations of \$1.1 million
- Vancouver Island Health Authority will provide the operating funding

### Our Place Society

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The Victoria Open Door Inner City Ministry and Upper Room Society consolidated in 2005 to provide a continuum of supports and services for Victoria's homeless. The amalgamated societies were renamed the Our Place Society.