

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2007

WOMEN'S PLACE ST. CATHARINES AND NORTH NIAGARA SHELTER OFFICIALLY OPENS DOORS TO MORE WOMEN AND CHILDREN FLEEING ABUSE

ST. CATHARINES – More women and their children fleeing abuse will continue to benefit from Women's Place St. Catharines and North Niagara, a newly renovated and expanded 34-bed emergency shelter that focuses on a safe, supportive environment.

"Our government is proud to help provide safe and supportive housing to women and their children who are experiencing family violence," said MP Rick Dykstra, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "This funding is helping Women's Place give women living in St. Catharines and North Niagara hope, dignity and a path to a safer, better and stronger future."

The \$4.5 million project to expand the services at Women's Place received more than \$1.8 million through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Shelter Enhancement Program and \$228,204 in federal homelessness funding. The Government of Ontario provided more than \$1.1 million. Several local donors and partners also contributed funding by raising more than \$1.3 million.

"Our government values partnerships with strong community organizations like Women's Place. Working together, we will continue to invest in safe and secure temporary housing for women and their children, an important first step toward rebuilding their lives free of violence," said MPP St. Catharines, Jim Bradley.

The Ontario government's investment builds on its Domestic Violence Action Plan. The plan places strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention to help reduce domestic violence and provides community supports for abused women and their children.

Women's Place St. Catharines and North Niagara provides 24-hour telephone counselling, one-on-one and group counselling, safe, temporary shelter, meals and emergency clothing, and children's counselling and recreation programs.

“Our new facility will allow women the space and privacy they need to heal and consider their options. Children will now have a safe place to play. We can now help more women and children flee abuse,” said Anne Armstrong, Executive Director of Women’s Place St. Catharines and North Niagara. Ms. Armstrong added, “We cannot do this work without the support of our Government partners, donors and community. Violence against women is not just a women’s issue, it’s a community issue that traumatizes our women and children and costs Niagara approximately \$71 million dollars a year in social service, healthcare and lost productivity costs.”

On April 1, 2007, the Government of Canada announced the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) which is providing \$269.6 million 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.

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

As Canada’s national housing agency, CMHC draws on over 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes – homes that will continue to create vibrant and healthy communities and cities across the country. For more information, visit www.cmhc.ca or call 1-800-668-2642.

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For further information, please contact:

Carlene Siopis

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
416-529-2710

Wendy Murray
Women’s Place St. Catharines & North
Niagara
905-684-4000, ext. 231

Jeff O’Grady
Minister’s Office
Ministry of Community and Social Services
416-325-5450