



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women's Place St. Catharines and North Niagara Opens Doors as Gillian's Place

(St. Catharine's, ON) November 16 – Women's Place St. Catharines and North Niagara, a safe haven for women and children escaping abusive situations since 1977, opened the doors of its new facility earlier today.

The \$4.5 million facility is located at the site of the former Victoria School on Gibson Place. The new facility has been named after long-time Executive Director, Gillian Dooley, who recently retired after 27 years of service to the community of St. Catharines and North Niagara.

“It is fitting to name our new location in honour of a unique person who for more than two decades has been a strong voice speaking out against domestic violence in our Region. Gillian's work has been felt locally and nationally, and her commitment and innovation will leave a legacy of hope for people living in fear that will echo for years to come,” said Monica Willows, President of *Gillian's Place* Board of Directors.

The new shelter doubles in-size in terms of square footage compared to the previous location, increasing the capacity to 34 beds. This will provide residents with a safe and spacious place to heal, offering a bedroom for each family and privacy to consider their options. Children will now have ample room to play and just be kids enjoying the large indoor playroom and private outdoor playground. Child and Youth Counsellors are nearby to help children overcome the trauma they have experienced.

“Last year we were forced to turn people away due to the fact we were filled to capacity, but we are pleased to say with the new facility we will be better equipped to meet the current needs of our communities. The new building will also be adaptable to long-term needs if the demand from the community changes,” said Anne Armstrong, Executive Director.

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Gillian's Place also offers support for non residents including 24-hour crisis telephone support, emergency counselling appointments, legal advocacy, community outreach, and transitional supports. *Gillian's Place* also partners with Women's Place South Niagara and the Niagara Regional Police in 'It's Everybody's Business', an ongoing project to educate leaders on the prevalence and the cost of family violence and encourage prevention initiatives.

For more information on *Gillian's Place*, please visit www.gilliansplace.com.

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