

February 2, 2009

Streethome Foundation contributes \$750,000 of private donations to address homelessness

Streethome Foundation officially launched today and gave \$750,000 in private funding to projects that address homelessness. The Foundation's aim is to help ensure that, by 2015, people who are homeless in Vancouver have access to safe, decent, affordable housing and support services.

"This is the first, broad community-based initiative designed to tackle homelessness in Vancouver," said John McLernon, Chair of Streethome and co-founder of Colliers International. "Streethome brings together 25 leaders from all sectors of the community: non-profits, community groups, governments and business. Our work will bring new funding (particularly from private donors), new partnerships and previously untapped strategic resources to build on the work already being done to tackle homelessness."

From private donors, the Streethome Foundation raised funds for two projects:

- \$250,000 toward the just announced London Hotel Project with 72 units. The funds will be used to renovate rooms and bathrooms for use by people who are homeless.
- \$500,000 toward renovations to the Aboriginal Mothers' Centre. The renovations will create 16 units of transitional supportive housing. The apartments will help aboriginal women to get custody of their children who are in foster care, and help new mothers keep their babies.

In addition to these donations, last December, again with the help of private donors, Streethome gave \$500,000 to help the Province and City of Vancouver fund temporary overnight shelter beds.

"Community partnerships are the best way to tackle homelessness, which is why the Province provided \$500,000 to help start the Streethome Foundation," said Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development. "Thanks to the Foundation's links to the community, we've had many anonymous donors step up and help fund shelters and supportive housing."

Besides the Province's initial financial support, Streethome Foundation was also given start-up funding – of \$500,000 each – from the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Foundation.

"The work that Streethome is doing to solve homelessness is catalyzing change across the city," said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson. "In just a few short months, Streethome has

created partnerships and collaborations across different sectors, and has made generous contributions to fund shelters and housing. As Mayor, I am very excited about the work the city can do with Streetohome in the years to come."

Chief Justice Donald Brenner, who serves as Vice-Chair of Vancouver Foundation, explained why Vancouver Foundation was eager to provide seed funding for Streetohome. "For us, Streetohome represented a new approach to the problem of homelessness: an opportunity to get everyone involved and tap new sources of energy, support and funding. And it tied in well to the philosophy we have at Vancouver Foundation – which is that we all owe something back to our community."

Streetohome plans to focus its initial work on its "QuickStart Program" – an initiative to fund housing projects that include on-site support services for chronically homeless individuals. The Foundation will also develop a measurable, longer-term strategy to help ensure access to safe, decent and affordable housing by 2015 for all people in Vancouver who are experiencing homelessness.

For more information on Streetohome Foundation, its structure, goals and projects, go to: www.streetohome.org

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