



NEWS RELEASE

January 29, 2009

Third quarter 2008 ends with more achievements on ending homelessness

Calgary, Alta. – The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF or the Foundation) reports on progress in the implementation of Calgary’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness for the third quarter of 2008 (October – December 2008).

“I’m pleased to say, we’re on track to meet the first year outcomes of the 10 Year Plan,” says Tim Richter, President and CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation. “We’ve made significant progress in the third quarter and we look forward to successfully completing the first year of the 10 Year Plan by March 31, 2009.”

Several key funding announcements were made in the third quarter. The Pathways to Housing Program received \$2.3 million for 2008-2009 from the Alberta Safe Communities Secretariat to support a second team, which aims to house 60 chronically homeless Calgarians struggling with mental illness, addictions and physical health problems over the next 18 months. The province also provided \$747,650 to the Family Violence Housing First Pilot Project, whose first goal is to move 50 women or families living in emergency or transitional housing into permanent housing.

The Government of Canada also announced the extension of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), which was to expire on March 31, 2009. HPS provides operating and capital financial support to agencies who serve those Canadians who find themselves homeless as well as those at risk of becoming homeless. The Calgary Homeless Foundation and many other groups advocated with the federal government for an extension to HPS. Calgary organizations will receive approximately \$6 million in funding through HPS during fiscal 2008-2009.

On November 22, the Foundation hosted 1,038 participants at its third Project Homeless Connect (PHC). This is a one-day event where homeless or near-homeless individuals and families receive a multitude of services in one location. There has been a steady increase in the number of people attending PHC with 650 served on April 26, 2008 and more than 800 served on September 20, 2008. The next PHC is planned for Saturday, February 28, 2009 at the Petro-Canada Centre.

During October and December, the Foundation sent teams onto the streets of Calgary to test, develop, adapt and apply a “Vulnerability Index” (VI). The VI is a tool for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population according to the fragility of their health so those with the most severe health risks can be identified, in order to re-house them and save their lives.



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In December, the Foundation began a national campaign advocating a \$2.5 billion infrastructure investment in affordable housing by the Government of Canada as part of an economic stimulus package. A recession will have significant negative impacts on the 13.5 per cent of Canadian households unable to access acceptable housing. Lower income and fixed income Canadian households are particularly vulnerable. Renters, female lone-parent families, seniors, immigrants and Aboriginal households will face higher risk of losing a roof over their heads.

The Foundation believes this advocacy campaign successfully helped put affordable housing on the national agenda. The federal government announced a \$2 billion investment in social housing in Budget 2009, which was tabled in the House of Commons on January 27, 2009.

“This is the largest federal investment in social housing in more than two decades, which is very positive,” says Tim Richter. “We’re pleased to see the federal government get back into social housing in such a robust manner.”

“We are working with our non-profit partners, the federal government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to put this money to work in our community as quickly as possible.”

The Foundation continues to fund construction of the Alice Bissett Residence in Inglewood, a 114-unit apartment scheduled for completion in early 2009. With a total project commitment from the Foundation of \$4 million dollars, the third quarter saw the \$450,000 proceeds from this summer’s Willow Park Classic Golf Tournament directed toward construction and completion costs. CHF is working on this affordable housing project with the Calgary Home Builders Foundation and the Horizon Housing Society.

Approximately 1,100 potential affordable housing units in various stages of development have been identified as of the end of the third quarter. The Foundation continues to work with governments, agencies, funders, and the private sector to bring these units to fruition. Calgary’s 10 Year Plan calls for 850 units of new affordable housing to be completed and occupied by 2010.

Outstanding front-line workers serving Calgarians who are homeless were recognized by the Foundation on October 27 through the Arthur R. Smith Awards. This program, named to recognize the Founder of the Calgary Homeless Foundation, presented awards to frontline workers Nicole Bealing from Alpha House, Ralph Watson of Oxford House and Shirley Marion from CUPS Community Health Centre for their dedication in serving Calgary’s homeless.



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In November Mr. Steve Snyder, President and CEO of TransAlta Corporation, who chaired the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH), received the Conference Board of Canada's highest honour, the Honorary Associate Award, for exemplary leadership in the Calgary community. On January 24, 2009, he was also recognized by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce's Annual Salute to Excellence for his work with the CCEH. Congratulations!

The Foundation continues to benefit from the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations. Multi-year financial commitments from corporate Calgary for the fiscal year to date total \$2.9 million. Many individuals contributed through their company's matching donations program or made donations directly via the Foundation's website.

Notably, Calgary's 660 News selected the Foundation as a charity for its Caring Tree program during the holiday season and people responded. We thank all donors for their support of the Foundation and our mission to end homelessness in Calgary.

Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness describes planned first year outcomes, and a review of the status of each planned outcome appears in the attached Backgrounder. The Foundation will complete its first year of the 10 Year Plan on March 31, 2009.

"Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness was developed by the community, and the only reason we can report having a successful third quarter is because of the community," says Tim Richter. "This quarter we have seen so many Calgarians get involved and do their part to end homelessness. Thank you Calgary!"

About the Calgary Homeless Foundation

The Calgary Homeless Foundation leads the implementation of Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. Issued in January 2008, Calgary's 10 Year Plan was created by the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, a community-based, multi-stakeholder, leadership group, who issued the Plan and selected the Foundation to implement the Plan. The Foundation is moving forward on Calgary's 10 Year Plan in partnership with the many homeless serving agencies, the private sector, our government partners, the faith community, other foundations and all Calgarians to end homelessness in Calgary once and for all.

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For further information or media interviews please contact:

Sheridan McVean

Calgary Homeless Foundation

403.718.8539

sheridan@calgaryhomeless.com



Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness is available at: www.endinghomelessness.ca.
CHF quarterly reports and news releases are available at: www.calgaryhomeless.com.

Two backgrounders attached:

1. Update on First Year Outcomes as of December 31, 2008
2. Overcoming Homelessness: Success Stories



Backgrounder: Update on First Year Outcomes as of December 31, 2008

The first full year of the implementation of Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness by the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) will end March 31, 2009. Page 14 of the Plan describes intended first year outcomes. This backgrounder reports on the status of each of these outcomes as of December 31, 2008. The Foundation continues to be on track to achieve these objectives.

1. The CHF will be fully staffed and funded to lead the implementation of the 10 Year Plan.
 - ✓ The Foundation opened an additional office location in O'Neil Towers to accommodate additional staff and expects to have the anticipated staff complement as of March 31, 2009.
 - ✓ The Foundation has raised approximately \$2.9 million in multi-year commitments from corporate Calgary.

2. Complete a multilateral agreement between all levels of government and the CHF to implement and fund the 10 Year Plan.
 - ✓ The Government of Alberta requested the Foundation hold this outcome until the province has released its Alberta 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. Alberta would be the first provincial government in Canada to have a province-wide plan to end homelessness.
 - ✓ The federal government has agreed to extend its Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
 - ✓ The CHF and its similar groups across the country have submitted a proposal to the federal government for \$2.5 billion over two years to be invested in affordable housing projects as part of an economic stimulus package.

3. Move 100 chronically homeless Calgarians into permanent housing. (The chronically homeless have been continually homeless for over a year or have been homeless four or more times in the last three years.)
 - ✓ The Pathways to Housing hospital discharge pilot program has re-housed 57 people as of December 31, 2008, with 15 re-housed during the third quarter.
 - ✓ CHF staff completed two three-day Vulnerability Index studies in the third quarter in order to pinpoint the most vulnerable people living on Calgary's streets and help house them. Five people were re-housed as part of the Vulnerability Index activity.
 - ✓ More than 85 families have been housed through the CUPS Rapid Exit Program.

4. Launch a pilot project with Alberta Solicitor General to re-house 50 previously homeless people about to be discharged from provincial corrections.
 - ✓ During the third quarter of 2008, the Alberta Government announced funding for the Pathways to Housing Corrections Discharge Pilot. The program has a goal of housing 60 individuals in a year.



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5. Launch a case management pilot project to move 125 people out of shelter and into permanent housing, and tender case management contracts to move 500 people from emergency shelter into housing.
 - ✓ The CUPS Rapid Exit Program for Singles was announced by the Alberta Government in the second quarter. Since start-up in December 2008, the program – focusing on the chronically homeless – has helped 10 individuals find housing, with an ambitious goal of housing 300 individuals within one year.

6. Begin developing 100 treatment beds for people experiencing mental illness and/or addictions.
 - ✓ This quarter the Foundation, working with the Fresh Start Recovery Centre, received approval of a development permit from the City of Calgary for a 50 bed addictions recovery facility. Fresh Start continues to fundraise for the facility but currently expects site preparation to commence during spring 2009.
 - ✓ The Foundation is working with two other agencies on facilities that would add 48 more beds for people experiencing mental illness and addictions.

7. Move 50 women or families in crisis from emergency or transitional shelter into housing with support.
 - ✓ On October 9, the Alberta Government announced \$747,650 in funding for the Family Violence Housing First Pilot Project, which aims to move 50 woman and children living in emergency or transitional housing into appropriate housing in 2009.

8. Help introduce changes to provincial Income Support and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped to increase incomes of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens.
 - ✓ The Province of Alberta has made positive changes and increases to provincial Income Support and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped programs during June 2008. The Foundation continues to advocate for improvements to a wide range of homelessness prevention strategies.

9. Provide one-stop service to more than 4,000 people at risk of or experiencing homelessness through three Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events.
 - ✓ The third PHC took place November 22, and had its largest turnout with 1,038 participants. Over the three PHCs in 2008, more than 2,480 people have participated.
 - ✓ More than 1,000 are expected to attend the fourth PHC on February 28, 2009.

10. Complete a comprehensive land acquisition strategy and acquire two acres of new land for affordable housing.
 - ✓ The CHF is working with the City of Calgary and the Alberta Government to identify suitable parcels of land for housing on a case-by-case basis. The Foundation is also working on acquiring land and buildings suitable for affordable housing.



Backgrounder: Overcoming Homelessness – Two Success Stories

John

Seeing a middle aged, clean-shaven man sitting on a bench downtown, you'd think he was waiting for the bus to go to work. Probably the last thing you'd think of is a homeless man dealing crack cocaine. Yet this was John's reality.

By age 50, John had raised a family and was operating his own business. But when a friend got him hooked on crack cocaine, he soon found himself selling everything he had to get the drug, and ended up on Calgary's streets. He went through rehabilitation treatments twice, but with no low-cost housing available, John returned to the streets. Here he fell back on what he knew to survive – dealing and using drugs.

After 12 years on the street, John finally was able to get a warehouse job and save up enough for an apartment. "Every day I get a little bit stronger," John said happily. With the stability of permanent shelter, he has overcome his drug addiction and has begun to heal relationships with family members.

He also was able to access additional finances by attending Project Homeless Connect in November 2008. By speaking with the Canada Revenue Agency and explaining the past few years of his life, he has been able to collect an additional \$158 per month that the CRA had been withholding from him.

Lately he's had opportunities to share his experiences and help others through the CHR Safeworks program. He is also working part-time for the Calgary Homeless Foundation doing street outreach.

John said one of the most important things he learned from street life is that "everyone has a story" and you can't assume anything about a person based on appearance.

Robert

As a former employee of a local temporary shelter, it's sadly ironic that Robert would experience homelessness for himself.

Robert was precariously close to being homeless for the second time in his life when he couldn't pay his rent due to a medical condition that prevented him from working. He had been trying for months to find a family doctor without any luck.

When Robert attended Project Homeless Connect in September, he was able to see a doctor. Not only did he receive medical attention that day, he joined the patient list of a family physician. "That's taken a great load off my shoulders," noted Robert.

The physician was also able to fill out forms for Robert verifying that he was unable to work due to medical concerns. This was vital, as it ensured he would continue to receive income support to pay his rent, freeing his mind from worrying about the likelihood of being evicted.

"It was so dark for so long, with me not having a cheque and maybe losing my place," said Robert, "But now the sun is shining, and it's a beautiful day!"