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Families impacted by domestic violence in Calgary now have more affordable housing options

Calgary... More women and children in the Calgary area who have fled domestic violence will have a safe and affordable place to call home thanks to the Brenda Strafford Foundation Affordable Housing Initiative. The Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta celebrated the official opening of the 85-unit housing project today, which received close to $8 million in funding under the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program.

Recognizing a need for more long-term supportive housing for women and children who have fled domestic violence, the Brenda Strafford Foundation committed an additional $14 million to bring this critical housing project to Calgary.

Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Member of Parliament for Calgary East, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and the Honourable Jonathan Denis, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, were present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony today.

"Through investments like this one, our Government is helping to make an important difference in the lives of families in need," said Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai. "The Brenda Strafford Centre will provide a stable and supportive environment for more women and children in times of crisis. We're proud to be a partner in the Centre, and would like to thank and congratulate the staff, volunteers and sponsors who helped make this new facility a reality."

"The Alberta government will continue to assess and address the long-term housing needs of victims of family violence through the province's 10-year plan to end homelessness," said Minister Denis. "This is not merely an investment in a building, it's an investment in people, and that is truly what building a better Alberta is all about."

The Brenda Strafford Centre features 85 two-bedroom apartments and includes an indoor/outdoor play area for children, private counselling offices, and space for group meetings.

"The Brenda Strafford Foundation is very pleased to open such a critically needed facility in Calgary. Access to safe and affordable housing is a key factor in preventing further domestic violence and allowing families to move forward free from abuse," said Mario Siciliano, President and CEO of The Brenda Strafford Foundation. "We are very grateful to our government partners, the Government of Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Province of Alberta, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, along with our capital campaign donors, who made this
The Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Agreement is comprised of a commitment of $98.62 million from each of the two senior levels of government. In total, the federal and provincial governments have invested more than $197 million in the program, which provided over 3,600 affordable housing units in Alberta.

Working together to expand Alberta's affordable housing supply, the two governments have continued to make separate and joint investments in communities across the province.

In 2008, the Government of Canada committed more than $1.9 billion over five years to improve and build new affordable housing and to help the homeless. Canada’s Economic Action Plan builds on this with an additional one-time investment of more than $2 billion over two years for the construction of new and the renovation of existing social housing, plus up to $2 billion in low-cost loans to municipalities for housing-related infrastructure. Most of this funding is being implemented through amendments to the agreements for the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI). In Alberta, this brings a further $119 million in federal funding to the province.

The Alberta government is working to build a better Alberta by fostering economic growth, strengthening our health and education systems, investing in infrastructure, supporting safe and strong communities and ensuring a clean and healthy environment. With strategic investments of more than $1 billion over the past four years, the Government of Alberta has helped to create over 10,000 affordable housing units across the province, and is on track to reach its goal of creating 11,000 affordable housing units by 2012. For more information on affordable housing support in Alberta, visit www.housing.alberta.ca.

To find out more about how the Government of Canada and CMHC are working to build stronger homes and communities for all Canadians, call CMHC at 1-800-668-2642 or visit www.cmhc.ca/housingactionplan. For more information on Canada’s Economic Action Plan, call 1-800-O Canada or visit www.actionplan.gc.ca.

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