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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2001

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS OVER \$637,000 THROUGH THE WHHI TO HELP WINNIPEG'S HOMELESS

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA — The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Francophonie & Western Economic Diversification), on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness, today announced that the Government of Canada is investing \$637,406 in homelessness-related projects through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI). The announcement was made jointly with Tim Sale, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; and Glen Murray, Mayor of the City of Winnipeg.

The investment will help five local community groups expand their existing programs and continue to respond to the needs of Winnipeg's homeless, or those at risk of becoming homeless. Funding for Main Street Project, Holy Trinity Parish, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, West Broadway Development Corporation and Operation Go Home, is provided through the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and Youth Employment Strategy (YES).

"These projects demonstrate what can be achieved when we all work together as partners to find solutions that help improve the quality of life of all Canadians," said Minister Duhamel. "Today's announcement brings the total funding to date invested by the Government of Canada, through the WHHI, to just over \$1.1 million directly aimed at preventing or alleviating homelessness in Winnipeg."

The WHHI is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address declining housing stock, homelessness and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods.

"Empowering community groups to make decisions about how their neighborhoods will be improved and revitalized, and giving them the resources to implement change, is a necessary step toward eliminating the risk of homelessness in Winnipeg," said Minister Sale. "Our partnership within the WHHI and with communities is actively addressing this social issue."

“The key to tackling the homeless problem is prevention,” said Mayor Murray. “Providing these community groups with additional resources will strengthen their efforts to put in place preventive measures to battle the homeless situation in our city.”

All projects were assessed against the Community Plan for the Homeless in Winnipeg, which sets out the objectives and measurements for putting in place a seamless web of services designed to address Winnipeg’s homelessness issues.

The SCPI enables communities to bring together various partners to develop local solutions to their particular homelessness needs and issues. It is a key component of the Government of Canada’s Homelessness Initiative, which also includes expansion of existing programs for youth and Aboriginal peoples, enhancement of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s renovation and shelter programs, and making surplus federal properties available for homelessness-related activities.

The YES is the Government of Canada’s action plan to boost the employability of young Canadians. It is designed to help young people acquire the knowledge, skills, work experience and career information they need to enter and participate fully in the labour market.

Since the launch of the Homelessness Initiative in December 1999, the Government of Canada has approved more than \$143 million for Youth, Aboriginal and SCPI projects across the country. Under the SCPI, YES and Urban Aboriginal Strategy-Homelessness, communities in Manitoba will receive more than \$24.3 million over three years to address homelessness.

Funding for these projects was provided for in the February 2000 budget and is built into the existing financial framework.

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See attached backgrounders for a description of the projects and for more information on the WHHI.

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BACKGROUND

Projects

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (SCPI)

Main Street Project -- \$253,092

To create a multidisciplinary team to work with each client from intake and help them make the successful transition from dependency on crisis or emergency services to an independent lifestyle. Team members will provide individual assessments, counselling and referral services, with a special focus on those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Main Street Project will also implement a service to help clients develop and maintain relationships with public and private housing providers to ensure successful housing placements. In addition, a co-ordinator will be hired to oversee the recruiting and training of new volunteers.

Contact: Joan Dawkins, Executive Director, (204) 982-8242

Holy Trinity Church -- \$55,130

To develop a series of initiatives aimed at expanding its services to downtown residents living in the Holy Trinity Parish community. Initiatives include recruiting and training volunteers, training programs for the homeless and disadvantaged in the areas of nutrition, budgeting, emergency food and clothing, and referral services.

Contact: Reverend Robin Mather, (204) 942-7465

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg -- \$35,000

To conduct research into the assets and gaps affecting homeless people in Winnipeg. In addition, the SPCW will help establish a Reference Group made up of representatives from community service organizations to assist other groups to access funding for homelessness projects.

Contact: Wayne Helgason, Executive Director, (204) 943-2561

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY (YES)

West Broadway Development Corporation -- \$260,294

To hire 18 youth to renovate four affordable homes in the West Broadway neighbourhood. Youth Builders II will provide inner-city youth at risk with short-term employment and new skills in housing construction for future employment in the housing and renovations industry.

Contact: Allan McIntosh, Project Manager, (204) 227-3854

Operation Go Home -- (1) \$15,630 (2) \$18,260

To hire a Housing Registry Co-ordinator to help homeless, runaway youth locate safe and secure housing. The Co-ordinator will maintain and update a vacancy-housing registry for the Spence, West Broadway and Osborne neighbourhoods for use by agencies dealing with homeless or runaway youth on the street.

The Housing Registry Co-ordinator will evaluate rental properties by size and type of units available, rent and utility costs, lease information and youth rental policies. The Co-ordinator will also accompany the client on apartment visits.

Operation Go Home will also hire a Prevention Education Co-ordinator and develop a comprehensive prevention program aimed at deterring at-risk youth from running to the streets.

The Co-ordinator will work closely with school officials and community members to produce communications materials and deliver workshops dealing with life and dangers of living on the streets.

Contact: Margaret Church, Executive Director, (204) 783-5617

BACKGROUND

Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI)

Established in May 2000, the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address declining housing stock, homelessness and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods.

Located at 233 Portage Avenue in the Curry Building, the WHHI Single Window office serves as a one-stop shop approach for community organizations to access information on government-funded housing and homelessness programs. The Single Window concept also helps foster improved cooperation and information sharing between the various levels of government and the community groups. Community groups wanting more information on the programs available can call the WHHI at (204) 940-3070.

FUNDING

Government of Canada

- \$10.8 million over three years under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) for Winnipeg homelessness-related projects. The SCPI is based on a community plan developed by the various partners to design and implement local solutions to their particular homelessness issues. The SCPI funds up to 50 per cent of the costs of implementing the community plan. The other 50 per cent is comprised of direct or in-kind contributions from a variety of partners, including other levels of government, community organizations, and the private and voluntary sectors.
- \$567,000 annually to homelessness-related youth projects under Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES). \$3.3 million annually has been directed to homelessness-related Aboriginal projects under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS).
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), to help low-income households and landlords make necessary repairs to bring their properties up to acceptable health and safety standards. RRAP is cost-shared 75/25 per cent respectively by the federal and provincial governments. The Manitoba government is administering the program while the City of Winnipeg acts as the delivery agent.

Government of Manitoba

- \$8 million over four years for housing in Winnipeg neighbourhoods through the Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) program under the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative. Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term development strategy aimed at providing community groups with the support they need for programs in the areas of housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention.
- The NHA will contribute to the revitalization of housing in declining neighbourhoods by supporting homeownership and renovation initiatives of community-based groups in designated neighbourhoods. Eligible community organizations and individuals may receive up to \$10,000 per residential dwelling unit for the purchase or renovation.

City of Winnipeg

- \$7 million over five years under the Winnipeg Housing Policy to fund housing initiatives in targeted inner-city neighbourhoods.