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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHHI FUNDS TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECT IN WINNIPEG

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, OCTOBER 3, 2003—Two newly renovated homes in the inner-city can now provide individuals living with mental health problems and at risk of being homeless with affordable, transitional and supportive housing. The Westminster Housing Society Inc. purchased and renovated the houses with the help of \$508,300 in funding assistance from the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

The funding is being provided through the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), the Canada–Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative, and the City of Winnipeg's Housing Policy.

Today's announcement was made during the official opening of the newly renovated homes. Participating in today's ceremony were: Anita Neville, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South Centre, on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Federal Coordinator on Homelessness; Rob Altemeyer, Member of Legislative Assembly for Wolseley, on behalf of the Honourable Drew Caldwell, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; Glen Murray, Mayor of Winnipeg; Dr. Sharon Macdonald, Vice-President of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; and Wayne Arnould, President of the Westminster Housing Society Inc.

“This funding contribution represents the Government of Canada's commitment to working with community groups such as Westminster Housing to help ensure individuals with special needs are provided with the housing and services they need to lead healthy, independent lives,” said Ms. Neville. “This project is an example of the efforts by all the partners to help improve the lives of the less fortunate and give them hope for something better than a life on the streets.”

“We applaud Westminster Housing Society's unique approach in creating more safe housing for people in need,” said Mr. Altemeyer. “Manitoba is pleased to support projects where affordable units of housing are developed which also give people the opportunity to achieve greater self-sufficiency and independence.”

“Initiatives such as these make a tangible difference in the lives of people who need our respect and support to become active, healthier members of the community,” said Mr. Murray. “I am pleased with the level of cooperation and commitment of the city of Winnipeg and our partners to provide transitional housing for people who are too often marginalized and forgotten. Together, we're building caring neighbourhoods, one affordable home at a time.”

Funding of \$418,300 was provided to the Westminster Housing Society under the SCPI, \$70,000 through the Canada–Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative, \$20,000 from the City of Winnipeg, and additional funding by the Westminster Housing Society.

The project involved purchasing two inner-city rooming houses and converting them into eight self-contained units of affordable, accessible housing for individuals living with special needs. One of the units has been adapted to allow wheelchair accessibility on the main floor. In addition, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority will recommend the tenants for these homes and will provide a range of supportive services to enable them to live independently. The homes are owned and managed by the Westminster Housing Society and demonstrate the organization's commitment to providing good, quality accommodations to low-income residents at affordable rates.

“While this is a day for celebration, much remains to be done in providing homes for the homeless at rental rates they can afford and in restoring a neighbourhood that has been too long neglected,” said Wayne Arnould, President of Westminster Housing Society. “With our financial partners, and working in cooperation with other community organizations, we intend to continue our work in the West Broadway community.”

The project is being coordinated through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, a partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness, declining housing stock and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. Located at 361 Hargrave Street, the WHHI serves as a single-window office for community organizations to access information on government-funded housing and homelessness programs. Community groups wanting more information on programs can call the WHHI at (204) 940-3070.

For more information:

Sue Foley-Currie
Human Resources Development Canada – Manitoba Region
(204) 983-3781

Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) Funding

In the first three years of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), communities in Manitoba received approximately \$24 million:

- \$12.8 million through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), which includes \$10.9 million for homelessness projects in Winnipeg, and \$1.9 million for projects outside the city. 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.
- \$1.7 million for youth projects under Youth-at-Risk-Homelessness (Youth Employment Strategy); and
- \$9.9 million for Aboriginal-specific projects under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy-Homelessness.

The Government of Canada launched the National Homelessness Initiative in December 1999 to support communities' efforts to help homeless Canadians. Building on the successes achieved, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Minister Claudette Bradshaw recently announced \$405 million for three years to continue the Government's commitment to addressing homelessness in Canada.

The National Homelessness Initiative is making a difference by encouraging the development of flexible, community-driven solutions to help alleviate homelessness. Funding for the Initiative is provided for in the February 2003 federal Budget.

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit the NHI Web site at: www.homelessness.gc.ca

- The Canada–Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) was signed in September 2002 and provides \$50.8 million over five years to help increase the supply of affordable rental units and new housing available in the province. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), on behalf of the Government of Canada, has contributed \$25.39 million, which is matched by the Province of Manitoba. It is anticipated the AHI will create 2,500 units over five years.
- The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) helps 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 government through CMHC, and by the provincial government through Manitoba Family Services and Housing. Manitoba is administering the program while the City of Winnipeg acts as the delivery agent.

- The Government of Canada annually supports housing in Manitoba, with approximately \$112 million in grants, contributions and subsidies, which serves 42,750 low-income families, seniors, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal people and victims of domestic violence.

For more information on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, visit the CMHC Web site at: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Government of Manitoba

Manitoba works cooperatively with the other levels of government to revitalize housing. Projects may be funded with assistance from the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative.

- The Government of Manitoba has committed \$25.39 million, through the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative, to further increase support for the development of safe and affordable housing. Funding support under the New Rental Supply, New Homeownership Supply, Repair/Conversion and Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance Programs is available to support housing proposals.
- The Manitoba government has also committed close to \$2 million annually to its share of federal renovation programs, including the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP).
- Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term development strategy that provides community groups in designated areas of Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson 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 Manitoba government has committed \$3.7 million to Neighbourhoods Alive! in the 2003 budget to develop local capacity, innovative training and provide a fund through which local neighbourhoods can implement their revitalization plans.

For more information on Manitoba Family Services and Housing, visit www.gov.mb.ca/fs/

City of Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg has allocated \$17.5 million over five years under the Winnipeg Housing Policy and the Affordable Housing Initiative to fund housing initiatives in targeted inner-city neighbourhoods:

- The Winnipeg Development Cost Offset Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 to assist neighbourhood organizations and proponents to plan and implement quality, affordable housing projects by providing financial assistance for pre-development costs and the reimbursement of City fees.
- The Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Plans and Advocacy Program provides financial assistance of up to \$30,000 and other support for community stakeholders to develop a housing plan or strategy to build local capacity, to undertake housing initiatives, and to provide training and support for home ownership and tenancy.

- The Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Program provides financial assistance for projects that support the development and implementation of affordable housing and that is consistent with Neighbourhood Housing Plans and strengthen neighbourhood stability. The total assistance is based on an approved proposal and business plan.
- The Winnipeg Minimum Home Repair Program provides financial assistance to owner-occupants to undertake minor critical repairs required for the continued safe and healthy occupancy of homes.
- The Winnipeg Downtown Housing Program provides financial assistance to encourage unique and innovative approaches that support downtown housing development and result in quality, affordable housing by providing financial assistance to proponents. The total assistance is based on an approved proposal and business plan.

For more information on the City of Winnipeg, visit: www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca