



Funding enables conversion of historic house and expanded services for people with HIV/AIDS

Winnipeg, September 17, 2004 - Representatives from three levels of government today participated in the official opening of the newly-renovated House of Hesus (Hebrew word for “mercy”), a transition house for persons with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Winnipeg. The house is the only one of its kind in the province.

With the assistance of the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI), New Direction for Life Ministries, a Christian agency, was able to purchase and renovate a large, beautiful residence at 45 Edmonton Street and expand its programs to help people with HIV/AIDS. The early 1900’s three-storey house has increased House of Hesus’s occupancy capacity to 10 spaces for HIV/AIDS clients and one space for a live-in care worker. Most of the support to operate the house comes from the church community in Winnipeg and surrounding communities.

The Honourable Christine Melnick, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing, Councillor Donald Benham for River Heights-Fort Garry, George Skinner, Director General for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Manitoba Region, and Harold Jantz, Chair of the Board of Directors for New Life Ministries/House of Hesus, participated in today’s official opening ceremonies.

"We are tremendously grateful for the assistance that allowed us to obtain the fine house on Edmonton Street," says Moe Feakes, Director. "It was a God-send. The spaces this house has given us have made it possible for our staff to create a warm, restful and inviting place. We are very pleased."

"The Government of Canada, was pleased to support the House of Hesus project with funding assistance of \$409,944 through the National Homelessness Initiative," said the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "This support enabled the New Direction for Life Ministries to realize their dream of creating this new home, and to ensure people living with HIV/AIDS enjoy a safe, affordable and nurturing environment."

“By contributing, through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, to this important next stage for House of Hesus, we are able to better support citizens in need and enable them to live in dignity and security,” said Minister Melnick.

"This project is a great example of how citizens and government can work together to address the special needs of the members of our community," said Mayor Sam Katz. "This new home will be a safe and caring place for individuals with HIV/AIDS."

The House of Hesed has been in operation since 1998. From the start it provided transitional housing and care for six persons with HIV/AIDS. It grew out of the experience of several volunteers with New Direction for Life Ministries, an agency that offers counsel and support to persons struggling with sexual issues. In the years since it began, the House of Hesed has provided a welcoming environment to some 35 men and women. Unfortunately, some have died while others have gone on to live in their own apartments.

The Founder and director is Maureen (Moe) Feakes.

The desire to move to a larger facility was prompted by a belief that the House of Hesed could serve a larger group of persons and the need for facilities that were more user-friendly. The new building has a dispensary, office, visiting room, high-ceilinged basement, and very large bedrooms, besides a fine kitchen and eating area and new washrooms.

With funding assistance through the WHHI, the House of Hesed Board was able to purchase the house and complete most of the renovations. The move from the previous location was made in mid-May.

For more information, contact:

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