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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GROUPS RECEIVE OVER \$478,000 FOR HOMELESSNESS PROJECTS IN WINNIPEG

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA—Four local community service providers will share over \$478,000 to improve existing transitional housing for people with disabilities, and to continue programming for homeless or at-risk youth in Winnipeg. The projects are being made possible with funding support from the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

Funding is being provided to L'Arche Winnipeg Inc., Klinik Community Health Centre, West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre and United Church Halfway Homes under the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). The attached backgrounder outlines the approved projects.

The funding announcement was made today at the former convent of the Oblate Sisters, site of the first L'Arche Winnipeg project, at 420 Rosseau Avenue East. The Honourable Christine Melnick, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; Anita Neville, MP for Winnipeg South Centre, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing; and Councillor Russ Wyatt, Transcona Ward, on behalf of Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz, participated in today's ceremonies.

"We are pleased that this support, through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, will result in needed accessibility improvements to facilities and will also support youth as they gain important work skills and experience," said Minister Melnick. "We acknowledge the key role of the community partners in helping people with disabilities to live safely and participate in our society, economy and labour market."

"The renovations being made to all of these residences are essential to enhance the accessibility for the residents, provide support services and extend the lifespan of the projects," said Neville. "The Government of Canada is pleased to partner with local groups like these to help develop long-term solutions to address homelessness."

"Winnipeg has historically led the nation when it comes to ensuring that facilities are accessible to all citizens," said Councillor Wyatt. "These dollars will help ensure that we continue this important work, by providing safer and more accessible facilities for at-risk youth and for individuals with disabilities."

The funding, through the WHHI, is helping organizations to build new facilities or renovate existing buildings, provide more transitional housing as well as expand programs and services for those at risk of being homeless.

“This funding will ensure we have transitional housing with various levels of accessibility allowing our aging members with mobility disabilities to continue to live in the L'Arche Community,” said Dennis Butcher, Community Leader, L'Arche Winnipeg.

“The Dream Catchers Project is an important part of the healing process and provides necessary supports, mentorship and guidance for at risk youth who have been affected by such challenges as childhood sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and addictions,” said Lori Johnson, Klinik Community Health Centre Executive Director. “We are grateful to the WHHI for enabling us to continue on with this program.”

“The Odd Jobs for Kids is important for preparing kids for the workforce,” said Linda Williams, Coordinator of the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre. “It’s also instrumental in keeping kids out of trouble and teaching them how to relate efforts to rewards.”

“The funding from the WHHI will be directed toward much-needed repairs to one of our homes in the west end of Winnipeg,” said Ron Coles, Executive Director, United Church Halfway Homes. “These repairs are crucial to our sustainability and will allow us to continue re-integration services to men and women who have just been released from prison, a significant portion of whom have an increased risk of homelessness due to a wide range of mental illnesses/disabilities.”

The Government of Canada launched the NHI in December 1999 to support communities’ efforts to alleviate homelessness. Between 1999 and 2006, \$1.15 billion will have been invested as part of the federal government’s commitment to addressing homelessness in Canada. To date in Winnipeg alone, 117 projects, representing an investment of about \$30 million, have been either developed or approved to proceed.

The funding is coordinated through the WHHI, 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:

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BACKGROUND

Funding for the projects below is provided under the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI):

- **L'Arche Winnipeg Inc. Renovation/Transitional Housing - \$387,302**

To renovate the L'Arche home at 420 Rousseau Avenue E (former convent of the Oblate Sisters) in Transcona, and make it more accessible for the residents. The majority of the renovations involve the installation of a new elevator and wheelchair accessible washrooms. In addition, renovations will be made to another existing L'Arche Winnipeg Inc. home at 7 Kern Drive, also in Transcona, to make it wheelchair accessible on the main floor with a ramp, two bedrooms and an expanded washroom. These renovations will provide safe and accessible facilities for five to seven residents with developmental and physical disabilities. Total project cost: \$393,302.

Contact: Dennis Butcher (204) 237-0300

- **Klinic Community Health Centre – Dream Catchers Project - \$41, 907**

To cover part-time wages for a Staff Counsellor/Coordinator as well as to cover the Peer Mentor honoraria. The Dream Catchers Project provides support, mentorship, and social services to at-risk youth whose lives have been affected by such challenges as childhood sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and addictions. This project will help support women (majority of who are homeless or at risk of homelessness) in the transition out of the sex trade. Total project cost: \$110,827

Contact: Lori Johnson (204) 784-4076

- **West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre - Odd Jobs For Kids Project - \$38,516**

To cover wages for youth participants in the Odd Jobs For Kids Project. The project will provide inner-city Aboriginal youth, between 10 and 19 years of age, with opportunities to develop work skills and work experience. Odd Jobs allows youth to work in familiar surroundings with supportive staff that train and supervise them. Total project cost: \$73,681.

Contact: Linda Williams (204) 783-1995

- **United Church Halfway Homes - Renovation/Transitional Housing - \$10,647**

To renovate an existing 100 year-old transitional facility and maintain the current stock of transitional housing for ex-offenders, including those with mental illness and disability who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The renovations will lead to improved living conditions for the residents by providing a healthier, more comfortable and safer environment. Total project cost: \$14,506.

Contact: Ron Coles - (204) 783-6332