

For Immediate Release:
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Innovative Programs and Tools Introduced to End Homelessness in Calgary

*An Update on the 2nd and 3rd Quarters of Fiscal 2009-2010
July 1 – December 31, 2009*

Calgary, AB The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) and 10 Year Plan partners continued to make strides toward ending homelessness in Calgary based on progress in the second and third quarters of 2009.

“The second half of 2009 saw a number of great innovations introduced in Calgary,” said Tim Richter, CHF President and CEO. “New programs continue to prove that providing affordable housing and support services is efficient and effective, while the tools are helping us better understand homelessness so we can more precisely focus our efforts.”

Q2/Q3 Performance Toward Fiscal 2009/2010 Priorities

Augment domestic violence re-housing programs to house 25 to 40 families fleeing violence

Calgary Urban Projects Society’s (CUPS) Rapid Exit Housing Family Violence program re-housed 40 new families fleeing violence. Families received support from Discovery House’s new Family Violence Housing First Case Management program, which began in January 2009.

Augment family re-housing programs to house 120 homeless families

Forty-five new families were re-housed through CUPS’ Rapid Exit Families program. Support for these families was provided by the new Integrated Services Assessment and Case Coordination case management team.

Develop and implement shelter diversion programs for individuals and families at risk of homelessness

In December, two homelessness prevention pilot programs were launched. Aspen’s Family and Community Network Family Shelter Diversion program served five families, and the Inn From the Cold Diversionary Project served eight families. Each program aims to prevent 60 families from homelessness over a one year period. Agencies are also working to develop a pilot program to divert individuals from mainstream emergency shelters. The singles diversion program is expected to start by the end of March 2010.

House and support 60 homeless individuals with complex mental health and addictions issues, who are being discharged or diverted from the criminal justice system

A new program, Pathways to Housing (Corrections Team), re-housed 32 homeless individuals since June 2009. This program, provided by the Alex Health Centre, serves people with complex mental health and addictions issues, who have been discharged or diverted from the criminal justice system.

Develop and implement a medium/high intensity case management program to re-house some of the city's most vulnerable homeless individuals

The Alex Community Health Centre's HomeBase program was launched in July 2009. The program uses the "Housing First" philosophy to provide some of Calgary's most vulnerable homeless individuals with affordable housing and support. In the second and third quarters, HomeBase provided support for 25 individuals, of whom 13 were housed by HomeBase and 12 were housed by the CUPS' Rapid Exit Program for Singles.

Complete business planning and secure funding and agency partners for a 24/7 Opportunity Centre and a Hospital Discharge (Respite Care) Facility, both to be opened by year end 2010

Work began on business planning for a 24/7 Opportunity Centre. The Centre is envisioned as a "one stop shop" where people at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness can receive the services and supports necessary for them to prevent or end their own homelessness.

In the meantime, the CHF continued to host Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events, where about 50 agencies provide services to individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Two PHC events were held in the second and third quarter of 2009. Each event attracted more than 650 participants, bringing the total served at seven PHC events to more than 5,000.

Work with emergency shelters and existing re-housing programs to accelerate re-housing, prioritizing long-term homeless in shelters or those cycling in and out of shelter

In addition to introducing new programs and pilot projects outlined in the other priority areas, the CHF and family-serving agencies are developing a co-ordinated intake and re-housing process for families at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

At the CHF's fall fundraising event, "Ed's House Warming Party," Premier Ed Stelmach presented a cheque for \$1.179 million in program funding to Calgary's Mustard Seed Street Ministry to re-house and support 360 men and women over the next year.

Develop or fund 1,025 affordable housing units, supportive housing units and/or treatment beds

The total number of affordable housing units developed or funded in 2009/2010 will be known in the fourth quarter, based on the units developed by The City of Calgary and the success of RFPs submitted to the Government of Alberta for affordable housing in Calgary.

The Government of Alberta and the City of Calgary made a number of announcements during the second half of 2009, advancing investment into affordable housing in Calgary. In December, the Government of Alberta announced \$6.2 million in funding for the CHF to create 52 affordable housing units in Calgary. The City of Calgary presented a \$4 million cheque to the Mustard Seed to develop an affordable housing initiative – 196 studio apartments and 28 one-bedroom suites.

In addition to public sector funding, First Calgary Savings announced a \$5 million interest free Evergreen Line of Credit for the CHF. This unique Line of Credit will be used by the CHF to purchase land and buildings for affordable housing.

Alice Bissett Place became the first affordable housing units in Canada to achieve the Platinum Level of Built Green™ program and 82 EnerGuide rating. The 114-unit housing complex opened in June 2009 and is a joint venture partnership of the Calgary Home Builders Foundation, the CHF and Horizon Housing.

Advancing Knowledge of Homelessness and “Housing First”

CHF is working with partners to better understand homelessness, to advance education for staff and volunteers in homeless serving agencies and to develop tools which prioritize resources for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

“Some of Calgary’s brightest minds are working with us to better understand the causes of homelessness, so we can focus prevention efforts,” said Richter.

In partnership with the University of Calgary’s (U of C’s) Faculty of Social Work, the CHF developed the Homeless Asset and Risk Tool, a first of its kind screening tool. The tool helps identify those at greatest risk of homelessness and will allow agencies to more precisely target homelessness prevention efforts.

In partnership with the Alex Pathways to Housing program and the U of C Faculty of Social Work, the CHF developed a certificate training program for front-line employees and volunteers in homeless serving agencies. The CHF will provide 30 individuals currently employed or volunteering with an organization serving the homeless in a front-line capacity with \$1,200 scholarships.

The CHF used funding from the Government of Canada to develop a re-housing toolkit, which identifies and prioritizes housing for the most vulnerable. The tool, called the Re-housing Triage Assessment Survey, is based on the Vulnerability Index created by Common Ground in New York.

Calgary hosted and CHF sponsored a conference among the seven Alberta cities implementing a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The conference showcased innovations to end homelessness and provided delegates with an opportunity to share successes and challenges in the development, implementation and transition to a “Housing First” approach. At the 5th National Housing Day sponsored by CHF, Calgarians learned more about the benefits of developing affordable housing.

Calgarians wishing to contribute by making donations or volunteering are encouraged to visit the CHF website: www.calgaryhomeless.com.

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Calgary Homeless Foundation

The Calgary Homeless Foundation leads the implementation of Calgary’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. Issued in January 2008, Calgary’s 10 Year Plan was created by the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, a community-based, multi-stakeholder, leadership group who issued the Plan and selected the Foundation to implement the Plan. The Foundation is moving forward on Calgary’s 10 Year Plan in partnership with the many homeless serving agencies, the private sector, our government partners, the faith community, other foundations and all Calgarians to end homelessness in Calgary once and for all.

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For more information on the Calgary Homeless Foundation or the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, please visit www.calgaryhomeless.com.