

INN FROM THE COLD WAITING ON PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS TO BUY EMERGENCY FAMILY SHELTER

Calgary - The purchase of Calgary's first, and much needed, emergency family shelter is in jeopardy of falling through as a result of continued delays by the Alberta government in deciding on a funding application submitted four months ago. The request for \$2 million has been sitting with government officials since February. At the time the application was made, Inn from the Cold was advised that a decision would be made no later than the end of May 2008. Despite repeated follow up, the government has not reached – or revealed – a decision.

The funds are to be used to purchase Centre 110, located at 110 - 11th Avenue S.E., a building currently owned by the Calgary Drop-in & Rehab Centre, for \$6 million. The Calgary community has already demonstrated its support through the Inn's Building Family capital campaign that has raised almost \$4 million.

"We have been able to keep this purchase alive only through the support of the Drop-in Centre, which has granted us several extensions as we've waited to hear from the provincial government", says Steve Cloutier, Inn from the Cold Board President. "It's obviously frustrating to have finally identified and negotiated the purchase of a building that so thoroughly meets the needs of Calgary's homeless families, only to be repeatedly told by the province that a decision is coming soon".

Centre 110 has the appropriate zoning and permits for a transitional shelter, is centrally located, accessible by transit and close to many partner agencies that provide programs and services to the homeless families. It is also located in an area experiencing a residential building boom that will see more families moving into the neighbourhood in future months and years.

Cloutier adds, "This is really about doing what is best for Calgary's homeless families. At the new shelter, we could give families a stable environment while they prepare for appropriate housing when it becomes available, in keeping with the Housing First philosophy. Without this building, children and their families will continue their nomadic lifestyle of going to different shelter locations each night. We believe we can do better than that. We need this government to step up and help us. "

Inn from the Cold began operating eleven years ago at a time when the provincial government was cutting debt. The Calgary community demonstrated a groundswell of support to care for those homeless families in need, taking on a role that historically had been assumed by governments. Volunteer churches began providing emergency shelter for mothers, fathers and their children who were facing the prospect of sleeping on the street. The organization has now grown to a network of approximately 4,000 volunteers representing over 100 churches, synagogues, mosques and community associations which donate their facilities as shelters for homeless families.

Inn from the Cold must finalize its financing within the next few days to successfully secure Centre 110.



Says Cloutier, "This money is a great investment in the future of homeless families. There is no reason to not support this project now, and even less to endlessly delay a decision on funding."

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