

Inn from the Cold Finds Emergency Family Shelter

Calgary – After two years of looking, Inn from the Cold has successfully secured a building for Calgary's first Emergency Family Shelter. The organization will purchase Centre 110, located at 110 – 11 Avenue S.E., from the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre. Inn from the Cold's administration office has been located in the building, since the Drop-In offered the rent-free space two years ago. The organization will use the upper floors for a dormitory-style living for families.

"This is a very positive step for homeless families and for the Calgary community as a whole," says Diana Segboer, Inn from the Cold's Executive Director. "For the past 10 years, through our network of volunteers, we have been providing temporary emergency shelter in different churches and buildings. While our families have received compassionate care, safe shelter and warm meals, they have dealt with the uncertainty of not knowing where they will be staying from night to night. This nomadic lifestyle is particularly hard on children."

With the Emergency Family Shelter, families will now have the benefit of staying at one address and the volunteers will come to them to provide meals and hospitality. While at the Emergency Family Shelter, homeless families will work closely with the Inn's Outreach counselors to access the programs and services they need to stabilize and begin to prepare for supported, and ultimately, market housing.

Inn from the Cold will continue to need its network of churches and other venues to provide temporary emergency shelter for single guests and any families that cannot be accommodated at the Centre 110 emergency shelter.

"We are delighted to be able to further Inn from the Cold's initiatives in providing wrap-around services to homeless families through the purchase of Centre 110," says Dermot Baldwin, Executive Director, Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre. "We wanted to ensure no services were lost and that continuity was maintained with all families in the network. By providing families with a viable alternative to the nomadic lifestyle Diana describes, we have a better opportunity of ending the cycle of homelessness within children's lives, and thus, affect the long-term impact of homelessness within our adult client base."

Segboer explains that a designated Emergency Family Shelter brings a much-needed resource to the Calgary community. "We strongly support the goal of ending homelessness in our community. However, we also know that families are unique and require many resources to permanently break the cycle of homelessness. The shelter is a crucial first step."

It is anticipated that the deal will close in the Spring 2008, with the shelter becoming operational once renovations have been completed. Inn from the Cold is currently fundraising to ensure that the financial conditions of the deal are met.

For more information or to make a donation, call 263-8384.