

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA RELEASE****Collaboration leads to 45 new affordable homes for Calgarians with limited mobility**

Government of Alberta and generous donors help Accessible Housing build the way for barrier-free housing for vulnerable Calgarians through the RESOLVE Campaign

Calgary, Alberta – Sept. 8, 2016 – Accessible Housing and the RESOLVE Campaign host a groundbreaking event today from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 1129 23 Avenue NW to celebrate this significant step towards achieving RESOLVE’s goal of making home a reality for 3,000 vulnerable Calgarians through a first-of-its-kind collaboration between nine agencies.

A new affordable and accessible home for 45 Calgarians with limited mobility will be made possible in part by generous donations from: the Government of Alberta; R. Charlie Guille & Family, Bill Kujat & Family; Centron Group of Companies; RGO Group of Companies; BMO Financial Group; Trico Homes and other generous community members.

“Having a place to call home is the foundation for building a meaningful life. With the creation of these unique, new homes, more individuals will be able to thrive and contribute to our community. It is a momentous first-time celebration for Calgary,” said Jeff Dyer, Chief Executive Officer, Accessible Housing.

There is an urgent need for safe, affordable, permanent and barrier-free housing with supports in Calgary. Calgarians with disabilities report a significant level of concern with housing affordability and safety; of these individuals, 40 per cent are worried about not having enough money for housing. Yet, less than three per cent of Calgary’s affordable housing is also accessible.

“I’m pleased to celebrate the beginning of this project that will strengthen the way we support Albertans with disabilities at home and in our communities. By working with our community partners and making capital investments in housing, our government is ensuring Albertans have safe, affordable and supportive places to call home while creating construction jobs throughout the province,” said Minister Irfan Sabir.

This project will benefit health systems specifically by providing access to 45 permanent beds with supports for people with complex medical needs. The long-term cost-savings of this approach decreases hospitalization rates and the use of emergency medical services, by ensuring stable, supportive care.

Bob Harris of Centron Group of Companies, also a builder, saw our city’s urgent need for homes that are both accessible and affordable for people with limited mobility. Harris enlisted the support of three friends – Bill Kujat of Safeway Holdings, Charlie Guille of Cougar Contractors Ltd. and Ross Glen of RGO Office Products – and, together with their families, they made an incredible combined gift of \$5.6 million to Accessible Housing’s RESOLVE project. The four friends are a group often referred to as the “Amigos.”

The Amigos were eager to support this project, “It’s important to make life a little more comfortable for people in need of affordable and accessible housing,” Bob Harris said. “This building will offer that,” Harris added.

Sadly, Charlie Guille passed away on April 17, 2016. He will always be remembered for his incredible generosity and commitment to those in need. Charlie chose to give an additional \$1 million to the Campaign and the legacy he has left through these gifts will help vulnerable Calgarians for years to come.

By 2019, an estimated 200,000 Calgarians over the age of 15 will be living with a disability. Individuals with disabilities are four times more likely to require homeless shelters compared to those without disabilities.

“There is an urgent need in our city for safe, affordable and barrier-free housing with supports,” said Craig Hill, Partner, Dentons LLP and Vice-Chair of the RESOLVE Campaign. “Generous contributions to Accessible Housing’s project, through the RESOLVE Campaign will make a home possible for Calgarians who might otherwise be forced to live in inaccessible, unaffordable and unsafe environments,” Hill added.

Located in Capitol Hill, Accessible Housing and RESOLVE will build on land Accessible Housing currently operates on to increase the previous 11 units to 45. The new barrier-free building will offer multi-purpose rooms, office space, a commercial kitchen and underground parking; close to public transportation and amenities. More importantly, this building will offer the security and stability of a home for 45 people with physical disabilities who might otherwise be forced to live in unsuitable, unsafe housing and access emergency medical services more frequently and stay in hospital for longer periods of time.

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The 11 residents that previously lived in the Accessible Housing group home, Fourth Dimension, are now living with RESOLVE partner Silvera for Seniors, in their Westview Community building for approximately 14 to 20 months while their new home is built.

"I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to live in a place where I can excel and receive the support I need," said Bill Turko, a future resident of the 45-unit building. "I love the community we are in – all of the neighbours are very friendly and it truly feels like home," Turko added.

The celebration of this significant step forward towards ending homelessness will take place today at the building's future site (1129 23 Avenue N.W.) from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. with comments from representatives of the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, donors who have made the building possible and an Accessible Housing resident.

About Accessible Housing

Accessible Housing is a Calgary not-for-profit organization that opens doors to homes that are accessible and affordable for people with limited mobility. Accessible Housing's vision is that everyone has a home and belongs in community. For more information about Accessible Housing's programs, services and clients, visit www.accessiblehousing.ca.

About RESOLVE

RESOLVE is a unique collaboration of nine Partner agencies raising \$120 million to build affordable and supported rental housing for 3,000 vulnerable and homeless Calgarians. The nine respected and established agencies have partnered with government, business and community leaders, all resolving to make Calgary a better home – for everyone. The RESOLVE Partners include: Accessible Housing; Bishop O'Byrne Housing Association; Calgary Alpha House Society; Calgary Homeless Foundation; Calgary John Howard Society; Horizon Housing Society; Silvera for Seniors; The Mustard Seed; and Trinity Place Foundation of Alberta. Visit, www.resolvecampaign.com.

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