

Embargoed until 6:30am, 12/12/2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Date 12/12/2017

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Calgarians' Generosity Brings Hope in New Housing**  
*Murray's House provides 23 new homes for Calgarians who need it most*

Calgary, Alberta, Dec. 12, 2017 – Just in time for the holidays, today is the opening of Murray's House, and it marks the end of homelessness for 23 Calgarians who will stay warm this winter. This gift is a result of the generosity of Calgary's giving community - namely David and Leslie Bissett and their donation to Calgary Homeless Foundation through the RESOLVE Campaign. The remaining 70 per cent of funds required for construction comes from a capital grant provided by the Government of Alberta.

Murray's House, a new permanent supportive housing building in the South Calgary community, is owned and managed by HomeSpace Society and will be operated by The SHARP Foundation, a Calgary non-profit providing housing, healthcare and supports to vulnerable Calgarians.

The name "Murray's House" is the Bissetts' nod to "Million-Dollar Murray", an article written by author and researcher Malcolm Gladwell in the *New York Times* about the intersection between the inhumane state of homelessness and its societal cost. It tells the story of Murray Barr, an ex-marine whose alcoholism landed him in jail or the emergency room so often that he cost tax payers over one million dollars across ten years of homelessness.

According to the [Calgary Homeless Foundation](#), the difference between the cost of continually supporting shelter and public services usage in contrast to the cost of housing people amounts to an annual savings of \$34,000 per individual.

Murray's House represents more than just a home. It represents hope and provides a stable place of belonging from which to build a better future.

The opening of Murray's House is a symbol of the power of collective community impact. Empowered by community donations and support, the RESOLVE Campaign, Calgary Homeless Foundation and HomeSpace Society collaborated with the Government of Alberta to create 23 new homes for those who need it most.

This new building offers permanent supportive housing to previously homeless individuals, and is proof positive that homelessness can end when we choose to work together, with intention.

The opening of Murray's House takes place today with a small gathering of community partners; service providers; and David and Leslie Bissett and friends.

## QUOTES

**Hon. Lori Sigurdson, Minister for Seniors and Housing, Government of Alberta**

“Many hands and hearts came together to create this home for 23 vulnerable Calgarians. Our government believes everyone should have a safe place to call home and this belief guides Alberta’s first comprehensive *Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy*. Murray’s House is an innovative model that demonstrates how collaboration between government and local organizations can result in sustainable, compassionate housing services that make life better for Albertans.”

**Diana Krecsy, President and CEO, Calgary Homeless Foundation**

“Murray’s House represents more than just a home for 23 individuals experiencing homelessness. It represents hope and provides a stable place of belonging from which to build a better future. Collaboration between government, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, HomeSpace Society, local Calgary home builders and the RESOLVE Campaign, is a true demonstration of the power of a collective impact approach. As we open more buildings offering permanent supportive housing, to those who need it most, we continue to demonstrate that homelessness can end, when we intentionally choose to work together.”

**Floyd Visser, Executive Director, The SHARP Foundation**

“We look forward to working with the Calgary Homeless Foundation, HomeSpace Society and other organizations in the community who know that healing begins at home. The SHARP Foundation is excited to extend its unique model of compassionate care to the new residents of Murray’s House. Throughout the past 27 years SHARP has proudly provided dignity, support and a place to call ‘home’ to over 450 people who needed to feel valued.”

**Alan Norris, Chairman and CEO, Brookfield Residential Properties and Chair of the RESOLVE Campaign**

“The RESOLVE Campaign is working diligently to secure as much funding, and as many pledge commitments, as possible prior to the Campaign’s sunset date of March 31, 2018. Pledges made can be fulfilled any time before Spring 2021. The Campaign has come a long way, however the need for affordable and supported rental housing in our city remains urgent. We are encouraging fellow companies and citizens to join in and follow the example of the community and business leaders who have already stepped up to help make a tangible difference in our city, by providing the safety and security of a home for our most vulnerable,” said Alan Norris, Chairman and CEO of Brookfield Residential Properties and Chair of the RESOLVE Campaign. “Murray’s House is another example of the difference we can make in our community by following the lead of the Government of Alberta and inspiring business and community leaders, like David and Leslie Bissett, to help make home a reality for Calgarians who need it most. Thanks to the Government of Alberta and the RESOLVE Campaign’s largest individual donors, David and Leslie Bissett, Murray’s House will provide 23 people, and many more who will come after them, with the safety and stability they need to rebuild their lives, starting at home.”

**Bernadette Majdell, CEO, HomeSpace Society**

“HomeSpace Society is excited to have led the development of this new permanent supportive apartment building on behalf of the Calgary Homeless Foundation in collaboration with RESOLVE and its Partners. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home and, when we work together as a community, great things can happen.”

### About CHF

The Calgary Homeless Foundation is a catalyst and enabler for Systems and Service Agencies to optimize client success. CHF focuses on four strategic pillars of work; Advocacy, Research and Development, Systems Planning, and Funding (outcomes). In addition, CHF addresses gaps and identifies best practices to improve the system of care and enhance desired client outcomes. Through mobilization of collective impact, CHF is committed to moving forward in partnership with the many homeless-serving agencies, the private sector, government partners, local communities, the faith community, other foundations and all Calgarians to end homelessness in Calgary. For more information, visit [calgaryhomeless.com](http://calgaryhomeless.com).

### About the RESOLVE Campaign

RESOLVE is in the final year of its unique collaboration of nine Partner agencies, working together to create affordable and supported rental housing for up to 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](http://www.resolvecampaign.com) for more information.

### About HomeSpace Society

HomeSpace Society is an innovative affordable housing provider focused on collaborative and innovative housing options for Calgary’s most vulnerable. HomeSpace exists to significantly advance community-based planning and delivery of affordable housing and to increase the number of specialized affordable housing units. Visit [www.homespace.org](http://www.homespace.org) for more information.

### About SHARP Foundation

For the past 27 years the SHARP Foundation has committed to providing a continuum of care including housing, healthcare and support to individuals affected by HIV. Their focus is to help residents live longer and lead sustainable lives, helping residents become independent and integrate into the community. SHARP operates five programs located in various Calgary neighbourhoods providing medical and social support. SHARP has proudly provided dignity, support and a place to call home for over 450 people who needed to feel valued. Visit [www.thesharpfoundation.com](http://www.thesharpfoundation.com) for more information.

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