
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Health
Central City Foundation

PROVINCE SUPPORTS UNIQUE NEW CENTRE FOR ADDICTED YOUTH

VANCOUVER – The Central City Foundation will use a one-time \$2 million grant from government to build the Crossing at Keremeos facility, which will become B.C.'s first long-term residential treatment centre for addicted youth, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“Long-term residential treatment services improve the likelihood of a young person’s success in overcoming addictions,” said Premier Campbell. “Once construction is complete, the Crossing at Keremeos will provide 42 treatment beds for youth and complement the wide range of existing addiction treatment services currently available in British Columbia.”

The Crossing at Keremeos will be located on a 58-acre area of land 10 kilometres outside of Keremeos, and 55 kilometres southwest of Penticton. Construction of the facility is scheduled to begin in summer 2008 and be completed by summer 2009. Central City Foundation expects to have 20 treatment beds available for early occupancy by December 2008.

Groups including the parent support and advocacy group From Grief to Action, Central City Foundation and Portage Program for Drug Dependencies have been working with the Ministry of Health, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health to create a program to benefit young people between 14 and 24 years of age.

The \$2 million grant will go toward the \$6 million estimated cost of renovating and retrofitting the former Outward Bound camp. The remaining capital funding is expected to be raised through the Central City Foundation’s fundraising efforts.

In British Columbia, some young people are challenged by addiction, with devastating consequences for their health and their relationships at home, at school and at work. Once operational, the program will expand addictions services and provide effective treatment for B.C.’s youth who have been unable to escape the cycle of addiction in their current environment.

“We thank government for supporting the Crossing at Keremeos, which furthers our foundation’s goal of innovative and pioneering programs such as safe and affordable housing or addiction treatment services that are now accepted as commonplace solutions to some of our most intractable community challenges” said Jennifer Johnstone, CEO of Central City Foundation.

"It can happen to any family. Addiction can enter the most loving and happy of homes and, when it strikes, the whole family is thrown into turmoil. The Portage program at the Crossing will give hope to families in crisis and help young people reclaim their future. We believe this program will save lives," said Susie Ruttan, board member and vice-president of From Grief to Action.

In addition to the many mental health and addictions services available, British Columbia was the first province in Western Canada to have dedicated youth detox beds, and currently has 51 beds. In 2007/08, government spent \$1.1 billion on mental health and addictions, which represents a 30 per cent in funding increase since 2001.

From Grief to Action is a Vancouver-based support and education society dedicated to restoring hope and dignity to families and friends of drug users. It provides support tools for families dealing with addiction and works tirelessly to ensure British Columbia youth have access to long-term residential treatment.

The Portage Program for Drug Dependencies Inc was founded in 1970 and has since then expanded to provide care to adults and adolescents, pregnant addicts, mothers and children and the substance dependent mentally-ill. Portage provides services to youth across Canada from British Columbia to Newfoundland and was the first organization in Canada to design services targeted at adolescents. The Portage Program will be offered through the Crossing at Keremeos.

Central City Foundation is one of Vancouver's oldest charitable organizations that provides valuable services to vulnerable populations in British Columbia, including mental health and addictions patients.

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