



CAMPAIGN FOR HOMELESS WOMEN & FAMILIES

Media Release: YWCA Niagara Region announces 1.2 million raised for the Y the W Capital Campaign

November 17, 2017 – The YWCA Niagara Region made a milestone announcement on Thursday, November 16th, 2017 at 10 a.m. on the progress of the Y the W Capital Campaign to build emergency shelter for homeless families at the Stone Mill Inn, St. Catharines.

Countless circumstances can lead a person to be homeless. One thing they all have in common is the profound need for safe, supportive housing or emergency shelter. The YWCA Niagara Region has been answering the call since 1927 through two 20-bed emergency shelters, a 15-bed modified men’s shelter, six family emergency shelters, and three phases of transitional housing throughout the region.

Sadly, those shelters aren’t enough and leave a gap – particularly where families requiring shelter are concerned – and has led to the new fundraising initiative designed to close the gap.

Since 2015, the YWCA Niagara Region along with the Y the W Capital Campaign committee have been working diligently to raise funds for YWCA Oakdale Commons Facility, the new emergency family shelter. The new facility will allow the YWCA to continue to help Niagara’s most vulnerable people for years to come.

John Armstrong, Y the W Capital Campaign Chair along with the campaign team including Elisabeth Zimmermann, YWCA Niagara Region’s Executive Director, explains, “The new housing will combine two existing programs the women’s transitional housing and the family apartments. It will be delivering a proactive, cost-effective solution to supporting women and their families as they work towards permanent housing within the community.”

“Our goal is to raise 1.5 million for the campaign. We are here today to announce that we’ve raised 1.2 million for the new build and we are well on our way to reach our goal,” John Armstrong states.



Marika Kozachenko, Mayor Walter Sendzik, Honourary Chair June Mergl, Honourary Chair Ann Louise, M. P. Chris Bittle, Jennifer Bonato, Christopher O’Connor, Doug Smith, Misette Critelli, Laurie Andrews

Local M.P. Chris Bittle began the discussion of affordable housing saying, “If we’re going to talk about poverty, if we’re going to talk about health care, if we’re going to talk about any of these significant issues facing our community, housing is at the center.” He expressed that after the National Housing Strategy comes out November 22nd, 2017, he will be able to speak to how the federal government can truly help with this cause.



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St. Catharines' City Mayor Walter Sendzik states, "This building here today will be a reminder to those in our community that when those who are going through very serious challenges in their lives that there's other people that are surrounding them, we're creating a circle around folks that have been largely been invisible for a long period of time in our community. That invisible nature has to stop and we do that by bringing them into the community."

"When you look at affordable housing and what a compassionate city looks like the YW is that organization that lives and breathes compassion," says Mayor Walter Sendzik. He along with the Mayor's Invitational Golf Tournament committee presented a \$25,000 cheque to the new build. "Looking at what affordable housing means, it's right there. That's what it means to give someone dignity, that's what it means to create a space that families to feel that safety. That's what the YW is doing here today."



Wise Guy, Doug Smith of Wise Guy's Charity Fund also presented a \$50,000 cheque to support the Y the W Capital Campaign. Other supporters include Honourary Chair of the campaign Ann Louise Branscombe of Branscombe Foundation, Rotary Club of St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, Gatta Homes, Rankin Construction and many more.

"With all of the support we have received, we are expected to break ground in late spring 2018. We are incredibly grateful for all of the support we have received and hope to hit our goal of 1.5 million soon," says Executive Director Elisabeth Zimmermann.

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About YWCA Niagara Region: The YWCA Niagara Region was established in 1927, in an effort to respond to identified needs in the community. The YW has a long standing history of providing safe, supportive housing, and programs directed to the development of homeless and impoverished women and their families.

For more information:

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<http://www.ywcaniagararegion.ca/about/y-the-w-campaign/>