



For immediate release

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New housing minister to join community and corporate partners to help put a cap on homelessness in Newfoundland & Labrador

Raising The Roof's annual toque campaign gets underway Tuesday, November 22nd at 12:00pm outside the Salvation Army's Wiseman Centre shelter at 714 Water Street West. Wearing a trademark red campaign toque, Paul Shelley – Newfoundland & Labrador's new minister responsible for housing – will join community and corporate leaders to launch this year's fundraising effort for local groups serving the homeless.

"Having a place to live is one of the most important necessities of life," says Minister Shelley. "I believe everyone has this right. By supporting Raising The Roof we can work together to help those who are homeless or facing serious housing problems." The Minister urged people across the province to support the campaign by purchasing a \$10 toque.

With winter fast approaching, the growing shortage of affordable housing in the province raises concerns that more people will require emergency shelter and support this year. Raising The Roof is Canada's only national homelessness charity. Proceeds from this year's toque sales will support four shelter and supportive housing providers in St. John's: the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland & Labrador, the Salvation Army, Stella Burry Community Services, and the St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association.

"All of our organizations have recently-built or are currently constructing new shelter and affordable housing services in our community," says Jocelyn Greene, executive director of Stella Burry Community Services, and Board member of Raising The Roof. Representatives of each of the recipient organizations will speak

at the launch about their projects, and how the toque funds will help the people they serve.

“The Salvation Army’s new partnership with Raising The Roof couldn’t have come at a better time”, says spokesperson Wanda Burt. “Our Wiseman Centre for homeless men is undergoing a \$3 million transformation to provide improved shelter services and new supportive housing.” The neighbouring Shawnadithit Shelter, opened by the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre at a cost of \$1 million last year, and the upcoming construction of the AIDS Committee’s Tommy Sexton Centre and Stella Burry’s supportive housing at Rawlins Cross – both at a cost of over \$1 million – will help address Newfoundland & Labrador’s growing housing crisis.

November 22nd is also National Housing Day. “We call upon our federal and provincial governments to use this occasion to deliver on their earlier commitments to invest in a national affordable housing program”, says Bill Downer, Executive Director of the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland & Labrador. “We’ve waited too long”, agrees Myrtle Banfield, Executive Director of the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre Association. “The federal government’s recent fiscal update completely neglected affordable housing, despite Royal Assent being given last July authorizing \$1.6 billion for housing spending in 2005 and 2006 under the Liberal–NDP budget accord”, says Myrtle Banfield,

Raising The Roof’s national corporate partners Direct Energy, The Home Depot Canada, and Global Television are supporting the toque campaign alongside many local businesses and groups. Starting now, you can get your Raising The Roof toque at The Home Depot in St. John’s and across Canada.

To order toques, contact Bruce Pearce at (709) 689–9615 or bpearce@nl.rogers.com, visit www.raisingtheroof.org, or purchase one at The Home Depot Canada in St. John’s.

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Contact: Bruce Pearce, Toque Campaign Coordinator, Raising The Roof
T: (709) 689–9615
E: bpearce@nl.rogers.com

W: www.raisingtheroof.org