

# BREAKING <sup>the</sup> CYCLE of HOMELESSNESS

## Aboriginal Housing Initiative



The Aboriginal Housing Initiative (AHI) grew out of the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC. One of the goals of the strategy is to assist the nearly 30 per cent of Aboriginal families living off-reserve in inadequate or unaffordable housing.

In March 2007, the Province issued a call for proposals inviting Aboriginal non-profit societies to help build new, affordable housing off-reserve. The intention was to develop approximately 200 new housing units to be funded with \$50.9 million in one-time funds through the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust. The trust was transferred from the Government of Canada to the Province, which is administering it in consultation with the Aboriginal Housing Management Association. Societies answering the call for proposals created strong partnerships in their communities allowing for the development of the housing.

AHI is funding over 200 developments in communities throughout British Columbia. The sites will address a range of Aboriginal housing needs and priorities including youth, women, elders, and people with alcohol and drug addictions.

## Facts & Stats

- More than 28% of off-reserve Aboriginal households are in core housing need
- 30% of Metro Vancouver's homeless people are Aboriginal



HOUSING MATTERS



## Another AHI-funded project underway

With the official groundbreaking of the Cariboo Friendship Society's Eagles Nest in Williams Lake in September 2009, another development funded by the Aboriginal Housing Initiative is under way. The initiative is funding developments in communities throughout British Columbia. The sites address a range of Aboriginal housing needs and priorities including youth, women, elders, and people with alcohol and drug addictions. The need in Williams Lake, where there is a large Aboriginal population, is great.

Eagles Nest will include 16 one-bedroom units and 17 two-bedroom units for Aboriginal singles or single-parent families



*Drummers perform at the groundbreaking at Eagles Nest.*

who are at risk of homelessness. There will be four offices, a craft and storage room, and a residents' laundry room.

"We have a great number of one- and two-bedroom applications sitting on our waiting list and we have had for years," said Cariboo Friendship Society assistant director Rosanna McGregor. "When the opportunity came along for the [AHI] grant, we had the perfect property." Many of the tenants, she noted, will likely come from the society's transition house.

### Testimonial

"I have battled demons my whole life and if I would have had a place like this to go to, I don't think I would have struggled so much."

**~ Jeannie, speaking at the opening of Spirit Bear Center, Abbotsford.**

[www.bchousing.org/breakingthecycle](http://www.bchousing.org/breakingthecycle)

June 2010