

For Immediate Release

North Church Court building opens its doors to individuals and families offering a safe, supportive, and affordable place to call home.

St. Catharines ON, June 04, 2020 Starting this week and throughout the month of June, 127 households will be moving into their new homes in downtown St. Catharines at 111 Church Street. Many of these individuals and families have endured tremendous hardships during these unprecedented times.

Inspired by a shared vision to provide a solution to the affordable housing crisis in Niagara, the Church Street building has become a reality because of a unique partnership between FirstOntario Credit Union, Penn Terra Group Limited and Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, along with the support of municipal and regional governments, and local community agencies.

“The vision to provide affordable housing in our community and the commitment of all involved is finally becoming a reality after more than five years of complicated hard work and steadfast leadership”, said Lori Beech, Executive Director of Bethlehem Housing and Support Services. “This is a story about how an innovative partnership, pure will, perseverance and passionate commitment made the probability of almost impossible....happen.”

In Niagara Region the need for affordable housing is real with more than 5,500 households on the wait-list.

“The new North Church Court building shows that there is a way to make a meaningful contribution in our community”, said Sunil Bahadoorsingh, Founder and CEO of Penn Terra Group Limited. “Our dynamic team developed a replicable model to address problems identified with affordable housing in the past, without compromising on the dual goals of quality and affordability. Hopefully many more units will be built in the near future”.

“It’s our responsibility as a credit union, to invest our profits in the needs of the communities where our Members and neighbours live and work,” said Lloyd Smith, CEO of FirstOntario Credit Union. “We recognized there was a need for affordable housing in the Niagara Region so we came together in partnership to help provide a homegrown solution and make the dreams of this secure, family-friendly community development a reality.”

Many organizations and individuals have contributed to this development project and have worked to ensure that the new tenants have a comfortable, healthy and safe space to call home. “We would like to acknowledge our Project Manager, WSP, as well as the construction crew under the direction of our General Contractor Solid Construction for their leadership, and thank all of the supporting trades workers and companies who have worked tirelessly to get us to finish line, particularly given

the additional challenges presented by the pandemic”, said Lori Beech. “After five years of hard work it is great to see it become a reality.”

For more information, please contact:

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About Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

Bethlehem Housing and Support Services is a multi-service organization serving the diversified needs of Niagara residents by offering support for individual growth through housing and other focused services. Bethlehem’s vision is to provide stable affordable housing and support services to contribute to a vibrant, caring and inclusive Niagara where everyone has a home. Learn more about us today at www.bethlehemhousing.ca

About FirstOntario Credit Union

FirstOntario is a full service cooperative financial institution, serving Members for 80 years throughout the Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Region and Southwestern regions of Ontario. With \$5.4 billion in assets under management, FirstOntario is one of Canada’s largest credit unions. Everyone is welcome to be part of FirstOntario for financial services including daily transactions, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario profits are invested into the communities we serve through support for entrepreneurs, competitive rates and charitable pursuits including our award winning student nutrition program. Learn more about us today at FirstOntario.com.

About Penn Terra Group Limited

Penn Terra is one of Niagara's premiere developers offering luxury condos, student residences, and modern apartments. Penn Terra prides itself on developing affordable quality buildings and was the first developer in over thirty years to build multi-unit residential buildings within the downtown core of the City of St. Catharines. In the last few years it has built a boutique condominium as well as two student apartment buildings and has received awards for these buildings. Penn Terra is an active participant within the Niagara Region and has a keen desire to work within the community towards addressing a solution to the need for affordable housing in the Niagara Region. Learn more about us today at www.pennterragroup.com.

About North Church Court

North Church Court provides permanent supportive housing for men, women and families of low to moderate income with a focus on those who are homeless due to issues with poverty, physical disability, mental health, domestic violence and family breakdown. Located in downtown St. Catharines this building offers 127 units of housing including 71 one bedroom, 41 two bedroom and 15 three bedroom units. Thirty of these units are accessible and designed for persons with disabilities. The building also includes a day care facility and natural play area, onsite storage for residents, laundry facilities, a large common room with cooking facilities, lots of bicycle and electric scooter storage and on-site support services. Learn more by visiting the North Church Court page at www.bethlehemhousing.ca