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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs

### **Supporting youth in northern B.C. with 34 new housing spaces**

Newly renovated homes coming for vulnerable young people in Prince George

PRINCE GEORGE –

#### **Summary**

- *The Province, through BC Housing, is providing \$12.7 million for purchase, renovation of property at 1575 Queensway Ave.*
- *Project will provide 34 safe supportive-housing spaces for youth 14-18, young adults aging out of care*
- *Existing 16-bed Reconnect Youth Village supportive-housing program is relocating to this new facility*

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Young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Prince George area will have 34 newly renovated housing spaces, with youth-centred support services, at Reconnect Youth Village.

“Supporting our young people so they can transition from homelessness to stable housing or reduce the chance of becoming homeless, means more youth in the North can gain confidence and connect to the supports and services they need,” said Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs. “The leadership of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre and access for youth to these new, safe places to live contributes to the well-being of Prince George and builds a stronger and safer community for everyone.”

#### **The new Reconnect Youth Village**

The Reconnect Youth Village is an existing 16-bed youth program that is relocating from downtown Prince George to the former Hardwood Apartments at 1575 Queensway Ave. This new project will expand capacity by introducing 18 additional rental suites for both youth and young adults, allowing the program to support people transitioning out of care. The residents can live independently in their community, supported by outreach staff who will assist them in achieving their independence goals and enhancing their life skills.

Reconnect Youth Village is built on the understanding that healing and growth happen through strong, supportive relationships grounded in community and culture. The program creates opportunities for youth to connect with Elders, cultural teachings and community supports while strengthening identity, belonging, shared responsibility and pathways toward adulthood.

#### **Supports provided through Reconnect Youth Village**

- Training may include budgeting, scheduling, shopping, cooking healthy meals and maintaining their home.
- Other supports will include employment assistance, counselling, and physical and mental health resources.
- Reconnect Youth Village offers a variety of voluntary youth-centred integrated service programming, as well as daily meals prepared on site.
- Emergency drop-in services are also available 24/7 for any youth in crisis in the community requiring supports or assistance navigating services.

Sixteen of the homes are funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development for youth 14-18. The remaining units are for young adults up to 27 who are transitioning out of care and moving toward independent living, with rents determined by income. It is expected the new site will be ready for residents by March 2026.

### **Features of the new location**

- The building will have studio, one- and two-bedroom units.
- There will be eight support staff on site providing 24/7 coverage.
- Staff will provide a range of support services, including unique and culturally responsive programming.

This work is part of the Province’s Belonging in B.C. plan to help prevent homelessness and bring more people indoors quickly. Since 2017, the Province has more than 93,600 homes delivered or underway, including more than 800 homes in Prince George.

### **Quotes:**

#### **Jodie Wickens, Minister of Children and Family Development –**

“Young people need safety and stability as they transition into adulthood, yet too many experience uncertainty at a time when they should be focused on learning, growth and building their future. These housing spaces will provide young people with safe homes, culturally grounded connections, caring relationships and a strong foundation for adulthood.”

#### **Simon Yu, mayor, Prince George –**

“Housing for young adults and youth who have aged out of care is a much-needed service in our community. The city thanks BC Housing and the Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society for providing these new spaces and adding more housing options for those who need it most in Prince George.”

#### **Barb Ward-Burkitt, executive director, Prince George Native Friendship Centre –**

“The new Reconnect Youth Village offers a safe, welcoming space designed to support youth with stable housing, cultural connection and personal growth opportunities. Rooted in community values and traditions, the centre provides a place for young people to connect to family, Elders, school, employment and training opportunities, and community while connecting to their cultural identity and sense of belonging. It stands as a symbol of resilience, hope and empowerment for the next generation.”

### **Learn More:**

- To read the Belonging in B.C. plan, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BelongingStrategy.pdf>
- To learn about the steps the Province is taking to address the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for people in B.C., visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>
- To see a map showing the location of all announced provincially funded housing projects in B.C., visit: <https://www.bchousing.org/homes-for-BC>
- To learn more about household supports for you, and for those who build and provide homes, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/more-homes-for-people>
- To learn more about the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, visit: <https://www.pgnfc.com/>

**Contacts:**

Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs  
Media Relations  
Hmamedia@gov.bc.ca

BC Housing  
Media Relations  
Media@bchousing.org

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