



December 12, 2001

Hon. Chris Hodgson, Minister of
Municipal Affairs and Housing,
17th floor, 777 Bay Street,
Toronto, ON,
M5G 2E5
Fax - 416-585-6470

Dear Mr. Hodgson:

I am writing to you on behalf of the staff, board and clients of the YWCA of Greater Toronto regarding the commitment your ministry has made to join in a national housing agreement with a pledge of \$20 million. We are pleased to see that the Ontario Government will be part of this commitment. Homelessness is inexcusable in our affluent society and the commitment of new money is essential to any long-term solution.

The YWCA of Greater Toronto is one of the largest providers of housing and shelter to women in the GTA. We currently have seven housing projects that range from emergency shelter beds to permanent apartment units for single women and women with children. We have been improving the lives of women and girls since 1873, and have seen many fluctuations in social policy with regard to housing. Last year we served over 32,000 individuals in our four program areas of Housing and Shelter, Counselling and Group Work, Camping and Outdoor Education, and Employment and Skill Development. Across our program areas, we have seen a drastic increase in homelessness and under-housing which has created not only a backlog in our emergency shelters, but also a wait list in our battered women's shelters. This latter situation has potentially fatal consequences, as the recent rash of inquests into the deaths of abused women in Ontario has grimly illustrated.

We do not believe, despite our pleasure that Ontario has made a commitment, that \$20 million is nearly enough to address the problem at hand. The YWCA has always been a supporter of the 1% solution, and we will continue to pressure all levels of government for a realistic investment in long term housing solutions. We are also concerned that the Provincial government will place unwarranted confidence in private sector investment in housing to make up Ontario's contribution. In addition, we want to make it clear that without government funding, the not-for-profit housing providers are unable to provide adequate and coordinated affordable housing solutions. It has been clearly demonstrated in this province that the market alone does not rush in to fill gaps in social policy and housing stock investment, and the not-for-profit sector is too strapped for resources to be able to deal adequately with the scale of the crisis.

We look forward to a written response from your ministry in answer to our concerns. Please feel free to contact me for any further information we can provide.

Sincerely,

Heather McGregor
Executive Director

