



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 1, 2013

Media Contact
Atira Women's Resource Society
Janice Abbott, CEO
604.813.0851
janice_abbott@atira.bc.ca

ATIRA UNVEILS CANADA'S FIRST RECYCLED SHIPPING CONTAINER SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Atira Women's Resource Society will unveil its shipping container housing development at 502 Alexander Street in Vancouver at 10:00am on Thursday, August 1st, 2013.

VANCOUVER, BC – Today marks a historic moment in affordable housing as Canada's first recycled shipping container social housing development is opened to media and special guests in Vancouver. The development, established through a partnership between Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, Atira Women's Resource Society, BC Hydro and a host of other community partners will provide twelve units of safe, affordable housing for women in the Downtown Eastside.

"We are absolutely thrilled with the outcome of this development," says Janice Abbott, CEO of Atira Women's Resource Society. "Atira had the vision and the tenacity to see this project through a precedent setting development process, despite criticism and opposition. We are grateful to our funding partners who stood by us. The building and individual suites look better than we ever could have imagined."

This development is a cost effective and environmentally sensitive building option that can address a wide range of affordable housing needs. The project achieves a density of 12 self contained units on a standard City of Vancouver lot.

"This shipping container housing development serves to show us that with creative thinking we can work to ensure that everyone has access to safe and secure housing" concluded Miriam Sobrino, Chair of Atira's Board of Directors.

Janice Abbott will be available to speak to the media today during the event at 502 Alexander Street between 10:00am and 11:00am. For more information, please contact Janice at 604.813.0851 or via email at janice_abbott@atira.bc.ca. Development Manager James Weldon will also be available for questions.

BACKGROUNDER RECYCLED SHIPPING CONTAINER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Atira Women's Resource Society's Recycled Shipping Container Housing Development is located at 502 Alexander Street in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver and provides six social housing units for older women as well as six units at Housing Income Limits rental rates.

The first shipping container was dropped on location on November 30th, 2012 and the project was completed in July, 2013.

The six residents of the social housing units will be women with roots in the community who are stable and interested in mentoring the young women living next door at Imouto Housing for Young Women, as part of Atira's Intergenerational Mentorship Program.

Move in date is September 1st, 2013.

The housing was constructed using a base structure of 12, recycled shipping containers.

The project was inspired by BC Hydro's "House of the Future," a recycled-shipping-container-housing demonstration project, which was located on the front lawn of BC Hydro's downtown office during the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. BC Hydro donated The House of the Future to Atira in the summer of 2010.

Two additional units were donated by Frank Lo and MC Quarters.

The remaining eight containers were purchased through a broker from the Port of Vancouver.

TECHNICAL SPECS

- Hard construction costs were \$82,500 per unit
- The studio units range in size from 280 – 290 square feet net living area.
- The units are fully self contained, with kitchens, bathrooms and in-suite laundry
- The development meets all current building codes and in some case exceeds code, e.g. insulation and sound transference
- There are 12 units on a standard City of Vancouver lot; 25" x 119"

PARTNERS AND FUNDING

The full project, including the heritage restoration of Imouto Housing for Young Women at 120 Jackson Street next door, cost \$3.3 million and provides 31 units of non-market housing.

- **Capital funders include:**
 - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
 - Streethome Foundation
 - The City of Vancouver
 - BC Hydro
 - Central City Foundation
 - The Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia
 - The Golf for Good Charitable Golf Tournament

- **Individual donors include:**
 - Ken Shannon
 - David Cottrell

- **In kind contributors include:**
 - Eagle Crane Services
 - Tri-R Transport Ltd.
 - MC Quarters

- **Financing provided by:**
 - VanCity
 - BC Housing

- Units staged by: Dekora Staging Inc., Instant Bedrooms Manufacturing Inc.

Atira Women's Resource Society is a community-based organization that supports all women, and their children, who are experiencing the impact of violence committed against them and/or their children. Through education, advocacy and outreach, Atira is an active voice in the struggle to end violence against women and their children. Our feminist-based philosophy informs all our work with ourselves, each other and the community (Mission Statement, 2004).

For more information, please visit www.atira.bc.ca.