

For Immediate Release – December 10, 2013

Successful pilot project brings home ownership to a Métis Settlement - first time in Canadian history.

Elizabeth Métis Settlement, AB – Six families received keys to their new Habitat for Humanity homes on the Elizabeth Métis Settlement (EMS), marking the end of a successful pilot project by Habitat for Humanity Edmonton (HFHE) and EMS. In total, eight families have become homeowners – the first time in Canada that homeownership has become available on a Métis settlement. The success is due to the forward-thinking Aboriginal community and their willingness to proactively address local housing needs.

“Habitat is proud of our successful partnership launching the first ever Habitat homeownership program on a settlement with the Elizabeth Métis Settlement,” said Carolyn Graham, Chair, HFHE. “Elizabeth has embraced this first-of-its-kind pilot project and, as a result, eight families now enjoy home ownership on the Settlement. This successful project has the potential to transform how affordable housing is delivered to other settlements.”

The Government of Alberta has supported Habitat’s sustainable program for many years and has been a champion for affordable housing in our province. Habitat continues to work towards housing solutions for Aboriginal communities, and the success of this new pilot project demonstrates the transferability and sustainability of their home ownership model.

“Today is historic day and I congratulate the families and the community on this significant accomplishment,” said Minister of Aboriginal Relations Robin Campbell. “These homes reflect a commitment by Premier Redford to ensure safe, stronger families and communities. Through the Metis Settlements Long-Term Arrangements, we are partnering with Habitat to do similar projects in other Settlements as we continue with our building Alberta Plan.”

“Discussions between the Settlement and Habitat were ongoing for many years with both parties determined to make affordable homeownership a reality for Settlement members,” said Irene Zimmer, Chair, EMS Council. “Habitat and our Council signed the historic partnership in January of 2011, and when the opportunity to build four duplexes arose in the summer of 2012, both parties worked diligently to ensure the project’s success. With eight growing families – a total of 15 adults and 25 children – building equity, we cannot help but be excited.”

The homes at EMS are purchased at market value from HFHE. The families’ mortgage payments are interest-free and are 25 percent of their income, and every mortgage payment is equity in their home. Since Habitat homes are funded up front through financial donations, gifts of building materials and volunteer labour, Habitat is able to reinvest the mortgage payments back into affordable housing on EMS. This model enables Habitat to build more homes on EMS and, for members and the community, this is welcome news.

About Habitat for Humanity

Founded in 1991, Habitat for Humanity Edmonton is a charitable organization working towards a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Their mission is to mobilize volunteers and community partners to build affordable housing and promote home ownership as a means to break the cycle of poverty. Visit HFH.org for more information.

About Elizabeth Métis Settlement

The Elizabeth Métis Settlement was first founded in 1939, and a framework for land and self-government was adopted via the Métis Settlement Act in 1989. With an approximate population of 700 members and a land base that covers 25,641 hectares of land. It is their goal to welcome anyone that is interested in visiting the community and to share their proud Métis history. For more information please visit www.elizabethms.ca.

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