



Victoria Native Friendship Centre is seeking \$1.3 million in fund-matching contributions for Ready Set Soar Youth Housing

Ready Set Soar will create culturally-based, multigenerational housing, services, supports, and community for Urban Indigenous Youth

(VICTORIA, B.C. - March 30, 2023) – The Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) is seeking to match \$1.3 million dollars in funds for a new 45-unit housing community with space for on-site supports and services focused on helping Urban Indigenous Youth get ready, get set, and soar into healthy futures.

Urban Indigenous Youth are overrepresented in foster care, homelessness, and incarceration demographics across the country. In Victoria, approximately 150 youth “age” out of care annually without adequate supports in place to meet their basic needs, including housing. We know that many of those youth will end up on our streets, as 40% of our homeless population are Indigenous.

By implementing affordable-rent units inclusive of a community space, the VNFC can provide on-site educational assistance, financial literacy, mental health and addiction services, Elder mentorship and cultural activities, employment programs, and other vital supports for Urban Indigenous Youth in addition to physical housing. Access to wrap-around supports and connection to community creates the stability for Urban Indigenous youth to succeed, and contribute financially, socially and culturally to their futures and communities.

“If you think of success as a ripple, one step forward, it represents so much more. Who knows how far that success will continue, and what that one step means in a huge arc of progress and happiness? What does it mean when somebody feels like they belong to a community that connects and supports each other?” said Ron Rice-Wush’q, VNFC Executive Director. “Success in housing isn’t just about a door to lock behind you, it’s about the mix of people that come in, the opportunities created, and the kinds of services and support delivered on site. We have seen the success of this story, and know the value of this kind of investment.”

Building on the success of providing 50 units of safe housing and community since 2013 for Urban Indigenous Elders, students, and young families, the VNFC worked in partnership with M’akola Development and other donors to privately raise \$1.3 million dollars. A conditional offer was made to build on two centrally located properties in the city of Victoria. Additional



fund-matching of \$1.3 million is required in order to complete the land purchase, and leverage additional build and operational funding programs.

VNFC Housing communities provide purpose-built space for tenants to access on-site cultural, education, employment, health, family, and other supports to prepare them for success. The Ready Set Soar building designs by Christine Lintott Architects Ltd. make careful consideration of those who will use them.

"As a design studio, our most meaningful work comes from values-based collaborations on culturally rich and diverse design challenges which invite us to bring our highest creativity," said Christine Lintott of Christine Lintott Architects Inc. "If done well, the outcomes can elevate the occupant experience in every respect."

With your contributions, the VNFC can drive change for Urban Indigenous Youth and community by offering housing stability and on-site supports. In the spirit of reconciliation and decolonization, we need your help to make this happen.

Consider Supporting Today! Contribution Opportunities:

- **Online donation:** [link here](#) or visit our website at [vnfc.ca](#)
- **Donation By Phone or Credit Card:** (778) 587-1567 development@vnfc.ca
- **By Cheque or Money Order:** ATTN VNFC Programs Fundraiser, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, 231 Regina Ave, Victoria BC V8Z 1J6

"On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, we are absolutely thrilled to see this project unfold in a good way," said Monique Gray Smith, VNFC Board President. "We offer much gratitude to all who have and will work hard to make a safe place for young people to navigate a healthy and vibrant path for themselves."

[Click here](#) to view a video about VNFC's initial community housing project, Siem Lelum.

-30-

About the Victoria Native Friendship Centre

The Victoria Native Friendship Centre is a non-profit Indigenous-led organization located on Southern Vancouver Island, BC, mandated to promote the well-being of urban Indigenous people by strengthening individuals, families, and community for over 52 years.



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