



Builders Without Borders

Project update January 2010

Aboriginal Mother Centre-**OUR DREAM IS SIMPLE: HELP MOTHERS AND CHILDREN BUILD HEALTHY LIVES**

The Aboriginal Mothers Centre Society (AMCS) was created in 2002 to address the needs of Aboriginal women. In 2009 renovations commenced on the 28,000 sq. ft. building in East Vancouver to establish the first **Under One Roof** facility to provide a shelter, support and programs for women and children so they may turn a fragile dream of healing and family reconnection into a self-sustaining reality.

Renovations to this multi-purpose community enterprise will be completed in the summer of 2010 and will provide 16 residential shelter suites, lounge for families to gather, day care centre for 25 children, commercial kitchen, a dining facility, office space, meeting rooms and street front commercial leasing space. **Under One Roof** will also provide counseling, advocacy, education, life skills training and social support.

“There is no other place in the world that has brought together under one roof all the elements needed to support and ensure success for mothers struggling to assume their responsibilities and regain their capacities as a mother”, *stated Marjorie White, President of the Aboriginal Mothers Centre*. “This special place will become their home while they fight to regain their lives and their children and a stable future.”

The Reality

A disproportionate number of Aboriginal women across Canada and most particularly in the downtown eastside of Vancouver live in poverty, homelessness, fear of violence, isolation, addiction, loss, and degradation. As mothers, these women face greater chances to experience loss and profound pain as their children are born into a high-risk environment or are taken away to another high-risk environment. Opportunities are limited for these women to recover, to acquire economic security and to provide self-sufficient family lives for their children.

To meet the challenges of launching this unique project, the Aboriginal Mothers Society has worked hard with the support of partners over the past 18 months to:

- Establish a Board of Directors with expertise in finance, construction, law, business, arts, and from the grass roots and Aboriginal communities;
- Form a partnership with the award winning Lu'ma Housing to provide the critical construction and building maintenance expertise;
- Generate business plans for our key Social enterprises to realize our goals: build our self reliant capacities, train women in work skills and provide employment for Mothers to sustain their journey to well being;
- Partner with *Builders Without Borders* to do their first major project within Canada;
- Establish an experienced team to raise the necessary funds; and
- Take the initiative to collaborate with key business leaders that will provide executive training and assistance to enhance the ability of the Centre's staff.

THE FIRST “UNDER ONE ROOF” CORE SERVICES FOR HOMELESS ABORIGINAL MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Transition Housing

The AMC, in partnership with Lu'ma Native Housing Society, has begun construction of 16 residential units with an expected completion date of July 2010. These units will provide short-term and emergency housing Aboriginal mothers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as well as for pre and post partum Aboriginal women, without local support, who require medical, social and advocacy assistance during their pregnancy and following delivery. Discussions are currently being held with VACFSS and BC Women's Hospital for provision of resources to staff at least 8 of these units.

Daycare

The Daycare will provide 25 new spaces for children from age 30 months to Grade One with the following priorities:

- Children of mothers using the AMCS programs and services
- Children of Aboriginal mothers in the community
- Aboriginal children in foster homes in Vancouver

A proposal has been developed for a staff start up date of July/August 2010 with programming to start September 1, 2010.

Women's Collective

With membership open to women using the AMCS facility and from the surrounding lower mainland/Vancouver community, the Women's Collective Program will provide the structure (drop in centre) and resources for improving self-esteem, identity, personal empowerment and self-sustaining growth. This will be provided through peer supported education, training, life skills development, social support and economic self-sufficiency. A proposal for this Program has been submitted to Status of Women Canada and includes elements of the Healing program noted below.

Healing

Working in tandem and under the guidance of Traditional Healers and Medicine Women, the AMCS will provide culturally based services in the following areas:

- Addictions and substance abuse;
- Violence against women and children,
- Sexual abuse of women and children
- Intergenerational effects of colonization
- Identity and cultural security
- Spirit and ceremony
- Family reunification

Moms and Tots Day Program

As a transition to daycare and as a compliment to other programs, AMC, in consultation with Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, is currently developing a parenting and peer support program for moms to bring their children, aged infancy to 30 months.

Commercial Kitchen

In addition to providing a food and/or meal program for the transition residents, daycare, and Aboriginal mothers attending AMC programs, the Commercial kitchen will be developed for skills, training and social enterprises (i.e., catering) and will facilitate education programs on food and diet. Support from the Chefs at the Klahow-eya Culinary Arts Program and White Spot, has been most helpful in developing the Commercial Kitchen program. Opening date for the kitchen is expected to coincide with the opening of the daycare and transition suites.

Essentials

A Free Store will be developed to provide free clothing, household goods, toys, and other essentials needed by Aboriginal mothers.

Mama's Wall Street Studio

A sewing and knitting social enterprise, has been operating for five years, and has been selling quality scarves, blankets and convention delegate bags. A business plan for the Studio has been developed, with direction from the SFU School of Business that will provide employment readiness training, volunteer and job opportunities as well as a self sustaining economic enterprise.

Advocacy

For Aboriginal mothers, the challenge of apprehensions and family reunification often require significant legal intervention. The AMCS will conduct a feasibility study for the development of a strategy to provide direct legal services, as well as develop strategic policy planning for public dissemination. In the interim, proposals will be develop to provide advocacy, support and referral services to Aboriginal mothers using the services and programs at AMC.

PROJECT FUNDING

The \$7.1 million project for land, building and renovation improvements has thus far met with tremendous support from Governments, Corporate sectors and Private Foundations. To date \$4.6 million have been secured, and a campaign will be launched in January to raise the shortfall of 2.5 Million.

There are opportunities to contribute to ***Capital and Land, Programs and Services*** and to an ***Endowment Fund***.

Builders Without Borders and Heatherbrae Builders Co are making a special appeal to Metro Vancouver building supply companies to donate materials, labour and professional services to this much needed community enterprise for women and children.

Donors will be provided with a charitable tax receipt, will be featured in news stories, will have a dedication opportunity to name the facilities, will be recognized on the BWB website, will receive a commemorative plaque, will be featured on a 40' site banner, will be recognised at all site promotional events and media tours, and suppliers will have the opportunity to feature their donated materials in promotion material.

The media campaign is being conducted by *Pamela Groberman Media and Public Relations Inc.*

"Today, many individuals and organizations that have been instrumental in making the DREAM possible" *stated Barry Stuart, Vice President*, "and we are grateful to Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Angel Food Runners, Terra Housing, Heatherbrae Builders Co., Streetohome Foundation, BC Housing, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Ministry of Children and Families, the City of Vancouver, Building Community Society, and Builders Without Borders."

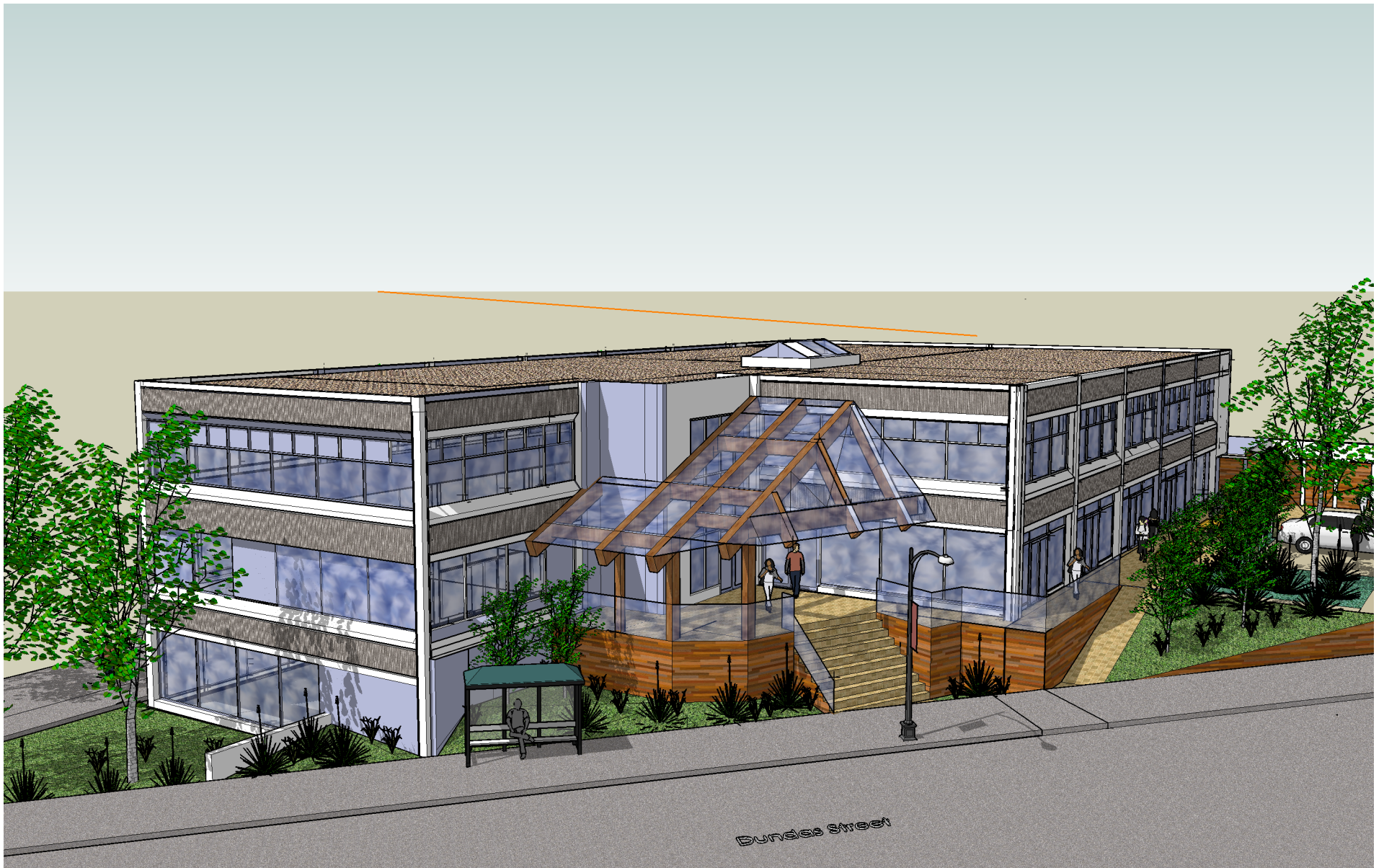
For More Information Contact:

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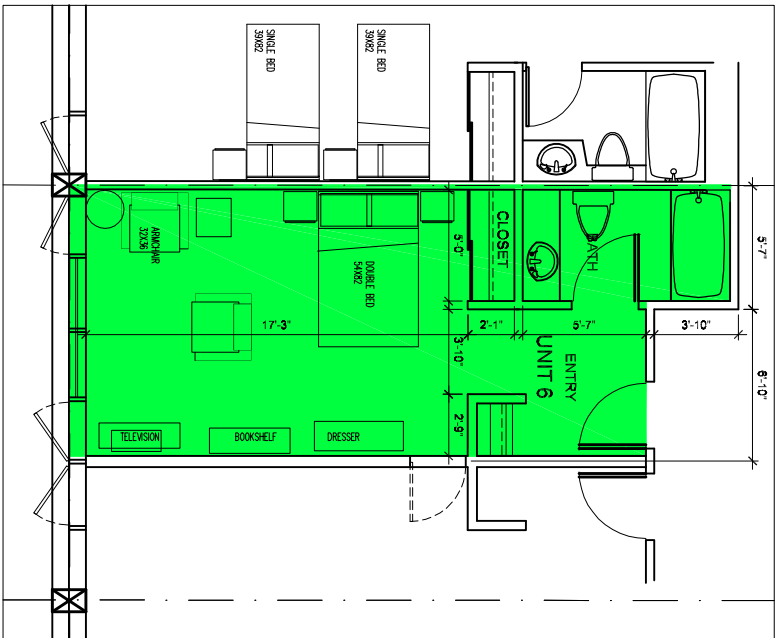
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Aboriginal Mother Centre
View of Entry from Dundas Street
2019 Dundas Street



UNIT PLAN
1/4\"/>



ABORIGINAL MOTHER CENTRE



THIRD STOREY - 16 TRANSITION UNITS

designer	—	date	NOV-2007
drawn by	DMS	scale	
checked		Project No.	?
—		Digital File No.	—
Project Name			
AMC TRANSITION HOUSING			
2018 DUNDAS ST. C.			
VANCOUVER, B.C.			
Drawing Title			
THIRD-FLOOR-PLAN			
PROPOSED			
Drawing No.	A201	Revision No.	—