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PRESS RELEASE

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Burns Lake First Nations Safe House Funding Secured

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), in partnership with Lake Babine Nation has been approved for funding to build and operate a shelter to address family violence on the Woyenne Reserve located in the community of Burns Lake, B.C. The location was chosen to address the significant need and gap for culturally specific safe house services in the center of the Highway 16 corridor, also known as the Highway of Tears. The highway of Tears refers to the stretch of highway from Prince George to Prince Rupert, where many indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered.

The Burns Lake surrounding area has a high population of First Nations who face significant social and cultural barriers to accessing services. When services are not available locally, individuals migrate to urbanized hubs such as Prince George or the Vancouver east side. All indigenous populations in north central British Columbia will have access to the services which will provide culturally appropriate, trauma informed, harm reduction focused safe house services.

“It is important for us to provide safe spaces for our most vulnerable citizens” said CSFS Board of Director Corrina Leween, Chief of Cheslatta Carrier Nation. “The shelter will provide safe housing and services to adults and children as they flee family violence situations. Supports will be made available for the empowerment of women, along with a plan to create a wellness strategy for the family and Nation. Our objective is to provide a roadmap for individuals escaping family violence to rebuild their lives.”

The 4500 sq. foot, shelter will accommodate up to 23 occupants. Programming will be designed using a blend of evidenced based best practices blended with traditional healing approaches for First Nations People. An integrated approach across sectors will be used to supporting holistic wellness for individuals and families who accesses services at the new Safe House. Site preparation for the project is scheduled to start within the next few months with a targeted completion date for mid to late 2018.

“It is really important that we offer quality and appropriate services for women, children and men, and provide the space for healing towards wellness“. Wilf Adam, Chief of Lake Babine Nation

The Safe House building project is funded by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation with operational funding being provided by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

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