



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### County of Grande Prairie Contributes \$450,000 to Odyssey House Supportive Housing Project

At today's County Council meeting, the County of Grande Prairie Council presented a cheque to the Odyssey House Supportive Housing Project. The funding will support construction of a 14-suite apartment-style facility that will offer safe, longer-term housing with a range of supports to help women and children transition to independent and violence-free lives. The facility will be located in Grande Prairie, but will serve women and children in the County and across the Peace Region.



From left to right: Brock Smith, County Councillor; Sharon Nelson, County Councillor; Mary Ann Eckstrom, County Councillor; Lois Dueck, County Councillor; Leanne Beaupre, County Reeve; Cliff Turner, Grande Prairie Women's Residence Board President; Jasmin Greavett, Odyssey House Executive Director; Ross Sutherland, County Councillor; Pat Jacobs, County Councillor; Harold Bulford, County Councillor; and Richard Harpe; County Councillor.

"This project has been a missing link in our region for women and their children who are trying to free themselves from violence," says Odyssey House Executive Director Jasmin Greavett. "The Project will help ensure that when women and children leave Odyssey House, or another emergency shelter, they receive the support they need to break the cycle of violence and secure healthy, independent futures.

"This funding really demonstrates the County's commitment to helping us end the violence in the lives of these urban and rural women and children."

“One of the County’s primary goals is to ensure our communities are as safe as possible,” says Leanne Beaupre, County Reeve. “The Odyssey House plays an extremely vital role in helping the women and children from our very region recover and live independent and violence-free lives; so we understand how imperative funding to social support service projects is. We are grateful for the organizations that help keep our communities safe.”

Greavett says that without a Supportive Housing Facility, often women and children leaving the emergency shelter return to the abusive relationship because they lack the means and support to live on their own. With almost 0 per cent vacancy in the area, this adds to an even greater barrier.

Last year, over 20 per cent of the women admitted to Odyssey House Emergency shelter, which provides emergency accommodation for a maximum of three weeks, returned to the shelter.

The three-storey, 18,000 square foot security-enhanced apartment building will provide affordable suites for women and their children for up to two years, along with programming and office space. The facility will be managed by the Grande Prairie Women’s Residence Association, which operates Odyssey House Emergency Shelter for Women and Children.

Greavett says programming in this facility is essential because simply focusing on re-housing victims of abuse does not provide the safety and intensive support most women and their children require becoming independent. She adds that without this Supportive Housing Project in the Peace Region, many victims of violence are falling through the cracks.

The cost of the facility is \$4.45 million. The Capital Campaign is still underway, and the organization has plans to commence construction next spring.

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**For more information contact:**

Leanne Beaupre, County Reeve  
Phone: 780-814-3121  
Email: [lbeaupre@countyp.ab.ca](mailto:lbeaupre@countyp.ab.ca)

Jasmin Greavett, Executive Director  
Odyssey House  
Phone: 780.538.1332  
Email: [director@odysseyhouse.ca](mailto:director@odysseyhouse.ca)