

Medicine Hat News

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New housing centre poised for opening

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A project that's been two years in the making will see the light of day this Wednesday.

The **Champion** Centre will be holding their grand opening Wednesday afternoon as the Centre becomes ready to accept tenants in the beginning of July.

"The **Champion** Centre is permanent housing for the marginalized," said Reverend Frank Kruliki, chairman of the board. "It's like a room and board setting."

The Centre addresses the affordable housing shortage by housing 12 men from all walks of life offering meals, laundry services and medication. The Centre is not considered assisted living, but there are supports for the tenants who are subsidized through local churches, agencies and community organizations.

Kruliki says 10 of the 12 tenants have already been selected and someone has been selected to run the facility.

A similar centre first started in Ponoka, Alberta five years ago. Executive director Klaas Klooster was invited to Medicine Hat to start one here.

The building, located on North Railway Street, has been paid for but Kruliki says once they open their doors, they will be starting at ground zero to generate funds.

"Connected with that, there's the Champions Cafe which is below where the men live and it's open to the public," said Kruliki.

The men and the public will be able to access a full menu at the cafe, which is also offering antiques and collectibles for sale. The money raised through the services will help offset the costs of running the Centre.

A partnership has also been started with the Salvation Army to run their hot lunch program through the Cafe.

"This is a great thing, the Mayor is so supportive of it ... and this is phase one, we're looking to do one for women in the near future," said Kruliki.

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