

THE ELM CENTRE

## **YWCA to build housing for women, children**

**JOSH WINGROVE**  
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YWCA Toronto will announce plans today for an \$80-million housing facility for women and children in the city's downtown, executive director Heather McGregor said.

The Elm Centre, at Elm and Elizabeth Streets, will include 300 affordable apartments for women and their children, Ms. McGregor said. Currently, YWCA Toronto runs 196 shelter units and 234 permanent housing units.

"It is really a significant addition," she said.

The project was made possible with \$36-million in government funding, a mortgage and \$15-million in private donations. The largest individual gift - \$5-million - came from the estates of Kenneth Thomson and Audrey Campbell, in honour of their sister, Irma Brydson, who died before them. The Elm Centre's main building, a 17-storey tower, will be named in her memory.

"Everyone benefits when our most vulnerable citizens have a safe and stable place to live. Philanthropy has an important role in addressing the root causes of poverty and homelessness and needs to be a top priority, especially in tough economic times," daughter Sherry Brydson said in a statement yesterday.

The site will include 150 units priced below market value, and 150 supported units priced based on an ability to pay. About 50 units are designated for women of aboriginal descent, and 45 for women over the age of 50.

"We actually believe the answer to homelessness is permanent housing," Ms. McGregor said.

A campaign will be launched in the spring to raise the \$4.5-million still needed.

The site will be developed in partnership with Wigwamen Incorporated, a native housing provider, and the Jean Tweed Centre, a counselling and care provider for women.

The Elm Centre, designed as a green development, is set to open in early 2011.

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Phillip Crawley, Publisher