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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Community Builders Brings Social Enterprise North; Focused on Job Training, Affordable Housing, and Building a Stronger Sudbury**

Sudbury, ON -

Community Builders, Simcoe County's leading Construction Employment Social Enterprise, has expanded operations to Greater Sudbury to create a new Community Builders North division.

As a Construction Employment Social Enterprise, Community Builders North aims to hire individuals with multiple barriers to employment and provide them with employable construction skills while supporting them to remove and overcome the obstacles that are currently excluding them from securing a job.

This expansion was facilitated through a partnership with the City of Greater Sudbury and national charity Raising the Roof. Through their Reside program, Raising the Roof purchases vacant buildings across Canada, and relies on social enterprise construction training programs to renovate them into dignified affordable homes. Raising the Roof creates partnerships with local organizations to provide long-term property management and ongoing support for the tenants. Through the creation of new units of affordable housing and the hands-on trades training with wrap-around supports, Raising the Roof's Reside program prevents homelessness for those most vulnerable.

Raising the Roof recently purchased five single family homes from the Greater Sudbury Housing stock and have negotiated a partnership with the City that will see each of the homes renovated by Community Builders North and maintained as affordable housing for the community. Each of the homes will be updated to include a legal secondary suite in the basement and be provided to low-income families in the community at affordable rates below current market rents.

"The City of Greater Sudbury has capitalized on the opportunity to, not only raise funds for their future affordable housing projects, but also invest in maintaining these units as affordable housing for the Sudbury Community," said Marc Soberano, Raising the Roof's Executive Director. "They have been exceptional partners throughout this process, and it is this innovative thinking that allows Raising the Roof to be successful in our mission."

Community Builders North will also work with the City to update existing units. It has already successfully completed 23 units in a short time frame and on budget. This continuous stream of work will allow over 30 people per year to be trained and supported as they move from a variety of social supports to meaningful and lasting employment. Barriers such as a criminal record, no employment experience or references, low levels of education, or homelessness and addictions make it near impossible for individuals to be hired, continuing a cycle of poverty. Community Builders North will work with a variety of community partners to strengthen existing support networks for individuals and break this cycle through employment.

"Our goal is to enhance the supports individuals are receiving from the excellent agencies across the community, to add a supportive employment option to the mix," said Managing Director, Carly Gasparini. "Having worked in the realm of social enterprise for seven years, I have seen that providing individuals with paid employment, while they complete training that will make them employable by the private market in the future, works to move people into better lives."

"I would like to welcome Community Builders and Raising the Roof to the community," said Greater Sudbury Mayor Brian Bigger. "We are excited about the opportunity to work with these organizations to create much needed affordable housing units in Greater Sudbury. This partnership also provides supports for individuals facing barriers and allows them to collect an income while they learn new skills to help them transition to the private labour force. City Council is committed to investing in affordable housing projects, and this collaboration is another step in the right direction."

Community Builders North is currently recruiting trainers, individuals with exceptional carpentry knowledge who are eager to pass it along in a classroom setting. They are also building their skilled labour team which will provide on-the-job training while ensuring work is completed to the highest standard. To apply, go to [www.communitybuilders.co](http://www.communitybuilders.co). To learn how you can support the project and to follow the progress, visit [www.raisingtheroof.or/reside-Sudbury](http://www.raisingtheroof.or/reside-Sudbury).

"Community Builders is excited to expand into the Sudbury area," said Community Builders CEO, Brandon Day. "We know that there is a serious need for skilled tradespeople in Sudbury and a large population who want to work. People, more than ever, are struggling and just need a little support and a sense of community, not everyone has this and that's what we bring. The results have been incredible, and we are so grateful for the opportunity in Sudbury to connect the people who need the work, with the work that needs to be done."

#### **About Raising the Roof:**

For 24 years, Raising the Roof has been a national leader in homelessness prevention. Its research and pilot projects are used by organizations across the country to prevent and end homelessness in their community. The iconic Toque Campaign has raised over \$8 million for over 200 homelessness prevention programs across the country. Raising the Roof's Reside program renovates vacant properties into housing for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. The renovations of these properties are used as a vehicle to train and employ people with barriers to employment through social enterprise contractors. Eighty-five per cent of people who worked on past Reside projects obtained full-time positions in the trades. <https://raisingtheroof.org/>

#### **About Community Builders:**

Community Builders is Simcoe County's leading social enterprise contractor. Community Builders offers a 16-week paid program for people with barriers to employment to gain employment readiness skills and hands-on construction training in a supportive environment. Community Builders' trainees will gain valuable experience as they work on this project. In the past, 83 of Community Builders trainees obtained paid apprenticeships or other full-time employment in the construction sector. <https://www.communitybuilders.co/>

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