



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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London, ON - Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) is ready to break new ground in providing holistic services and supports for youth. The agency will receive \$2.6 million from the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. The funding will enable YOU to begin redevelopment of The Cornerstone, the three-storey heritage building at Richmond and York streets which the agency purchased in December, 2007. The total project is \$4.1 million.

Steve Cordes, Executive Director of the not for profit organization says the funding represents a huge investment in the future of London. "Our downtown, our youth and this historic block will all enjoy the benefits for years to come. It truly is the fulfillment of a dream to bring new life to an historical building and create a new cornerstone for youth and community development."

The Cornerstone will provide local youth with multiple programs and services to build positive lives including alternative education, apprenticeship training, skills development, counselling, mentorship and employment opportunities. Each day more than 150 youth will be served. The building's upper two floors will continue as affordable housing for youth, with upgrades to the 28 apartments now fully occupied. At street level the YOU Made It Café, with retail store and wireless internet, will be the public portion of a training operation for young people. Building renovations will be to a high environmental standard. They include solar power, geothermal heating and cooling, grey-water collection and a rooftop garden. YOU has expanded its partnership with the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College on research in these areas.

"With the funding in place for this landmark building it's all coming together. This is a huge wow factor" says Bob Usher, Chair of the board, London Downtown Business Association. "It shows the strength and fortitude of YOU and the confidence of so many others in YOU's contribution to youth and to the community." Libro Financial Group owns a nearby building at 217 York Street. Harry Joosten, Corporate Secretary says the funding is great news for both YOU and the youth community YOU serves, especially in the downtown. "As both a supporter of YOU and a neighbour to The Cornerstone building, we are looking forward to the next phases of this innovative project."

Since 1982, Youth Opportunities Unlimited has provided transition, career development, and enterprise services to local youth. We provide a caring and active place where all youth are engaged in learning and creating opportunities to build their future.