

## **The 7 Cities Housing First Conference taking place May 7 and 8 in Edmonton**

**Edmonton, Alberta – May 7, 2015** – The annual 7 Cities Housing First Conference kicks off today at the Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel. This conference is an opportunity for Housing First practitioners as well as leaders in the sector to assemble, create dialogue, and collaboratively focus our efforts on being as effective and efficient as possible to end homelessness in our communities.

“This conference is a great way to refresh and refocus our efforts to end homelessness,” says Susan McGee, Chair of 7 Cities and CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. “The 2014 Homeless Count reflects that our efforts are needed more than ever, but we also need to celebrate the achievements that we have made six years into the provincial 10 year plan to end homelessness. Our collaborative efforts, along with the support of the province, makes this possible.”

Highlights for the 2015 Housing First Conference include a wide variety of breakout sessions including several Indigenous sessions, Alberta’s Youth Plan, landlord relations and engagement, homeless youth, and harm reduction. Specific sessions and their times can be found online at [eventmobi.com/hf2015/](http://eventmobi.com/hf2015/).

There are different keynote speakers for each day of the conference. On Thursday, May 7, Patti Laboucane and Kelly Mellings will be discussing the graphic novel *The Outside Circle*, which is drawn on 20 years of research based on healing and reconciliation of Aboriginal men. On Friday, the renowned Dr. Gabor Mate will bring his expertise on a wide range of topics, from addiction to mind-body wellness. The keynote address will run from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. on both days.

The 7 Cities Housing First Conference is taking place at the Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel. Media is invited to the keynote addresses, as well as the plenary on Thursday at 8:30 a.m.

For more information, please contact:

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***About 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness***

*Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness are the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness, working together since 2001. The 7 Cities coordinate local plans at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress towards ending homelessness. The members of the 7 Cities of Alberta are Calgary Homeless Foundation, City of Grande Prairie, City of Lethbridge, Homeward Trust Edmonton, Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, City of Red Deer, and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.*

*The 7 Cities provides a forum for dialogue with the federal and provincial representatives on housing and homelessness. The 7 Cities have long-standing histories of delivering strategic planning and service delivery in communities, along with administering and aligning funds, with accountabilities to several provincial or federal funders, including Alberta Human Services and the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.*