

Social housing facility opens

YOUTH, ELDERS
will live together at
newest project.

BY JENN MCGARRIGLE
THE NEWS BULLETIN

Affordable housing has come full circle with the opening of a new supportive housing facility for youth and elders in Nanaimo.

Salish Lelum on Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Society's Tenth Street property has 18 low-income apartments – eight for elders and 10 for Aboriginal youth – and a communal kitchen and family room.

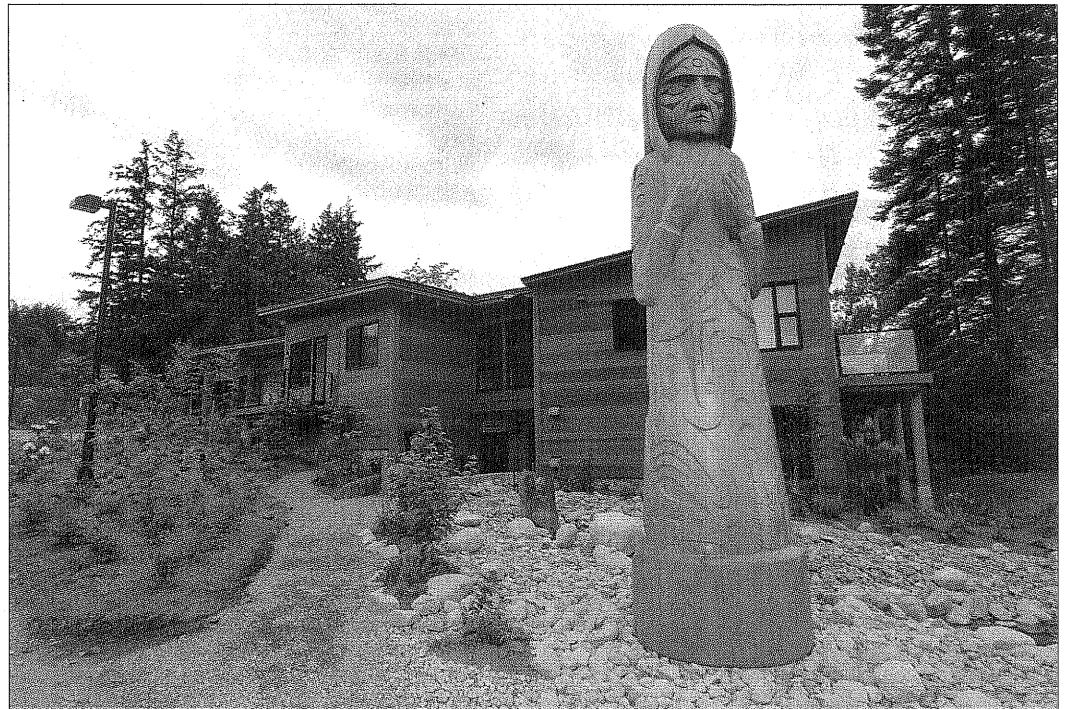
The \$3.08-million facility, funded by the province with the City of Nanaimo waiving development cost charges of \$115,906, is the first development to open from a partnership between the city and the province to build up to 160 units of supportive housing in the community.

The idea behind putting elders and youth together is so that youth have access to the mentorship and cultural knowledge the elders have to offer, said Grace Elliott-Nielsen, Tillicum Lelum executive director.

"This is actually, as far as I know, the first elder-youth facility," she said. "It helps the youth move into a more positive future. It keeps [the elders] young, they really are motivated to work with the youth."

Salish Lelum will house youth who are in school or just starting their first job, but still need support while they find their feet, said Elliott-Nielsen.

The youth are welcome to stay as long as they need this support, while elders are welcome to stay as long as they are self-sufficient – the facility has a part-time manager and part-time cleaner



CHRIS BUSH/THE NEWS BULLETIN

ABOVE: Sleni, the Coast Salish word for woman, carved by John Marsdon and his mother, Jane, from a 400-year-old cedar tree, greets visitors entering the new housing at Salish Lelum. The building is constructed to LEEDS silver standard and will house 18 elders and youth. **LEFT:** Theresa Gogolin is among the elders who have taken up residence at Salish Lelum.



Elliott-Nielsen expects the facility will be full next month.

Apartments for elders include a kitchen and living

area, bedroom and private bathroom, while the youth live in studio apartments with cooking and sleeping area in one room and a pri-

ivate bathroom.

New resident Kim Wilson, 19, is looking forward to cooking and watching TV with others.

"I like more people being around," she said.

Wilson hopes to get into the early childhood education program at Vancouver Island University next year and is looking for work in the meantime. She wants to stay at Salish Lelum until she's able to finish school.

Theresa Gogolin, 60, who moved into Salish Lelum a month ago, thinks putting youth and elders together is a great idea.

"It's kind of nice having them around and if you ever need help, they're there,"

Ground broken for youth centre

While celebrating the newly opened affordable housing development at Tenth Street on Friday, municipal, provincial and federal officials broke ground on a youth safe house that will be built next to it.

The eight-bedroom safe house will replace the old, four-bedroom house on site that Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Society currently uses.

a lot more work to supervise high-risk youth," said Grace Elliott-Nielsen, executive director. "It will be more practical."

She said the new safe house, for youth aged 14-19, will open in October.

The building will be funded through a \$375,000 grant from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and \$100,000 from the Vancouver Island Health