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For Immediate Release

GEF Seniors Housing Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Sakaw Terrace

Edmonton... GEF Seniors Housing is holding its groundbreaking ceremony for Sakaw Terrace, the newest affordable seniors housing building in Edmonton, **on November 22, 2016**, starting at **10:00 a.m.** at the **Mill Woods Seniors Association (2610 Hewes Way**, Edmonton, second level above the Mill Woods Public Library). The event will feature speeches from **GEF Seniors Housing CEO Raymond Swonek, Board Chair Gary Gordon, and Minister of Seniors and Housing Lori Sigurdson.**

The event will mark the official start of construction for Sakaw Terrace, GEF Seniors Housing's most ambitious building project to date. The building will feature more than 150 suites, both apartments and lodge rooms, a full commercial kitchen, two courtyards, a communal greenhouse, a salon, and a theatre room. Though the actual building site (5803 Mill Woods Road South) is a couple of blocks away from where the groundbreaking ceremony is being held, the first bit of topsoil broken from the construction site will be brought into the Mill Woods Seniors Association and turned to commemorate the occasion.

"We wanted to hold the groundbreaking inside somewhere publicly accessible so we could invite as many people from the community as we could," says Swonek. "Right from when we started planning Sakaw Terrace in 2014, we included the community in everything from the initial planning to even the design of the building itself. Because we've had community support for this building from the start, we wanted to invite the community to be part of this ceremony."

Construction for the \$42 million building is set to continue through 2017 and have an opening date for the fall in 2018. Though GEF Seniors Housing won't be accepting applications to Sakaw Terrace's waiting list until the fall of 2017, excitement and anticipation is still high.

"We attended many community events in the Mill Woods area over the summer, including open houses at community centres and the Mill Woods farmers' market," says Swonek. "There would always be a line at our booth of people asking about Sakaw Terrace and trying to get on the waiting list right away. We had to keep explaining that ground hasn't even broken yet for the building, but they were so excited that affordable seniors housing is being built in their community that they wanted to be a part of it right away."

GEF is the largest provider of affordable seniors housing in Alberta. Originally established in 1959, the organization has evolved into a prominent not-for-profit registered charity, managing more than 40 apartment and lodge buildings housing for low to moderate income seniors in Edmonton.

Today, GEF Seniors Housing has close to 500 employees, hundreds of volunteers, and more than 3,500 residents and tenants across every major area of the city, providing safe and affordable accommodations for Edmonton's seniors and peace of mind for their families and communities.

Media inquiries can be sent to Christopher Schieman, Public Relations Manager, at 780-447-9207, 780-938-1243, or cschieman@gef.org.