

Ganohkwa Sra Grand Opening

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Bill Montour, Chief of Staff of the Assembly of First Nations was one of the speakers at the grand opening of the family violence shelter, Ganohkwa Sra.

in to having the shelter become a reality.

Former chief councillor William Montour, now with the Assembly of First Nations, was among the guest speakers. Montour had turned the sod at the ground breaking ceremony when he was chief and said the

ladies involved used him as a battering ram to cut through the red tape.

"I admire the ingenuity of this community," he said. He would like to take all the complainers and dissenters from this community three hours north of here "to see the conditions our people

have to live in," he said.

Steve O'Brien, Social Development of Indian & Northern Affairs, called the shelter a positive alternative and a tribute to the community of Six Nations and said the social services on Six Nations are second to none.

Richard Lightbown, Organizations & Systems Development, call the shelter a beacon in the community.

Brian Porter, Mark Mussleman McIntyre Combe Architects, remarked on the \$900,000 building which will run an extensive outreach program and said this community now has the prototype for a shelter of this nature. He said when his company was researching the possibilities for a type of building, it was found that most centres were converted buildings, not new structures. He also remarked that more than 50 per cent of the work force for this building was local.

Safety is an important element

of the shelter, there is controlled access and monitoring cameras on the exterior of the building, as well as the interior. The courtyard provides a secure outdoor play area for the children, along with motion detectors mounted on the exterior of the roof. These detectors are wired to the police station.

Ganohkwa Sra operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Women and children in need can stay a maximum of six weeks. In addition to offering a safe haven for victims of family violence, the trained staff area available for counselling services. The

staff listens, talks, shares and supports abused women and their children about their feelings and experiences as survivors of family violence.

Support and counselling for men who abuse their families is provided as a joint project between Ganohkwa Sra and La Marsh Research Institute, York University, but the funding will end in June. Other avenues of funding for this program are being sought at this time.

Future goals for Ganohkwa Sra are a Men's Program, Sexual Assault Program and Second Stage Housing.