Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger
and members of City Council
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

April 19, 2007

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Re: letter of support for SISO’s proposal to acquire Auchmar House

I am writing to express my support for the Settlement & Integration Services Organization (SISO) in their bid to acquire Auchmar House. SISO intends to use the property for the purpose of establishing a reception centre to house Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) upon their arrival in Hamilton and to offer services to all immigrants in the Hamilton area.

SISO has been providing settlement services on behalf of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) since 1993. During that time, Hamilton has established itself as an ideal community for Government Assisted Refugees and other immigrants to settle and become integrated into Canadian life. Due to the excellent services provided by SISO, and the links that SISO establishes for newcomers in the community its programs are seen as models of service delivery.

CIC hopes to continue sending GARs to Hamilton as part of our ongoing commitment to resettlement. We have been encouraging SISO to locate a permanent site for use as a reception centre. Currently, a local hotel is used to accommodate the refugees when they arrive, but it is difficult to meet the needs of large families in a hotel setting. A space such as Auchmar House would provide a more
stable and welcoming environment for these high-needs newcomers. Kitchener is a prime example of a community that has benefited from having a permanent reception centre: refugees continue to integrate successfully, and community retention is high as a result.

In addition to the GARs benefiting greatly from the establishment of a reception house, the city of Hamilton will experience many social, economic and cultural contributions made by the newcomer families who settle there and will become a more vibrant, multicultural community.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Gryte
Director, Settlement Programs
Settlement and Intergovernmental Affairs Directorate,
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