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# Prevention



Issue #3  
Winter 2000–2001

Safer communities: Everybody's responsibility

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## "Our Children Are Not for Sale!"

A community fights back against teen prostitution

By Stephen Bindman

VICTORIA — The boyish-looking police officer with the slicked back hair pulls out a map of the downtown core and begins sketching directions.

"You walk out of the hotel, take a left on Government Street..." says 33-year-old Detective Constable Grant Hamilton.

"There's a definite kiddie stroll in Victoria. On any night, you will see five or six young girls..."

Victoria, it turns out, is not all afternoon tea at the Empress Hotel and "newly-weds and nearly-deads."

To the surprise of many, the city has a serious teen prostitution problem. Boys and girls as young as 11 are selling their bodies on the street for money, drugs, shelter or their next meal.

A booming convention business, proximity to



Vancouver, good cruising weather all year around, and lots of visiting American seamen combine to make Victoria a ready market for underaged prostitutes.

In fact, the "kiddie stroll" is just a block away from the world-famous Empress Hotel.

But unlike many communities, Victoria is doing something about its underaged prostitution problem.

In early 1998, the Capital Region Action Team on Sexually Exploited Youth (CRAT) was formed in response to a growing incidence of sexually exploited youth in the region.

The community-wide coalition's membership includes seven of Greater Victoria's municipalities, the B.C. Children's Commission, the B.C. Ministries of the

continued page 4

## One on one



Cherry Kingsley was recently awarded the prestigious Governor General's Award for her work with Save the Children Canada where she helps young people to get out of prostitution.

Q What is Save the Children?

A Save the Children Canada started 80 years ago in response to the crisis many children were in around the world, because of the effects of war. Save the Children Canada operates in 10 countries around the world, working on issues like child slavery, hunger, access to education, and, in Canada, on things like rights education and child participation.

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## Prevention

# Letter from the Editors

*Prevention* is the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention newsletter, published three times a year by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC).

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*Photo on front page and on page 5 are a courtesy of Save the Children Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General.*

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1-877-302-6272

ISSN: 1488-8378

Canada Post Mail  
Agreement No. 1677969

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Printed in Canada

Dear readers,

This, the third issue of *Prevention*, focuses on the dilemma of youth crime.

As witnessed by the recent election campaign, it is certainly a "hot button" issue for many Canadians.

While the number of young people charged with crimes continues to fall, survey after survey indicate many Canadians continue to believe youth crime is actually on the rise.

The debate rages over whether and when to get tough with young offenders, whether their names should be published and how to ensure they get the necessary rehabilitation they need to become upstanding members of the community.

But no matter where they may stand in the punish/rehabilitate debate, most Canadians believe that preventing youth crime in the first place is the ideal solution.

We at *Prevention*, as our name indicates, wholeheartedly agree.

In the pages that follow, we will look at just a few of the efforts that are being undertaken by Canadians across this country to deal with the root causes of youth crime.

The diversity of these efforts is startling. There are initiatives led by police and by community coalitions. And of course, there are projects organized by young people themselves, for who knows better the problems than those living with them.

These projects represent determined efforts to steer young people away from


crime, violence and victimization — as evidenced by our cover story on the growing problem of teen prostitution.

We are very pleased to be featuring, on a related topic, an interview with Cherry Kingsley, a prostitute at the age of 14 who now devotes her time to helping young people breaking out of prostitution and who was a recent recipient of the prestigious Governor General's Award.

Also in this issue, we are pleased to give some space over to a number of voices, from across Canada. These are stories worth telling,

and we look forward, with future issues of *Prevention*, to seeing even more contributions from our readers.

As per usual, we welcome your comments.

Enjoy! 



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English

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- Information on crime prevention projects in Canada;
- Crime prevention tools;
- New publications such as:
  - Policy Frameworks (Women and Girls, Youth and Children);
  - Fact Sheets;
  - This Newsletter;
  - And more;
- A revised on-line registration form;
- A revised on-line application form for a new link;
- Four easy ways to contact us.



## Perspectives

By Barbara Hall

Headlines, talk shows, political speeches and television often portray young people as violent, irresponsible lawbreakers. In a word: trouble.

But as I visit communities across our country, I see a very different picture of young Canadians. Yes, there are youth experiencing serious problems, but

they are concerned about crime and violence and, in many communities, they are taking responsibility and action to address these issues. A number of projects funded by the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention showcase the contribution that they are making.

are making an interactive video around the theme of absentee fathers, to educate young black males and females about the physical, emotional and economic responsibilities that come with parenthood.

Likewise, in the Alliance Théâtrale Haitienne, in Quebec, youth use theatre to develop and share strate-

and designing a multi-faceted prevention project. Using a multi-media format, it is aimed at reducing date rape and acquaintance sexual assault among young people.

Across the country, youth are becoming peer mediators to work in their schools and their communities to resolve conflict without

homophobia and sexism. The goal is to develop a sustainable, community-based strategy to prevent hate-motivated violence by youth against people in the gay and lesbian community.

The town of Summerland, in British Columbia, has adopted the "asset approach" to keeping their community safe and healthy. That means they want to give their kids what they need to succeed. A group of eloquent youth has taken strong leadership to promote the approach and are helping to connect their peers with adults who can assist them to make positive choices, to build good relationships, and to achieve success in life.

The Canadian Tamil Youth Development Association was formed by Tamil youth who were upset by the media coverage of Tamil young people and by the problems experienced by some of their peers in adjusting to life in Canada. In addition to setting up many supports for their peers, CanTYD has done research on Tamil youth gangs with an action plan to address the problem. They have brought together youth, the police, parents, schools, and youth serving agencies to make changes.

These are just a few of the exciting things that youth are doing in their communities. If only we could get the headlines, talk shows, political speeches and television to tell these stories. 🍁

*Barbara Hall  
Chair, National Strategy on  
Community Safety and  
Crime Prevention.*



the overwhelming majority are good people who deserve our respect and admiration.

The youth I meet are often better educated than earlier generations. They juggle a far wider range of issues in a more complex and demanding world. They are much more accepting of diversity and differences. They are angry at the way they are demonized in the media and at the refusal of many adults to listen to

Some youth are using creative arts to communicate with their peers about behaviour that can result in crime or victimization. For example, a group of students at Clarenville High School in Newfoundland have developed a powerful piece of theatre on bullying and intimidation, which they perform for other students throughout their province and elsewhere.

In Mississauga, the Peel Sisters of Colour in Action

gies to avoid drug use and delinquency.

Out west, in British Columbia, 841-KOZ is a youth-led program with a violence prevention and anti-gang message: they use theatre and music to reach and teach fellow youth, as well as professionals working with youth.

Also in British Columbia, the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre has recruited a group of young people who are developing

violence. For the second year in a row, YouCAN, a youth-led organization, brought several hundred young people from many parts of Canada to Cornwall, Ontario to learn mediation skills. This is youth training youth to work with youth.

In Toronto, young people are teaching hate crime prevention. As a group, they facilitate peer-led workshops in schools and communities on issues of

"Our Children Are Not for Sale!" from cover

Attorney General and Children and Families, the Capital Health Region, local school districts and police chiefs, the University of Victoria and Save the Children Canada.

The community mobilized after a task force conducted a landmark 1996 survey of 75 youth involved in the sex trade — one of the most detailed surveys ever conducted in Canada.

**"An older prostitute 'friend' 'sold' me to a motorcycle gang who used my street prostitution to support them, only now they are injecting me with hard drugs."**

After the task force advertised on the same page as the escort ads, the teens were asked 95 questions on their backgrounds, housing, safety and experiences of violence.

Public hearings were held to discuss the issue — desperate parents of youth on the street and ordinary citizens came forward. Some private sessions were also held so some sexually exploited youth could tell their stories in a safe place without having them made public.

The resulting report, *Wanted: Vulnerable Children and Youth*, found the average age of entry into the sex trade to be 15.5 years, with some youth entering as young as 11; most began trading sex for the basic necessities of survival — food, shelter or the money to buy them; verbal, physical, and sexual abuse were relatively common;

many youth had serious drug and/or alcohol dependencies; most did not have a stable living situation from which to work to exit the trade; and few had completed high school.

"The study made a great difference because when those results came in, everyone was singing from the same song sheet," said Barb McLintock, a newspaper reporter who is part of CRAT.

"The great advantage of the survey was that everyone at the table was using the same factual, local evidence when it came to discussing what projects should be undertaken.

"The community as a whole really said, 'Hey wait a minute, clearly this really is a problem in Victoria.' It would be pretty hard to disbelieve that you had a problem anymore."

There would be no turning back for this community in its fight.

The result was a 10-step community action plan — an integrated and coordinated campaign to attack the various aspects of teen prostitution and help the kids exit the sex trade.

**"I hit bottom when a john beat and raped me at gun point. I had to change or I'd be dead."**

Recently, CRAT received a \$490,000, three-year contribution from the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention's Investment Fund to undertake an integrated and seamless program of services for youth recruited into, or at risk of being recruited into, the sex trade and provide them

with the immediate and long-term support they need to leave, and remain away from the streets.

**"I'm afraid of dying on somebody's bathroom floor."**

That includes hiring a full-time street outreach team — a police officer and youth outreach worker who devote all their time to working with sexually exploited youth and trying to get them to accept services that will lead them off the street.

That's constable Hamilton and veteran youth worker Elaine Holmes.

They follow up leads from police, social workers, or other kids, or just spot teens hanging out with known pimps or prostitutes.

"Our approach is very low key," explains Holmes. "We've been known to try and outpimp the pimp. We want to build a trusting relationship pretty quickly so that the girls can feel really relaxed and comfortable because a lot of times we have a very short period of time in which to do the intervention, especially if we feel the girl may be leaving or may be taken out of Victoria.

"The intervention can take place from anywhere on the streets to hotel rooms."

Unlike some organizations that support adult prostitutes on the street, Holmes and Hamilton believe that anyone under age 19 "shouldn't be out there selling herself."

Under B.C.'s Child and Family Services Act, police can apprehend a youth in need of protection "and if you're out there working the stroll then you're in

These statistics come from a 1996 survey of 75 exploited youth involved in the sex trade in Victoria, B.C.

- With few exceptions, sexually exploited children and youth do not arrive from far away on some lucrative interprovincial or international "prostitution circuit." They are much more likely to have come from a smaller town up-island or from the city's own suburbs.
- They do not move directly from a "normal" teenage life of home, school, and extra-curricular activities to being a prostitute. Long before that, most have a long history of school problems, family problems, emotional problems, or all three. In fact, close to half of them were living on the street when they first began trading sexual favours.
- Only about one in four youth reported regular use of cocaine or other injectable drugs, but many of those who do, admit to a serious dependency problem.
- A majority of them said they would like to finish high school, and would even like a college or university education. Girls, more than boys, are interested in furthering their education.

From the *Report of the Sexually Exploited Youth Committee of the Capital Regional District* — Victoria, B.C.

need of protection because you don't know who you're going to be getting into a car with," says Hamilton, whose salary is paid by all 14 Victoria municipalities, a recognition that while the stroll may be downtown, the teens come from all parts of the region.

"So we'll pick them up and, we try to get them in a mutual setting, like take them out for coffee at a restaurant and start talking to them. We just tell them this is what we do, these are our services, you don't need to be doing this, what's up with mom and dad, do you need a place to live?"

"It depends on what's happening to them. If they're in a point of crisis where they want to get out or they're afraid of something, then it's a lot easier.

"But a lot of the kids think, 'Nothing can happen to me, I'm fine, I'm infallible, I know what I'm doing.' We just tell them that we're out

here, this is what we do and we try and connect them to a service.

"If they don't want at that point to make the change then we'll just give them the information, give them our card, and say, 'Look we'll give you a call next week and see how things are going' and try and maintain that relationship."

But Holmes and Hamilton are only the first step.

Once the kids decide to leave the street, Holmes and Hamilton will link them up with whatever basic services they need — safe housing, clothing, food, counselling, income assistance, education, drug and alcohol treatment, medical treatment, even reuniting them with their families.

Each kid's needs are different.

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"Our Children Are Not for Sale!" from page 4

"We're saying to them not only will we make you feel wanted and special, but we can also offer housing and safety and everything that a pimp can," says Holmes.

"There's always reasons that they're out there. Nobody joins prostitution because they like sex.

"There are certainly answers to everything. It's just a matter of because they're young and immature they haven't tapped into the resources they may be needing to tap into. A lot of it isn't arduous, it's just offering the right thing at the right time for these kids."

CRAT has established through the Ministry of Child and Families a network of six "safe homes" where young people who are ready to break away from life on the streets can live safely with stable, specially-trained house parents as they make the break.

**"When I told my pimp I was leaving, he slashed me on the neck and arms with a knife."**

Says Medical Health Officer Dr. Richard Stanwick: "It's been made clear to us that we can't nicely schedule them into our calendar, saying in seven weeks on Tuesday afternoon if you come in we'll help you with your transition.

"When these kids are ready to go, you seize the moment because it's so easy to fall back into the life of prostitution — mainly your pimp finds you and beats the crap out of you."

It can be simple things like teaching them how to hold

hands not for money and sex or how to sleep at night instead of during the day. Or what to wear.

Said Dr. Stanwick: "One of the people on our committee described how when she decided to finally make the move, she'd been absent from school for six or seven months and she said all she had to wear were these transparent blouses, six-inch skirts and 10-inch heels and mesh nylons and the social services' clothing budget wouldn't have been available for 30 days.

**"There needs to be a place where kids can go all night. I have friends with no place to go."**

"She said if she went back to school dressed like that, it wouldn't take very long for people to figure out what she was doing."

The goal is not necessarily to bring charges against pimps, Hamilton says, it's to get the kids off the street and into a safe lifestyle.

"In the past, we'd often get you to come forward, you give us a statement, we do the investigation, you testify. But there was no followup for you and you're on your own. Where do you go from there? We turn your life upside down and now what?

"So what we've said is we've got to form a support system so once we intervene you need to be surrounded by positive role models and a healthy lifestyle.

"Now we're saying that if you don't want to charge your pimp, that's fine with us. But you don't need to work and this is what we're

going to do so that you don't have to do that.

"But we're finding that because we establish the relationship first and they feel safe and supported, they often say, 'Okay, I think I do want to do this.' "

In the past three years, the duo have probably been in touch with as many as 100 teens.

Says Holmes: "The more we dig, the stinkier it gets. I still think we've only scratched the surface of some of the more organized groups that are running young girls. Unfortunately, it takes a ton of time to build relationships, to get

into doors that just don't want to open."

The project will also establish a database of children and youth involved in prostitution — ages, places, travel patterns and methods of recruitment will be tracked and conveyed to police and social service agencies across the country.

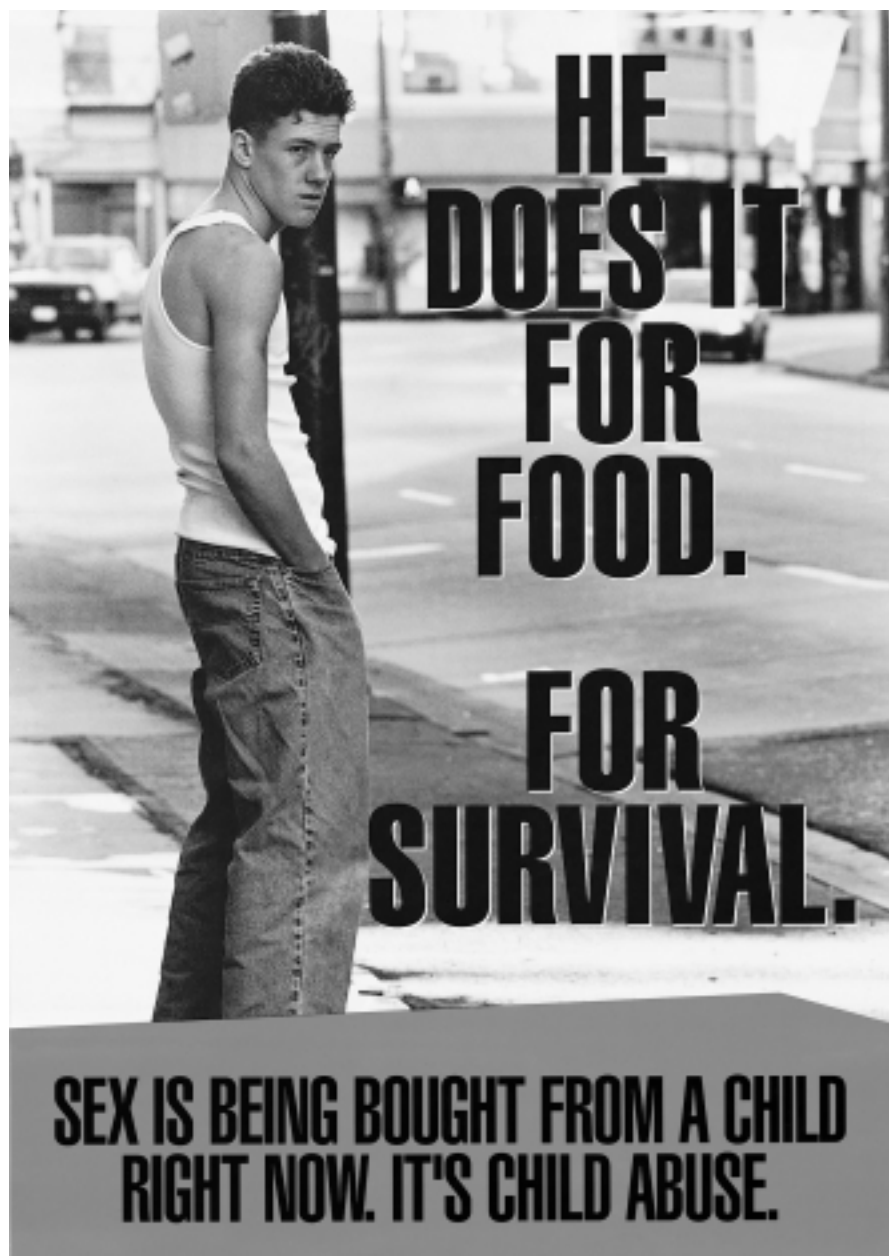
**"This was my 'family life': beating, verbal and sexual abuse, alcohol and drugs."**

As part of its efforts, the Victoria team undertook a four-month public aware-

ness raising campaign that included provocative radio and bus ads that youth sexual exploitation is just another form of child abuse and "Our Children are Not for Sale!"

The goal, Stanwick says, is to raise awareness of the problem to the point where there is no stigma attached to talking about it. It is a problem that cannot be solved by governments and social agencies alone — it requires that the entire community get involved, he says.

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"Our Children Are Not for Sale!" from page 5

"This would not normally be considered a subject for around the dinner table. The word condom couldn't be used 15 years ago in polite conversation.

"Similarly, unless we can get people dealing with this in a forthright fashion and feeling comfortable enough to deal with it, you won't engage in meaningful dialogue.

"Our goal is to shift public attitudes toward youth sexual exploitation in the same way societal attitudes have changed towards drinking and driving over the past 20 years. This is simply something that is not tolerated in our society.

"Our hope is that every single citizen of Victoria makes it clear that in our city, buying sex from anyone underage is more than just illegal, that it is also socially and morally reprehensible."

A survey conducted by the University of Victoria for CRAT found that more than 80 percent of residents surveyed were aware of the teen prostitution problem and most favoured tougher penalties for those who recruit juveniles into the sex trade or attempt to buy sex from them.

"In the community, the issue of youth sexual exploitation has gone from being one hidden in the darkest corners of the file marked 'Downtown Problems' to one that is openly discussed and dealt with in school parent advisory councils, in churches, in service clubs and over the backyard fence," says McLintock.

Both the local MP, Federal Cabinet Minister David Anderson, and B.C. Premier and former Attorney

General Ujjal Dosanjh became key supporters of the project.

"The sexually exploited youth we talked to as we began our work felt they had been studied to death, even though few people had ever asked them what they thought they needed for healing," Stanwick says.

"We vowed at that time that we would not become highly-educated voyeurs, getting a glimpse into a foreign world but offering nothing back in return. I think we got such honesty from the individuals who shared their stories because we promised we were not going to let this drop.

"Clearly this group is exploited enough already. For us to add to that burden would be unconscionable."

Stanwick says one of the key challenges is to shatter some of the myths about child prostitution — about who uses the kids and how they get drawn into the sex business.

"Without sounding too Hollywoodish, there is the Pretty Woman syndrome, that this is glamorous, that these kids are out there having a good time, that it's a life of ease and partying, that this is a choice that they make freely.

"The phrase the Americans use, survival sex, really does speak to the desperate straits of these individuals who are often running from something. This isn't a choice.


"One individual told us, 'I was having to do this at home, at least on the street I get paid for it.' These are kids who have been driven to sell their bodies and they often start not for money, but for simple things like food or shelter or clothing. And then eventually graduate up the barter scale."

One of the things that struck the team was how so many similar programs across North America were never evaluated to see what works and what doesn't.

That's why as part of the federal funding, the program will be evaluated by the University of Victoria.

"Every project will be evaluated so that we follow along with what works and not just because it makes us feel good to be telling people we have a terrible problem," says McLintock.

"The commitment to evaluation and communications will provide additional ben-

efits to communities across Canada so they may learn from our experiences and adapt this to their own special needs." 

*Stephen Bindman, an award-winning legal journalist, is currently a Special Advisor at Justice Canada.*

## By the Numbers

- In a 2000 public opinion poll, 71 percent of Canadians believed that youth crime is on the rise<sup>1</sup>.
- The youth crime rate, as measured by the number of youths charged with a *Criminal Code* offence, dropped 7% in 1999, including a 5% decline in violent crime and an 11% decrease in property crime<sup>2</sup>.
- The number of youth charged with violent crime in 1999 declined by five percent, by far the largest year-over-year decline since the introduction of the Young Offenders Act (YOA) in 1984. It is, however, still higher — by 40 percent — than it was in 1989<sup>3</sup>.
- Over half — 52 percent — of the victims of youth crime were youths themselves. Just two percent of the victims of youth crime were aged 55 years and over in 1998<sup>4</sup>.
- A 1997 survey showed individuals who make donations to charitable and non-profit organizations generally increase with age, while younger individuals are more likely to do volunteer work. The volunteer rate among youth aged 15 to 24 almost doubled to 33 percent in 1997 from 18 percent in 1987<sup>5</sup>.
- When asked in a 1999 survey which factors were the most significant in producing crime in Canada, young people identified family situation as the most significant cause (33%), followed by poverty and a lenient criminal system (both at 20%), peer pressure (18%), and lastly, inadequate social programs and services (8%)<sup>6</sup>.
- 81% of youths said that the government ensuring a post-secondary education is accessible and affordable should be a high priority for government. Government helping youth get on-the-job experience is also considered a high priority at 62%<sup>7</sup>.
- Youth consider keeping your word (99%), showing courtesy to others (98%), working hard (93%), helping others who are worse off than you (92%), and eating healthy (91%), to be very important to them<sup>8</sup>.
- The number of youth attending universities has increased by 1%, and community college by 9%, between 1993 and 1998<sup>9</sup>.
- Youths (15 to 24) have seen an employment gain since October 1999 of 4.2% or 93,000 jobs, 63,000 of which were full-time<sup>10</sup>. The youth unemployment rate in October edged up 0.2 percentage points to 12.9%, compared to 15.6% in 1995<sup>11</sup>.
- The National Strategy on Crime Prevention and Community Safety, since the launch of Phase II in June 1998, has supported almost 700 projects that deal with the root causes of crime and victimization among young people.

<sup>1</sup> Ekos Research Associates Inc., *Canadian Attitudes Towards the Prevention of Crime*, pg 43.

<sup>2</sup> Juristat, *Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999*, Vol. 20, no. 5, pg 12.

<sup>3</sup> Juristat, *Crime Statistics in Canada, 1999*, Vol. 20, no. 5, pg 13.

<sup>4</sup> Juristat, *Youth Violent Crime*, Vol. 19, no. 13, pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Monday, August 24, 1998, pg 3.

<sup>6</sup> Angus Reid Group, Inc., *Reconnecting Government with Youth II*, May 1999, pg 66.

<sup>7</sup> Angus Reid Group, Inc., *Reconnecting Government with Youth II*, May 1999, pg 16.

<sup>8</sup> Angus Reid Group, Inc., *Reconnecting Government with Youth II*, May 1999, pg 23.

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children Into the Millennium, 1999-2000*, pg 27.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Friday, November 3, 2000, pg 1.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Friday, November 3, 1995, pg 1.



## L.O.V.E. Works!

On September 30, 1972, Montreal native Twinkle Rudberg was forced to come to terms with the wrenching impact of violent crime.

That night, her husband Daniel was murdered by a 14-year-old boy following a struggle over a purse the boy had stolen moments earlier. It was, by any measure, a senseless and shocking tragedy.

That night, both Twinkle and Daniel Rudberg became victims of crime.

In its terrible wake, Twinkle Rudberg has dedicated her

life to the reduction of youth violence, demonstrating a depth of understanding and compassion that borders on the incomprehensible.

In 1993, having long recognized that the troubled, disconnected youth who had devastated her family was himself also a victim, Twinkle established Leave Out Violence (L.O.V.E.). Her objective was to give youth in despair the skills and will to choose non-violent, productive lifestyles. Launched in Montreal, L.O.V.E. now also has offices in Toronto, Vancouver and Halifax.

L.O.V.E. provides young people with the measurable skills, the sense of purpose and the support they need to reject violent behaviour. The philosophy of L.O.V.E. is rooted in the belief that the future of our youth is everyone's responsibility. Its programs teach skills, leadership, self-esteem, self-reliance, self-confidence and offer positive alternatives to the pull of criminal activity.

L.O.V.E.'s most compelling program is photojournalism. At-risk teenagers develop skills in both writing and photography taught

by professional journalists and photographers. Their reporting focuses on three themes: What are the causes of violence? What is its impact on all of our lives? How can we eliminate it? For many of the teenagers, the program is a place to address issues too hot for others to handle.

The book *L.O.V.E. Works!* consists of the writing and photography of 57 teenagers. The culmination of three years' work, the book hopes to heighten awareness of the problems of violence in the community at large. It is full of striking black-and-

white photographs and frank, often brutal accounts of gangs, drugs, suicide and sexual and family violence.

*Prevention* is pleased to feature excerpts, both photographic and textual, from *L.O.V.E. Works!* For more information on L.O.V.E., you can call one of the regional offices at (514) 938-0006 (Montreal), (416) 785-8411 (Toronto), (902) 429-6616 (Halifax) or (604) 682-5683 (Vancouver) or visit [www.leaveoutviolence.com](http://www.leaveoutviolence.com).

### The Stranger

Standing in the corner of an empty room, the tears stinging her eyes, she comes face to face with the stranger. He moves towards her. She knows what's coming next. He holds out his hand. But not to love and comfort her, only to hurt her. To take away her innocence. And when it's all over, she will sit in her corner, full of shame, rocking herself, trying to stop trembling. He has scared her for life. Made her unpure. Made her have to live in fear. In those treacherous never-ending moments, he has put her in a secret hell forever. And when she buries her face in her hands, sobbing quietly to herself, she sees his face in her mind. And she realizes that he wasn't a stranger after all.

Amanda Stillemunkes, 17



One way... one try. Nicholas Ramirez



## LOVE

I Used To Be/  
Now I Am

I used to be a little girl,  
Now I am a young lady;

I used to be scared,  
Now I am sure;

I used to be lost,  
Now I am found;

I used to be quiet,  
Now I am loud;

I used to be loved,  
Now I am loved.

Tia Potter, 15



*Is it ourselves or the circumstances we're born into that drive us into submission? Tess Vo*

Weapons of frustration have no place in our lives. Eve Hill



### Pool of Blood

I remember playing basketball on the neighborhood court and hearing a boy run down the hill yelling, "Please no," and the sound of a gun going off and his body rolling down the rest of the hill and him lying in a pool of blood.

When the gun went off I began to look frantically for my little brother. I was running and yelling out my brother's name. But it wasn't easy finding him. I was pushed and shoved but didn't stop looking.

When I finally found him, I told him to follow me but all he did was stand there. "What's wrong?" I asked. He responded, "I can't move." By now everyone is running and screaming, I wanted to get out of there so I grabbed my brother's hand and told him nothing was going to happen to him. I wouldn't let it, and with that we ran for home.

When we were running, tons of tears were running down my face. My stomach felt like someone was trying to pull it out.

Our mother was running towards us because she heard what happened. When she saw us, she ran even faster and gave us each big hugs and kisses for at least two minutes. The weird thing about this whole mess is that the whole time I kept thinking, I don't want my brother to see this.

Melissa Samuel, 15





## LOVE

### Dad Song

Why do you hurt me, something I said?  
Scared and unhappy, something we shared?  
Can't understand you, what's in your head?  
Look how I'm bleeding, try to repair...  
Look at you speaking, hiding the pain.  
Why don't you say it? Crying again.  
Hugging each other, going our way.  
Wish we could talk, but scared, must contain.

Malcolm Nadeau, 18



"No title" Junie Desil



Photo by Jeremy Ducharme/Caption by Semira Weiss

### The Red Line

The day was hot  
The day was dragging  
One second crawled like an hour  
It didn't take long for them to get bored.  
In seconds they found a diversion.  
In seconds he pulled back the hammer.  
In seconds he watched  
As the red life line slipped away.  
In seconds he watched his own brother die.

The day was hot  
The day was dragging  
It didn't take long to find daddy's gun  
It didn't take long for the day to end.

Junie Desil, 17

*I'm using my clarity as a tool to help others.*



## Cops on the Youth Beat

By Paul Murray and James Steen

For many years, Constables Willie Ducharme and Rick Kosowan patrolled the mean streets of Winnipeg's tough North End. They were good "beat cops" assigned to an area with a high crime rate.

But they were much more than that. Last August, the two veteran members of the Winnipeg Police Service received a special award from the Minister of Justice for their innovative and dedicated work with youth in trouble with law. The two were selected to receive the first ever Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which co-sponsors the award. The award recognizes the outstanding achievements of officers who work with young people.

Constables Ducharme and Kosowan were nominated for the Minister's Award by the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg. The nomination was also supported by many other community leaders in the North End, an area with a reputation of having "the roughest and toughest streets in Winnipeg."

As part of the Winnipeg Police Service's commitment to community-based policing, the two officers were posted in 1996 to this challenging area of low incomes, many single parent families, and a high incidence of alcohol and drug abuse. The North End is also known for its gangs and prostitution.

Although they had both joined the department

twenty-four years earlier and had taken recruitment training together, this was the first time Ducharme and Kosowan had served together. It turned out they made a great team.

Ducharme was born and raised in rural Manitoba and is of Métis ancestry. Kosowan's ancestry is Ukrainian. He was born and raised in the same North End he policed. Both had moved away from their roots but both came to the job with an interest in traditional Aboriginal culture and in working to earn the trust of the young people as well as elders and other community leaders.

Kosowan and Ducharme began to visit schools in the area. Their first visits were low-key — just walk-throughs to create a physical presence. In time, students and teachers began to make contact and to discuss issues and problems, such as bullying, fights and thefts.

Word of their interest in young people and their desire to help began to spread. More and more, the two became involved in problems outside the school as well as within. Sometimes parents would make contact and invite their help with a particular problem. On duty or not, they would respond.

A principal of a school in Winnipeg's North End said that Kosowan and Ducharme provided "counsel and information to parents and students about the perimeters of the law and options available to each individual. Where mediation was necessary, they have given their own time to facilitate the mediation process dur-

ing times convenient to the parties involved."

Another school principal praised their help in crime prevention, noting they were "visible, approachable, and available to students who needed advice on how to deal with an issue."

The more they became involved in the lives of young people in the community, the more they recognized the value of restorative justice and the need to find solutions to youth behavioural problems by working along with, but outside, the court system.

Kosowan and Ducharme took training and became Community Justice Forum facilitators. They looked for opportunities to use the justice forum approach to deal with young people who had committed an offence, but for whom criminal charges and court didn't appear to be the best solution.

They teamed up with the Aboriginal justice system, Ganootamag, which shares the objective of community-based justice for young people. In the last few

years, a number of young people in trouble with the law have participated in Community Justice Forums run by these two officers.

So far, the experience has been quite positive. Offences have been dealt with through meaningful consequences that support young people in their community. Kosowan and Ducharme are now training others to be facilitators and have been invited as speakers for conferences on the topic.

The two officers have been involved in many other activities as well: an Aboriginal employment program, work with gang members and other youth at the Winnipeg Native Alliance, work in northern communities to prepare youth for the transition to urban life, a police summer student/recruitment program, and Aboriginal teachings and ceremonies for recruits and members of the Winnipeg Police Service.

They have been honoured for their efforts by the Aboriginal community with Aboriginal spirit names and Honour Dances and, recently, they have been presented with eagle feathers, one of the highest honours that Aboriginals can bestow.

The success of their efforts clearly underlines the value of the objectives set out in the Government of Canada's Youth Justice Renewal Initiative. The strategy emphasizes a community-based approach to youth justice and encourages police to use alternatives to the traditional court process, especially in cases of less serious offences.

"Police officers are finding new ways to deal with young people outside the court process without putting the community at extra risk," said Larry Gravill, President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

In addition to the two winners, a number of other officers were selected for Certificates of Distinction and honourable or special mention. More than fifty officers were nominated by community organizations, schools and police services across Canada.

The deadline for submitting nominations for the 2001 award is April 16. To find out more, please visit Youth Justice Renewal Web site at <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/yj>, or call 613-957-4222.



Constables Ducharme and Kosowan receiving their award from Honorable Lawrence MacAulay, Solicitor General of Canada.

## A good idea, a small budget and a big impact: crime prevention video garners praise, award

### **BAD KIDS?**

"If you wanted to create a criminal, you'd have a pretty good chance  
If you took someone from a seriously troubled home  
Put them in a string of foster homes,  
Or group homes...  
Change their social worker on a regular basis  
Change everything  
Keep changing  
Change everything.

If you really wanted to create a criminal  
You'd let a young person drop out of school,  
Let them run away from home at an early age,  
And let them look for comfort in alcohol or drugs.

And somewhere...  
... somewhere...  
In their lonely and painful existence  
You'd let them be abused.  
Physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

And when they looked for help —

... Because sometimes we do look for help...  
If we know where to look...

If you wanted a kid to become a criminal,  
You'd see to it that there wasn't any help available.

When the people who could help them,  
Who want to help them,  
Just don't have enough time...

That's when we fall through the cracks.

You see kids as "trouble,"  
Instead of "troubled."

Most of all,  
If you want a kid to become a criminal,  
You treat him like a criminal."

— transcript from the award-winning video, *Bad Kids? (How to create a criminal)*

*Bad Kids? (How to create a criminal)* is a short video that graphically and movingly challenges mainstream media messages about young offenders. In less than five minutes, it takes viewers on a young person's journey through difficult family situations, problems at school, social isolation and substance abuse, to incarceration.

Because it challenges people to re-examine their beliefs about the causes of crime, *Bad Kids?* is being used widely to create opportunities to engage Canadians in discussing how individuals, communities, and service providers

can build safer communities by supporting and involving youth.

The video was inspired by a quotation in the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention 1997 publication, *Young People Say*. This quotation emerged from the specific experience of a young person from the National Youth in Care Network, and the power and eloquence of the message continues to resonate with people from a variety of backgrounds.


With the support of the New Brunswick Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the National Strategy,

and on a relatively small budget of \$15,000, Community Co-ordinator Melony McCarthy worked closely with a Fredericton production company to bring the message to life.

Atlantic Mediaworks dedicated significant in-kind resources and expertise. The Fredericton City Police co-operated by providing a constable, patrol car and holding cell that contribute greatly to the realism of the piece. The end result is an edgy, engaging piece that is, as Daphne Curtis of Atlantic Mediaworks puts it, "... something between a music video, an art film, and a police drama."

*Bad Kids?* had its first public screening at the National Crime Prevention Centre's (NCPC) meetings prior to the 13th Annual Atlantic Crime Prevention Conference in Truro, Nova Scotia in June, 1999. Since then, NCPC staff and their colleagues in the provincial and territorial governments have been using the video to help promote the root causes approach to crime prevention. It was used to help set the tone for discussions at the June 2000 meeting of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Deputy Ministers of Justice and health and community services. National Strategy Chair, Barbara Hall, regu-

larly features *Bad Kids?* in her presentations, including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police annual meeting in August. In October 2000, the video received attention, and praise, south of the border. Melony McCarthy and NCPC Regional Liaison Consultant, Louis Turgeon, accepted a Bronze Plaque Award for the production at the 48th Annual Columbus International Film and Video Festival (also known as the Chris Awards).

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of *Bad Kids?*, please contact the NCPC. Information can be found on page 2. 

One on one  
from cover

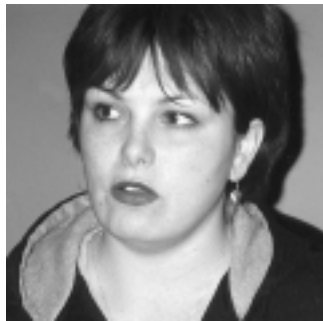
**Q** What is your role within the organization?

**A** I run the program *Out from the Shadows, Into the Light* (funded in large part by the Crime Prevention Partnership Program of the *National Strategy*) that addresses commercial sexual exploitation of children in Canada. There are a few different facets. One is public education — we have a series of posters across Canada and publications to try to educate people about different aspects of the issue. We have a network of young people across Canada, we try to find them community support and support within our organization so they can be active in their community. Some are focused on education, so they go around to schools, and some are focused on advocacy.

**Q** How did you get involved in prostitution?

**A** It wasn't one event in my life, it wasn't like it just happened, I think there was a lot of things that led

into it. I grew up in a violent home with a lot of abuse, fighting, alcoholism and neglect. And then when I was 10, I got put into care.



I had 20 placements while I was in care, so there were foster homes, group homes, shelters, receiving homes, assessment homes and secure care. That's part of it, the actual events in my life that were really disruptive and painful, but the events themselves don't really tell you about the isolation, marginalization, and discrimination that you face when you're living in a community and everybody there knows that that's the group home or that's the foster home and you're the foster kid. When you go to school everybody knows that... everything you do is a reminder. There's a lot of stigma and discrimination.

So growing up I was really isolated and disconnected from family, from community, from culture.

When I was 12, I met these people, they were about 18, and I used to hang out with them. When I was 14, they told me that I could go to Vancouver and leave all this behind and start again, so I went with them.

The very first day we got there, they said I had to work. Working meant standing outside, sometimes 18 hours a day or more, eight to 10 clients a day or more, and never even having coffee money in my pocket because I wasn't allowed to keep any money. And getting beaten up by customers or by the guy I worked for, or people driving by and calling me names or being harassed constantly.

I didn't feel I could talk to the police. I ran away from the foster home I was living in, since I was scared I would be in trouble, and I didn't want anyone to know what I was doing.

**Q** That was more than 15 years ago, do you feel it's different for those in the trade today?

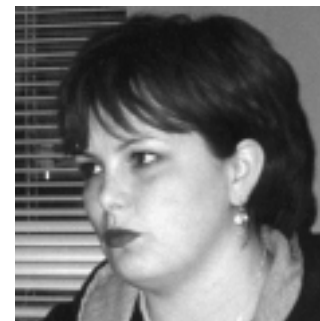
**A** No. There just aren't resources. People have this perception that help is just a phone call away, but that's not true. When you have seven detox beds in the Lower Mainland area of Vancouver and hundreds of IV drug-addicted and crack-addicted young people, seven beds doesn't cut it, and they don't want to take in the really strung-out young people. And housing, it's not appropriate sometimes to put a young person, age 15 or 16, in a foster home in suburbia. The foster parents aren't trained, they don't know what

issues they're dealing with. That young person has no support in that community.

The federal government is starting to get more organized on the issue, but on the ground level, we're not doing hardly enough to turn the situation around. It's just not happening.

Then there are the people that created 72-hour lock up (for teen prostitutes). It's so unfair. You have three people in a transaction, the young person being exploited, the pimp who profits, and the customer who exploits... and the young person gets locked up? That doesn't make sense. It's just ridiculous.

We have a lot of work to do.



**Q** Was there something specific that made you decide it was time to get out?

**A** There's no one thing. I never wanted to be there, I always tried to get out. When I could, I did. What made the difference for me was that my friends were all dead and dying from suicide, AIDS, drug overdoses, being murdered, and that was part of it. Someone tried to kill me and I overdosed a couple of times from cocaine and was hospitalized.

I knew that if I didn't get out, I was going to die. Being able to talk about it was what made the difference for me — talk, not only about the issues, but what I wished for, hoped for, not just in my life, but in life.


When I was still in the sex trade, me and some friends of mine did a newsletter called the Slice, and it was filled with stories and poems and artwork. At the same time, we were starting a support group for kids



on the street or working in the trade or in care. And then we were invited to meetings at city hall, and by the province, and then it just started to grow.

**Q** Will the average young person in the trade be resilient enough to pick up on where to go to get help, or do you think it's just your strength and determination?

**A** It's the people that are willing to make a difference on the people whose lives are affected. The system is changing. Changing the law, making it illegal to buy and sell children, helps. It doesn't solve it or make a tangible difference to the lives of the young people being bought and sold, but because we've made that statement, it's making it more of a reality for the people in the community.

The community has to do that. The sex trade exists because they let it, because in some way they profit from it, because they facilitate it, or because they ignore it. I wish young people would believe that it could be different. You can survive the feeling of isolation, abuse and violence, as long as you are connected to something. 

**"In some Canadian communities, up to 90 percent of child and teen prostitutes are Aboriginal."**

**Cherry Kingsley and Melanie Mark authored the report *Sacred Lives* after travelling across Canada for five months. They spoke with 150 Aboriginal youth who have been sexually exploited in the commercial sex trade.**

**The pair, who work with *Save the Children Canada*, cite a number of reasons for Aboriginal children being pushed onto the streets. Among them are widespread racism, the fragmentation of their culture and oppressive poverty.**

**One Aboriginal youth quoted in the 97-page report says Aboriginal youth are targets of commercial sexual exploitation because they are vulnerable and used to it.**

**The authors, both of Aboriginal descent, are recommending a series of round-table discussions, the establishment of a national youth network and the creation of youth-driven pilot projects.**

## Open your Mind. Open their Lives.

By Sharon Jollimore

The benefits of recreation and physical activity are well documented.

Children can learn motor skills, social skills, and creativity through physical activity and play. Physical activity also enhances self-esteem, academic performance, peer and family relationships, and prevents or reduces disease, violence, and negative behaviours such as smoking and substance abuse.

But many youth, however, face barriers that prevent their access to these benefits — barriers based on income, transportation, awareness, gender, and culture.

In 1998, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association joined with other national organizations to establish 28 nation-wide pilot projects. The goal of the initiative was to reduce barriers to participation in recreation and physical activity for targeted youth at risk (young women, Aboriginal youth, youth in poverty and new Canadians). The project stressed the importance of developing broad partnerships from a variety of youth-related sectors within these communities.

To share information about the initiative, the Association developed a publication *Open your Mind. Open their Lives*. It provides general steps to follow for planning sustainable, dynamic, community-driven recreation and physical activity programs for youth at risk. The *Success Stories* booklet, one of four documents profiled in the publication *Open Your Mind. Open their*

*Lives*, describes four fundamental steps: building awareness, gaining commitment, implementation, and sustainability. Important to each step are the components of time, energy, and consensus.

The following story illustrates how this was applied in one community.

partnership and discuss the goals and objectives of the project.

### Gaining Commitment

Grant then met with young people to learn what services they were aware of and what new programs they wanted. She then co-ordinated a workshop for local youth-related agencies



### New Glasgow

The town of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia has a population of 9500 and is the largest of several neighbouring towns. Although recreation and physical activity programs for youth exist, there was not a strong network to share resources and activities. The goal of the New Glasgow pilot *Teen Express 2000* was to establish partnerships and create mechanisms for sharing information between organizations related to youth.

### Building Awareness

In the spring of 1998, project co-ordinator Cathy Grant brought together local groups to establish a

where the advantages of partnerships and co-operation in youth programs were presented.

The workshop identified the need for greater communication within the community and youth service sectors, and as a result an agencies network was established. Surveys and focus group results demonstrated that young people wanted more say on issues and services affecting them, so a management board of adults and youth was established to act as a sounding board for the development of programs for youth and to distribute information to community organizations.

### Implementation

The opening of the New Glasgow Youth Centre and the newly renovated YM/YWCA resulted in an increase in programs and services to youth at no (or low) cost, including karate, weight training, youth leadership, first aid/CPR, and seminars on cooking, date rape, and the *Young Offenders Act*.

The Pictou County Women's Centre offered a successful "Girl Talk" camp for approximately 80 girls,

The next step was to gain greater representation for young people in decision-making through involvement on the Town Council. A Youth Council was established, made up of the mayor, councillors, police, recreation representatives, and youth.


### Sustainability

*The Teen Express 2000* pilot resulted in dynamic changes in New Glasgow and the surrounding communities. Extensive community involvement resulted in sustained networks, programs, and activities as partners built relationships. The involvement of many sectors in the community inspired change that would not have been possible through the efforts of any single organization.

To continue to build on the initiative, the agencies network and Youth Council continue to rally for support from politicians, community leaders and related agencies. These strong support systems and the continuing involvement of the youth in New Glasgow should result in a promising future for the community.

Bud Brown, New Glasgow's Director of Recreation, emphasizes the need for flexible programs that are based on youth interests. "The pilot project has really changed the way I work," Brown says.

Cathy Grant, project co-ordinator, agrees. "More teen involvement equals greater success."

For more information on the CPRA Pilot Project Initiative visit the CPRA Web site at [www.cpra.ca](http://www.cpra.ca), telephone (613)-748-5651, or e-mail: [cpra@cpra.ca](mailto:cpra@cpra.ca) 

*Sharon Jollimore is Program Manager at the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.*

## From Here...

### Nova Scotia Youth: Capturing our Attention and Showing us the Issues

The Play's the Thing...

By Jim Ellsworth

When William Shakespeare wrote, "The play's the thing wherein I'll capture the conscience of the king," he clearly did not foresee youth across Nova Scotia using plays as a means of capturing the conscience of their communities.

But that's what's happening these days around the province.

In Glace Bay, Cheticamp, Amherst, Halifax, Windsor, and other Nova Scotia towns and cities, local youth are using vivid and compelling dramas to engage their communities on the issues that are important to them.


Using plays as a communications medium, youth throughout the province are addressing a diversity of tough issues including dating violence, abuse, bullying, and addiction. The dramatic performances generate awareness and understanding of the many factors that contribute to these issues, as well as their far-reaching effects.

As one example, young Nova Scotians have embraced a drama originally developed in Newfoundland. *Black and Blue for Love* takes a realistic look at how teenage girls enter into relationships and are subjected to physical and emotional abuse. The play explores

how each girl reacts to the abuse and the impact the abuse has on both the victim and the abuser.

Local high school students are now performing the play in Halifax and plans are underway to present the

communities and showing the face of many issues that might otherwise be overlooked. They are also enabling communities to see their youth as the thoughtful, responsible people they really are.

have an opportunity to give youth your attention, do it! If you don't have the opportunity, create it! You will see what great people our youth are and what valuable contributions they are making to our communities." 

Those who have worked with youth dramas, and those who have been engaged through them, offer this advice: "If you

*Jim Ellsworth is the NCPC Regional Liaison Consultant in New Brunswick.*



Kirsty Howell, Amy North and Martha Blackler in *Black and Blue for Love*, a play about dating violence.

*Black and Blue for Love* was adapted for youth performances by Clarenville High School in Newfoundland.

With the assistance of the Clarenville Crime Prevention Association and the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, the troop travelled to Prince Edward Island and performed at a regional crime prevention conference.

Constable Ian Burke of the Halifax Regional Police was so impressed with the performance that he decided to assist youth in his community to develop a production of the play.

play around the province and to use it as the basis of a public service video.

Youth watching the play find that it speaks to them instead of at them.

Adults who watch are surprised to discover that young actors are able to handle such mature subject matter. They are equally surprised to discover the ease with which youth enter into discussion about mature subject matter.

Through their dramatic productions, these young people are capturing the attention of their peers, their parents, and their

The use of plays to dramatize youth issues is an effective means of engaging other youth and mobilizing entire communities around those issues. There are a number of reasons:

1. Youth as Assets: The approach demonstrates respect for youth as a community resource and as caring, responsible people. Youth are empowered to take ownership of issues and their solutions.
2. Youth Dialogue: Youth listen to youth and are more apt to enter into a dialogue when the invitation comes from their peers.
3. Learning Opportunities: Youth and adults alike prefer to deduce things for themselves, rather than have someone tell them what the issue is and how they should respond.
4. Attitudes: Parents support their children in the development of responsible and healthy attitudes and attempt to display these attitudes themselves.
5. Social Proof: It takes courage to perform on stage and even more courage to depict topics such as sexual and physical abuse. Young dramatists provide social proof that it is cool to openly acknowledge these issues and to take action to address them.
6. Vivid Examples: Youth are able to put issues into context by depicting issues as they are actually experienced by youth.
7. Beyond Awareness: Youth generate new attitudes and behaviours by engaging into a dialogue with the audience following the performances.

# and There

## Life Lessons: Sharing with our Community's Kids

By Ginette Henwood

There are certain lessons that stick with each of us throughout our lives.

There is a well-known story about a nurse who was given a pop quiz during her second month of nursing school.

The test was a breeze until the last question: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke, she thought. The student had seen the cleaning woman several times and knew she was tall, dark-haired, and in her 50s, but how would she know her name?

She handed in the paper, leaving the question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz.

"Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello." The nurse later learned that the cleaning woman's name was Dorothy.

Whether the story is true, or merely an urban legend, the lesson remains genuine and relevant.

For adults, it is sometimes difficult to see how big, complex, and confusing the world can seem to a child, particularly in an era characterized by rapid social

change. The choices that our children make today reflect who they are, suggest who they will become, and affect the choices that will be available to them in the future.



Participants in the Community Kids project.

This realization has led many community-based groups and organizations to invest their time, energy, and resources into strengthening the supports available to the children, youth, and families within their communities. Mrs. Lucci's Second Hand Store in Lac du Bonnet, located about one hour's drive north-east of Winnipeg, is one such example.

Mrs. Lucci's is an education and training facility that fosters the development of healthy parents, children, and families within the community. The store is a centre for the unemployed between the ages of 15 and 29.

On a rotating basis, the participants are expected to


work in the store for one day per week, volunteer at the elementary school for one day per week, and participate in education seminars and workshops.

create window displays for local businesses and paint community garbage cans, to strengthen adult-child relationships and to instil a sense of community pride within the children. These activities, along with many others, were driven by the youth and supported by community businesses, the local RCMP, the school, other community agencies, and members of the community.

When the project was completed, the youth participants had a chance to voice their thoughts. Their insights revealed that they have learned: how to work with local businesses; how to help people; how to get along with others; how to stand up for and believe in themselves; that the impacts of shoplifting far exceed inventory loss for store owners; that their contribu-

tions really make a difference; and, that they matter.

The Community Kids project in Lac du Bonnet exemplifies how a community can pull together to address a community-identified need. These are children who believe, as one participant commented, that "if I try, I can do it," and these are children who will, hopefully, continue to recognize that everyone is important.

By fostering such traits as self-control, problem-solving skills, and critical reasoning, it is hoped that these young people will be in a better position to make healthy choices and avoid being victimized and becoming involved in criminal activities in the future. 

*Ginette Henwood is the NCPC Regional Coordinator in Manitoba.*

### New Publications from the National Crime Prevention Centre

- Policy Framework for Addressing Personal Security Issues Concerning Women and Girls
- Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Children Ages 0 to 12
- Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Youth Ages 12 to 18
- Crime Prevention through Social Development
- Incarceration in Canada
- Personal Security for Women and Girls
- Picture of Crime in Canada
- Situational Crime Prevention

The documents are available on our Web site <http://www.crime-prevention.org>

You can also obtain a copy, by contacting the NCPC. (Information on page 2)

## Commentary

### Youth Violence — A Community Approach to the 'Root Causes'

By Dave Clark

The vast majority of our youth are excellent citizens who are extremely capable of leading our society into our new century.

Seventy five percent of our youth are never involved in violent activity. They are young people who are community minded, like their school, and generally lead quiet productive lives. Around five percent of young people are implicated in most of the incidents of crime and violence in our schools and our communities. The remaining 20 percent can be said to occupy the middle ground, sometimes manifesting the potential, for a range of reasons and factors, to become involved in violence.

Although the statistics indicate the number of youth charged with Criminal Code offences is actually down, some teachers and school administrators have publicly stated that they feel unsafe at school.

But the problem of violence among youth is not simply an issue of school violence. Youth violence has its roots in the community. The schools provide a gathering place where violence can occur.

To have a real impact on the incidence of youth violence, the symptoms must be recognized — within the context of youth interacting with peers, school, family and community. Issues such as family violence, substance abuse, poverty, lack of positive role models,

the breakdown of traditional institutions, and the impact of the media must be recognized and factored into strategies if we are to have a lasting impact on the problem.

One example of a community approach is the Wellington-Dufferin Task Force on Youth Violence.


The Task Force was established in 1990 in response to a concern that members of a youth gang called the 'Highlanders' were about to establish themselves in Guelph, Ontario. The focus of the Task Force evolved from youth gangs to group violence to youth violence as it affects young people in the school system. Building understanding and awareness of the root causes of youth violence and devel-

oping community partnerships are two parts of the long-term solution to the problem of youth violence.

Implementing effective prevention and intervention programs early in the lives of children is a critical third component. A fourth is the honest involvement of youth in the 'problem'.

The Task Force will be sponsoring a two-day symposium on youth violence in February 2001. The symposium will bring together a cross-section of youth from Wellington and Dufferin Counties to meet with educators, police, parents, and community agencies to define issues and recommend solutions to reduce the incidence of youth crime. The participants will leave with a toolkit of

resources to assist them with community initiatives.

There is no "quick fix" to youth violence. And there is no set formula which a community can apply to cause youth crime to disappear. Where youth crime has been reduced, communities have recognized the complexities of youth violence and have joined forces to address the separate and related components of this complex social issue. 

*Dave Clark is a former Superintendent of Education with the Upper Grand District Board of Education in Guelph, Ontario. For the past 10 years he has been the Chair of a Community Task Force on Youth Violence.*

## Events Calendar

### January 2001

"Premier congrès international francophone sur l'agression sexuelle"

Date: January 31 – February 2, 2001

Place: Sherbrooke, Québec

Contact: Congrès international francophone sur l'agression sexuelle  
C.P. 393, Sherbrooke  
(Québec) Canada  
J1H 5J7

Telephone: (819) 564-5127

Fax: (819) 564-6531

Web site: [www.rimas.qc.ca](http://www.rimas.qc.ca) or  
[www.pinel.qc.ca](http://www.pinel.qc.ca)

### June 2001

International Conference on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Date: June 6–8, 2001

Place: London Convention Centre  
London, Ontario

Contact: Karen Rhiger or Pat Mintsioulis  
Centre for Children & Families in the  
Justice System of the London Family  
Court Clinic  
254 Pall Mall Street, Suite 200  
London, Ontario  
N6A 5P6

Telephone: (519) 679-7250

Fax: (519) 675-7772

E-mail: [karenr@lfcc.on.ca](mailto:karenr@lfcc.on.ca) or [pat@lfcc.on.ca](mailto:pat@lfcc.on.ca)

Web site: [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)

### June 2001

"CONGRESS 2001" — The 28th Canadian Congress on Criminal Justice

Date: June 20–23, 2001

Place: Westin Nova Scotian  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Contact: Canadian Criminal Justice Association  
304–383 Parkdale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Y 4R4

Telephone: (613) 725-3715

Fax: (613) 725-3720

E-mail: [ccja@istar.ca](mailto:ccja@istar.ca)

Web site: [home.istar.ca/~ccja](http://home.istar.ca/~ccja)