



Social Workers - Make a Difference

Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers

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MEDIA RELEASE

March 4, 2009

For immediate release

Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers advocates for collaborative process to utilize community resources

In light of the recent report by the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office and the subsequent response from Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW) is advocating for a province-wide collaborative process that will look beyond the current challenges in Saskatoon and develop a wider discussion on reconfiguring the system to ensure it utilizes key community resources.

"The Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers believes that child welfare workers and foster families working within the child welfare system have very challenging jobs to do and deserve the interest and support of the community and government. We need to develop a system in which key service-providers offer well-connected services that engage with families and help prevent children and youth being diverted into the core child welfare system," said SASW President Jim Walls.

The need to develop a comprehensive solution is becoming critical. It appears clear that children and youth entering care are staying in care for longer periods than would be ideal. The child-in-care caseload is estimated to continue its upward growth.

There are several strategies that could be implemented to address these issues. The extent of poverty and marginalization in our communities should be addressed in a comprehensive way. The child welfare program should receive increased investment and accountability and mainstream programs be enhanced. New family support programs, parent training and neighbourhood collaboration should be offered in addition to traditional child welfare programs. New strategies are also required to address workforce and work environment issues.

The SASW is calling upon the government to begin a collaborative approach to address these issues. Initial steps could include a community-based organizational summit or a working group of key stakeholders, and ensure that First Nations and Metis concerns are included in the discussions.

"As social workers, we believe in the obligation of people, individually and collectively, to provide resources, services and opportunities for the overall benefit of humanity and to afford them protection from harm," said Walls. "This is especially true for children - the most vulnerable members of our society."

For more information contact Richard Hazel of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers at (306) 545-9155.

A Member of the Canadian Association of Social Workers