



# **Special Committee To Prevent The Abuse And Exploitation Of Children Through the Sex Trade**

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO PREVENT THE ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION  
OF CHILDREN THROUGH THE SEX TRADE  
2000**

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The committee met at 1:30 p.m.

**(The Co-Chair) Ms. Julé:** — Good afternoon everyone. We welcome you here, wholeheartedly welcome you here, and we would like to express our appreciation to everyone that was willing to do a presentation.

The first presenter we have — it's not really a presenter — but the first person that we will be hearing from today is Elder Helen Isbister and Helen will be leading us in an opening prayer. And we're very grateful, Helen, that you have come to do that with us. If you could please come forward.

**Ms. Isbister:** — Let us pray.

Gracious God, Creator, we give you thanks for this beautiful day. We give you thanks for this new day of spring.

We give you thanks for your gift of the Holy Spirit active in our spirits, our minds, and our bodies. Through the Holy Spirit we ask you to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts that we may truly love and worship you in spirit and in truth.

Heavenly Father, hear our prayers.

We pray for all our relations everywhere on Mother Earth. We pray for all our children, our families, and our homes.

We pray for all nations of the world and for all leaders in our communities. We pray for victims of injustice or oppression and for those in poverty or pain.

We pray especially for everyone at this gathering; for their continued good health, positive attitude and contributions to the work they provide as they serve our communities.

We pray that our hearts and spirits will be refreshed during this new millennium spring season.

We pray in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you very much, Helen. Helen is a member of the Mistawasis First Nations.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Helen, I want to express my appreciation to you as well. We all really appreciate your presence here today. Thank you for leading us in that prayer.

It's my great pleasure now to ask Sandi LeBoeuf and Jacqui Barclay to come forward for the presentation on behalf of Saskatoon Communities for Children.

I just want to say to other members of the committee that I know both of these individuals very well. They're friends. We've worked on the issue that we're addressing today together in Saskatoon. It's really special to have you here, Sandi. Is Jacqui going to come forward as well? Okay, sure. Anyway, we're really looking forward to your presentation.

Greetings, Jacqui, nice to have you here. If there's any other members of your group that you'd like to introduce — I see

some other people are involved for Communities for Children here so you may want to introduce them as well.

Greetings, Sister Germaine, nice to see you.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Yes, actually Sister Germaine is part of our group as is Roxane Schury with Children's Advocate. I think that's it.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Nice to have you here Roxane . . . (inaudible) . . . Please get underway whenever you'd like to, Sandi.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — We're ready to go. Special Committee, Chairpeople, and members, I'd like to thank you for hearing us today.

Saskatoon Communities for Children has been working to promote the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and social well-being of children for over four years in the community of Saskatoon. Communities for Children has a child-focus mandate and has a proven track record in facilitating the development and delivery of programs and services not only in the Saskatoon region but also throughout the province.

Later we'll list several of the Communities for Children initiatives in order to demonstrate our viability in the areas of prevention and/or intervention in the area of child sexual abuse by johns and pimps.

Saskatoon Communities for Children is a non-partisan, community-based organization with a proven track record in the implementation of plans of action that achieve concrete results for children and their families in Saskatoon and beyond.

The greatest strength of Communities for Children is its ability to develop strategies that address the deeply entrenched social problems that cut across the mandates of many government and community organizations. The representatives from government and community organizations work together in partnership, and a list of the existing community and government participants are also enclosed, which you'll get a copy of.

The Government of Canada recently cited Communities for Children as an example of an organization that is advancing efforts to stop discrimination against young women in Canada. In addition, the work Saskatoon Communities for Children has done in the area of child sexual abuse by johns and pimps has been submitted to the United Nations as an example of Canada's commitment to the signing of the UN Convention to end discrimination against women.

Community and government representatives at the central planning table of Saskatoon Communities for Children reached consensus on a children's agenda to be pursued in 1997 to 1999. Over 70 community organizations, including First Nations and Aboriginal organizations such as the Saskatoon Tribal Council and Metis Nation of Saskatchewan and 14 government organizations, have been working to achieve six priorities that will promote the well-being of children within Saskatoon. We give particular attention to the needs of children

at risk and their families.

And these priorities are, ensuring access to telephone services for the large number of low-income families; responding to the needs of children under the age of 16 who are not in school; reassessing the criteria used to determine when families with disabled children are eligible to access 24-hour respite services; and promoting the theme of a child-friendly community where all children are safe, secure, honoured, nurtured, and valued.

The zero to six working group; the child poverty working group; the housing working group; and the working group to stop the sexual abuse of children by perpetrators and pimps, which includes a subgroup which is developing a package of recommended changes to legislation on this issue. And it has the potential to impact children and their families province wide.

The working group to stop the sexual abuse of children by perpetrators and pimps has representation from over 50 community and government organizations and individuals, including four inner-city community associations, inner-city multi-faith churches, Saskatchewan Social Services, Saskatoon District Health, Saskatchewan Justice, Saskatoon Police Service, city of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Metis Family and Community Justice Services, Egadz, former street-involved women, youth, and several other community organizations.

This working group reached agreement on an overall strategy in June 1997 and on a specific plan of action in January, 1998. Almost all of the elements of that plan have now been implemented. And please note that several more elements have also been added since and we recognize that this is a work in progress.

These elements are the establishment of a safe house in the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood following an extensive series of community consultations. The Saskatoon Tribal Council runs the safe house with funding from Social Services, Sask Justice, and Saskatoon District Health. Over 57 children have resided in the safe house to date, and there were 97 youth intakes which means youth who came the first time as well . . . it includes youth who came the first as well as youth who returned. Children and youth have stayed a total of 896 nights over the year, and you'll be hearing a report on the safe house from other people later on.

The launching of a sign campaign in the stroll area to deter johns and to raise community awareness; the launching of a poster campaign in co-operation with Saskatchewan Justice and Saskatchewan Social Services — and the posters are included in one of the packages that I've given Randy; the implementation of a public awareness campaign around the issue of child sexual abuse. This campaign includes the production of a video entitled *It's Not Prostitution: It's Child Sexual Abuse!* and I've given you two copies of that video.

This video builds community understanding that children and youth drawn into the sex trade are not criminals. They are victims of child sexual abuse. This video was produced by the division of audiovisual services, University of Saskatchewan, in

co-operation with Saskatoon Communities for Children and the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

Furthermore, working with Save the Children — Canada, and the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) division of audiovisual services, our working group was involved in the production of the video *Out of the Shadows, Into the Light* which captures an instructive presentation by Cherry Kingsley, a survivor of child sexual exploitation.

Our public awareness campaign organized an effort to include an information insert in 78,000 city of Saskatoon utility bills. That is included in the package as well. Increased surveillance of the stroll by Saskatoon Police Services including additional beat cops. The launching of parent patrols focused on crime prevention in our inner-city neighbourhoods, and implementation by the inner-city community associations.

The strengthening of street outreach services delivered by Egadz's Youth Centre and by Saskatoon District Health Street Outreach. Participation in the March 6 to the 12 Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Youth and Children Awareness Week, part of a nationwide campaign to protect children and youth.

Making presentations to public through various venues; and working group to stop the sexual abuse by johns and pimps formed a subgroup to address the issue of changes to legislation.

The working group has been working to stop the sexual abuse of children by johns and pimps in various ways with a key priority to challenge building community understanding that the children and youth working the streets are victims of sexual exploitation. It is very important for the community to recognize that the children involved in the sex trade are not prostitutes; they are victims of child sexual abuse.

We have worked in partnership, in co-operation with the city of Saskatoon. Certainly the mayor's task force on child prostitution provided an impetus for joining together many concerned citizens and organizations to deal with the issue.

The city of Saskatoon recently recognized and endorsed the week we have been doing . . . the work we have been doing in the city of Saskatoon and they have safer city recommendations of September 20. Saskatoon Communities for Children realized the importance of involving various levels of and departments of government as well as various community organizations and voices in order to effectively address this urgent and pressing issue.

It is imperative that agencies and organizations work in co-operation. A multi-faceted strategy is needed to combat the multi-dimensional issue of child sexual abuse. Partnerships have been formed and are of vital importance to be successful. Most recently the working group has recognized and appreciated the formation of the legislative Special Committee To Prevent The Abuse And Exploitation Of Children Through The Sex Trade.

We believe the establishment of the special committee can make important contributions in recognizing and addressing the

issues surrounding the exploitation of children and youth through the sex trade. Our working group is prepared to fully co-operate in whatever way we can to advance the work of the special committee. Updates on the work of the legislative committee are in fact a standing agenda item for our regular working group meetings.

In closing, with this particular part of the letter, we would like to say, it's our desire to achieve community awareness and harmony and solutions rather than succumbing to the voices of hatred, racism, and destruction. We look forward to working with you in partnership to create safe streets in the city of Saskatoon as well as safe communities throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

And Jacqui will list some of the working groups that we work with as well as some of the ideas that we've been working on and issues we've been dealing with.

**Ms. Barclay:** — Okay, thank you, Sandi. One of the things we found with our working group to stop the sexual abuse of children is that there are so many areas or facets that we need to look at. And I know certainly in terms of the press conference you did this afternoon to begin with, you highlighted some of the different areas in terms of addictions, a safe place to go. It's what we realized.

And also when we're looking at intervention and prevention strategies to work with children and youth, sexually exploited, as well as looking at the area of dealing with sexual predators, that there needed to be sort of a multi-faceted campaign or different initiatives that we looked at, and it was very difficult to try and cover all that work so what we did is sort of created different subgroups and invited people with particular interests and expertise to work in the different areas.

One of the key challenges we've had to confront in doing this work is shifting people's thinking and public perception away from looking at the issue as child prostitution, and to instead to do awareness work in making people realize that it's sexual . . . child sexual exploitation by sexual predators. And the danger that we found of looking at it as child prostitution is you end up criminalizing the act; you end up blaming and punishing the children and the youth rather than actually intervening to help them.

So with this in mind, one of the key subgroups that we've had as part of our working group has been to do community awareness raising. Sandi mentioned the work done with the poster campaign where we worked with the Department of Justice and Social Services to have posters distributed throughout different communities to raise awareness.

We also had been quite involved working with, as members, with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and Saskatoon Police Services and a number of street-involved youth and youths who were concerned about the issue to organize a street symposium. I know Roxane, from the Children's Advocate office who's here today was part of the planning committee.

We also intend to be involved with the Street Symposium — it's going to be held in Edmonton — because we think it's very

important to cross jurisdictions and cities and provinces and be informed about work that's being done elsewhere.

The video that Sandi mentioned, we've had that used extensively. It's been shown at different business service clubs, church groups, through schools. Sandi, another member of our group, Rhonda Gough from the Catholic Family Services, did presentations to the Saskatchewan teacher's convention and institute to get teachers not only more informed, but to get them involved and look at ways of getting the video into the school.

We've also had the video aired through different programs — Indigenous Circle on CFQC and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. And we're looking at other creative ways. Talking about a milk carton campaign similar to the missing children campaigns that they have, working on looking at an ad campaign — and so those are sort of some of the different areas.

We also are very impressed with the presentation — and I understand that you're going to be hearing directly from Cherry Kingsley — but we do have a tape that we presented of a talk that she gave here and it's very, very instructive, not only for children, youth at risk, but for professionals working in that area. So we have a copy of her talk and we've been using that to distribute both for public awareness and using it for trainings for different front-line service providers.

We're in the process of working on a streetproofing kit, directed towards youths who could be seen at risk. I mean any child or youth is at risk as long as there's sexual predators out there preying on children and youth.

The other thing that we're trying to work at is the whole area of empowering youth — youth who have been involved on the streets — and adults in finding ways of supporting, encouraging their voices to be heard both in terms of training professionals or front-line service providers as well as to do public awareness work.

So I also wanted to mention that — to move a little bit more quickly — we had a subgroup looking at the whole issue of the stroll and in moving the stroll. And I know that particularly community associations — the Pleasant Hill Community Association and neighbourhood which Sister Germaine is an active part of and who's here with us today, Riversdale Community Association and area — have been very concerned about the fact that the stroll exists within residential areas and that they're near elementary schools, that there's three different elementary schools.

Now not only does that put at risk children and youth who've already been sexually exploited on the streets, but it puts at risk any child or youth. And we've heard stories about sexual predators who'll be cruising around the streets going near the schools at noon hour or right after school, you know, looking for kids who are on break or who are leaving.

One of the things we recognize though, it's a very difficult and sensitive issue. It raises a lot of concerns especially for communities that . . . I mean nobody wants to have the presence of a stroll within their area. So it's a longer term process of

consultation.

And I should mention that we've tried to work at involving adult women — who have been involved in the sex trade to . . . and who are concerned about the fact that children and youth are getting drawn into the whole area of the sex trade — as being resources to help inform us in terms of our work.

Sandi had also mentioned a sign campaign and parent park patrols. What I will mention there is the sign campaign. We had active involvement in direction from the community associations of the infected — the infected; good slip — most affected areas where the strolls exist and they identified different high traffic areas where we could locate signs.

And that sign campaign has both been intended as a public awareness as well as a deterrence to sexual predators who are cruising around in the area. And we've had messages like: protect our children, report johns, sex with children is illegal, our children are not for sale, and stop the child sex trade.

And the other thing I should mention is that we've had a lot of support from local churches. They're very interested in this campaign and have been very supportive and provided space to put up these signs.

In terms of the parent patrols, I will mention that it is comprised of community volunteers who are trained, and we've had the support of Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services as well as Saskatoon city police, both as fire and protective services doing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), emergency first aid training; the city police as being a contact for us to radio. We check in at the beginning of the shift and at the end of a shift.

In terms of a safe house, I don't know if there's anything that I should mention there because I know you will be hearing a presentation after us from the safe house coordinator.

**Ms LeBoeuf:** — Mention the three beds.

**Ms. Barclay:** — Okay. One of the things that Sandi and I talked about before coming up here was — and it's not included in the presentation — but refers to a comment that was mentioned about the area of addictions.

It's the whole concern that . . . Like through Calder Centre there's three beds set aside specifically for children and youth who have been sexually exploited or victims of sexual exploitation to deal with issues around substance abuse. And we're really pleased to see that but the services that are available in terms of substance abuse is inadequate, whether you deal with issues of substance abuse for the children and youth themselves or within their families.

And the last thing if possible, what I'd like to do, I didn't refer to the changes of legislation committee but we had just today a report, that you have a copy of, that was faxed to us by the chairperson for changes to legislation subgroup. And if the time is okay what I'd like to do is maybe read from a bit of that report as well.

This committee originally was chaired by Sonya Hansen from

public prosecutions and is now chaired by Kathy Grier from Legal Aid, and membership is included — representatives from community groups, front line, street level service providers, community corrections, John Howard Society, Legal Aid, and originally from Saskatoon Police Service. They haven't been at our last few meetings but there definitely is interest.

We've spent time reviewing the state of federal legislation to determine whether we wish to recommend changes to the Criminal Code initially. And Laura Bourassa from the policy and planning branch, Department of Justice, who I understand that you've heard from in Regina, assisted by meeting with us and bringing us up to date on current legislation and proposed changes which have since been enacted.

The consensus of the subgroup in '98 was that the current criminal laws should be effective. We did not propose any amendments but recommended more creative and effective enforcement of current provisions.

And again we really concurred with the comments mentioned at the press conference earlier about you can have tougher legislation — really good legislation — tougher penalties, but if there's not a way in terms of enforcement and getting the convictions then it's not effective.

The working group as a whole participated in a consultative process held by the provincial government, Social Services, and Justice, to consider the possibility of adopting legislation similar to the 72-hour detention legislation in Alberta. At that time the working group advised government representatives that Communities for Children was not prepared to endorse legislation of this type. Our concerns lay with the arbitrary detention of children and youth and the lack of treatment facilities available in Saskatchewan.

And in the presentation, when we were putting it together, Sandi had also mentioned how it re-victimizes the children who should be being protected by the legislation. So that's one of the concerns that we've had. The . . .

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Actually as well now too, the law, the legislation in Alberta is being challenged by two of the young women that have been detained, so . . .

**Ms. Barclay:** — We've also had — when we were inactive for awhile and we've gotten active, reactivated our subgroup — and at our invitation Fred Dehm, the regional crown prosecutor, attended to assist with information regarding criminal prosecutions and to provide feedback on some of our ideas on more effective enforcement against the sexual offenders who prey on children.

And I won't get into some of the different areas we've looked at. It's documented in the report. But we've been pretty creative looking at any legislation, including areas in the Criminal Code to deal with mischief, causing a disturbance, and even Saskatoon — City of Saskatoon bylaws — regarding street use and curfew.

So we tried to be quite, you know, quite extensive and creative.

I should mention that one of the things that the police membership of our committee has mentioned is that they continue to experience obstacles in the prosecution of johns who prey on children under 18. They cannot use decoys who are actually under the age of 18 and very few young girls are willing to come forward and testify against their abusers.

And some charges are, under the new anti-prostitution provisions of the Criminal Code, are slowly making their way through the courts. As of September there have not been any convictions.

We've looked at the whole area of the proposed changes to, now enacted to The Child and Family Services Act which provides greater penalties for those convicted of child abuse and recognize that these sexually exploited children are in need of protection within the meaning of the Act. And we definitely were very supportive of those changes that were made.

It's seen as a very positive step, although it was noted that protective intervention orders, whereby the court can order that a person have not . . . do not have any contact with the child, have been available for some time yet are rarely requested.

I'll close by mentioning a few other areas that . . . We've had a strong agreement within our subgroup as well . . . is we need to really focus on the education plan and familiarize ourselves as committee members, but also the general public, about current criminal and provincial laws which impact on the sexual exploitation of children.

And we've also talked about organizing sort of gatherings or workshops to work with children both who have been sexually exploited on the streets, but also children who could be considered at risk and other community members; just to look at the whole area of current rights and obligations under laws and be able to empower children and youth. And hopefully, if there are children and youth who do want to come forward, that they can identify that there's a community of support if they decide that they want to carry through and testify against their abusers.

And the last page of the report, we . . . our subgroup is also identified or wants to continue addressing deficiencies in the legislation governing the sexual abuse of children. We've been repeatedly assured that the police prefer to focus on the prosecution of sexual offenders without criminalizing the behaviour of young people.

Unfortunately, the evidence before us on the streets and in the courts tells us otherwise. The subgroup continues to be concerned with the large numbers of youth who are arrested and charged with criminal offences related to their behaviour on the streets. We continue to speak with police, prosecutions, and others to change this attitude and provide alternative resources for the children.

We're also exploring other approaches to address the issue of the sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Saskatoon. One of the major obstacles to successful prosecution of sexual offenders is the evidentiary requirements in criminal law. And we're currently reviewing possible civil remedies which may be

available to sexually exploited youth and their families, but we're not in a position to make a presentation or recommendations at this stage of the research. We anticipate consulting with legal experts, reviewing current legislation and civil remedies, and talking to young people and drafting a proposal.

And I guess I'd like to end by saying that we had . . . I had spoke, both Sandi and I, with Randy Pritchard at . . . in getting organized for doing this presentation. And we had said that our subgroup would be interested — the changes to legislation — and possibly making another presentation in the fall when this committee has done more work because I know that that's an area of great interest and concern to members of the special committee.

And I'll just turn it back to Sandi if there's any . . .

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — That's I think basically what we would like to present. So if you have any questions perhaps?

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you both very, very much. I'm going to turn it over to other members of the committee to ask questions. Arlene, did you want to start or do you want to finish up? Or what would you like to do?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Actually I can start if you like.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Sure. Why don't you start?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you very much. I really have to agree when you're . . . with both of you, especially with the comment that it's so very important that we have, you know, a sort of tandem integrated approach going to whatever services and whatever we're going to be doing here and whatever, you know. And I think that's one of the problems that there's just not . . . We just don't have a linked system in place in order to help the children.

I think that I'd like to comment a little bit on how communities for children came to determine . . . I guess I'd like to ask you — not comment — but I'd like to ask you how they came to determine that the legislation in Alberta was re-victimizing the children? Because from what Heather Forsyth tells me from Alberta, she'll give a scenario something like this: if the police are given the authority to, I guess they use the word almost rescue a child from a situation where they see that child is in danger. Now this has to be on reasonable, probable grounds. And they also have to be reporting, you know, many things within the report such as where they picked up the child, why they believe the child was in danger, where the child went.

But getting back to a scenario that Heather would give me, and I guess actually one of the police officers in Regina mentioned this too, it's a woman that's a detective, talked about how it broke her heart that she could see a young child, you know, that had been solicited into a vehicle with a john and ready to go, and she has to sit back as a police officer without any authority to go and rescue the child. She can't.

It's like I said, there's not evidence right there. The children are often afraid. The johns are telling them, don't you dare say

anything or, you know, you're going to end up going to jail too, or whatever the threats may be.

So the fact is there is no tools for the police officers to help that child on the spot. And this woman, this detective, told us that she saw them drive away. And she said it happens over and over again.

So I don't see that as victimization, I see that as protecting the children. The children are taken to a safe house to be assessed. And the assessment may not mean . . . like they're not arrested under this legislation. They are assessed to see where they came from, what the problems are, where their homes are, if they have a home, where they came from. Sometimes pimps transport these kids across the country and so on. So it's for their protection.

And I think the whole way we look at it, we must understand that we need protective legislation in place and that's the reason for that legislation. As well as, you know, the component of it that hits the johns harder with fines. And frankly, I would like to see a minimum fine of \$25,000 in the province. Because if we're going to do a deterrent, do a deterrent.

But anyway I just wanted to make mention of that kind of a . . . I certainly understand and agree with you that the victimization of children has already been too intense and too much and it should never be. But I think that the sort of way we look at protective legislation is important also. You know, why that may be a help here in this province as well as it is in other provinces.

But anyway, I really appreciate your comments and your thoughts, and most of all your work and your caring and your concern.

So I wanted to ask one more question and then I certainly will turn it over to committee members. The contents of the . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Why don't we have her respond to your question?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — First of all, the legislation requires a 72-hour lock-up. So obviously there's proof already that something is happening. If that's the case — that there is proof that the child is going to be selling sexual favours — why not change legislation or allow then for the police to actually charge the john. Why take the child and further, you know, keep the child for 72 hours if there is already proof that this is what's happening. See, that's part of the difficulty.

The other thing that's happening right now in Calgary and in Edmonton is that many of the children that would normally be on the streets are now underground and they're now in — what's the term? — they're working elsewhere, not necessarily on the streets. So they are still there; it's just elsewhere. It's not as visible.

So if the point of the legislation is that the children not be visible on the streets, then it's doing a good job. But the

children are still there; they're still working, just in other areas.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thanks for those comments. One of the things that . . . Certainly something is wrong in the picture. For instance if a police officer would see a, you know, a 13-, 14-, 15-year-old — assume that's the age — with a john, oftentimes the children have no homes. Oftentimes they have no care, even if they do have a roof over their head.

From what I'm told, the purpose, you know, first of all is to rescue the child from that incident right at the time. Because that child can end up dead by the end of the hour and they can be infected. I mean so to remove them from that and put into a place of assessment, the safe houses, up to 72 hours — it's not 72 hours — and it's up to 72 hours.

Yes, the safe house or the place of assessment, it is guarded and locked, certainly, because a lot of children are afraid. The children are happy when they go in there that the doors are locked. Many of the children are telling the safe house people that they would like to be there longer because they recognize that it is a safe place.

Certainly this sometimes happens that there's a repetition of children that are, you know, taken and end up back on the street and so on, but there has been a high success rate as far as . . . The other thing is in Calgary and Alberta, they have got comprehensive programs in place so that, you know, whatever the child needs next after the assessment, there's something in place.

I mean, here, you're right, we don't have — we don't have that, you know. So that's the problem.

**Ms. Barclay:** — Actually one of the concerns is in terms of places to go. And we have met with and had information shared from different . . . well actually from police representatives as well as some front-line-level service providers from Calgary and Edmonton, to get an idea of the impact of the Alberta legislation. And we certainly will continue, you know, to be informed or get information about that and monitor it.

One of the other concerns though that has been raised, and I think this has been most strongly brought forward by youths themselves or former street-involved people, as well as from some front-line or street-level service providers and from different representatives from the Aboriginal community, is although the intent of rescuing or removing these children from the streets is good — the intent of wanting to rescue them. What ends up happening is there's still that feeling because of the forced attention that they're again, you know, being blamed, or they're the ones being locked up or detained.

And when you look at a whole history of a lack of trust, unfortunately in terms of, you know, through the police or through the courts, through Social Services where you've had apprehensions, through families — even the whole history of the residential school system where families are broken up or children are forcibly removed, you know, from a family or from a situation — there's a lot of, a lot of distrust in terms of the good intent of rescuing. And that 72 hours is not enough time to really make a big turnaround or change in an intervention.



I mean, Cherry Kingsley spoke well about this as a former street-involved youth herself. She said that it's not even enough time to begin detoxing. And what we find is that if there's that trust, if there is a place to go . . . like we have tried to concentrate on that issue that you raised of places to go and that was one of the spirit . . . that's the spirit behind the safe house — although that's voluntary — is to have a place for these children and youth to go to get that space of time, that safety and that space of time to think and be able to stabilize.

And so we support that and we feel that initiative to change or make change or to seek out for help or change has got to come, you know, from the children and youth themselves. It can't be forced. You can provide the environment and the support and act as a catalyst and be there when they're ready, but if, you know, if you're forcibly taken away . . . I mean for some that might work and they might later at some point say well, that's the best thing that ever happened to me because it kind of turned things around, but for a lot of children and youth — especially at that time — they just see it as another restriction on them and another attack on them and blaming them.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Ron, would you like to ask a question?

**Mr. Harper:** — Yes, Mr. Chair, I have basically three questions. Of those children who are involved in the sex trade that you've had the opportunity to get to know and to deal with, have you been able to identify any of them who wanted to be in that trade? Or do they find themselves involved in the sex trade through circumstances?

**Ms. Barclay:** — Actually no, we don't find anyone that . . . I guess the first issue that we'd have to respond to or address is the whole issue of the choice. And if you're under age or if you're child or youth, there isn't that consent; I mean legally or morally. And so to want to be there or to be there by choice, that choice is not there.

And especially when you're looking at children and youth, 10, 11, 12 years old, you know I would defy anyone to say that they've gone there by choice or that they're selling their bodies on the street by choice. Like you said, it's a situation of circumstance, a number of underlying reasons that lead these children, you know, to the streets. And, I mean, there are certain generalizations that can be made in terms of some of the issues that they have to deal with. Each child and youth has their own reasons and own stories, you know, for being there. But certainly it's an issue of circumstance, not a choice of livelihood.

**Mr. Harper:** — Right. So in your experience have you been able to identify any common element of experience that would be prevalent in all children that find themselves on the street — any common tie?

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — I think that most children, when we were looking at the statistics, when we were looking at some of the reasons why we thought that the children were on the street, I think that many, many children, probably 99 per cent of the children live in poverty, first of all.

Secondly, they end up . . . I think it's 85 per cent have been sexually abused in the home or through . . . you know, prior to going on the street.

Many, many people assume that a lot of the children that go onto the street go onto the street because they're addicted to drugs and they need money for drugs. And that's not the case. Generally children who are on the street become involved with drugs after they've been there. And usually it's to cope and to deal with whatever issues that they have to deal with on the street.

**Ms. Barclay:** — I should mention too, one of the other things that's striking to me — Sandi actually works as a director with the Saskatoon Tribal Council Family Centre — and I think one of the values of the work that they do, besides being culturally appropriate and sensitive and looking at issues in terms of healing, is that they work not only with children and youth but they work with families and work with the community.

So you're dealing not only with situations where there might be children and youth who've had some sort of street involvement, but also those who could be considered at risk.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — As well, we have the facilitator's manual that is included in your package that goes along with the video that we have. And we've got some very general and very brief information on common issues that the children face when they're out there, who end upon the street.

And generally it's poverty. They likely have faced racism or generational trauma. May become involved with substance abuse, likely after the sex trade. May be caught up in cycles of addictions and abuse within their families. They find acceptance on the street. There's loose or dysfunctional ties to family. They trust few adults. There's few positive role models in their life. And they have a low self-esteem.

So those are some of the issues that they all face.

**Mr. Harper:** — One more quick question. Do you believe that tougher laws and suppression of the johns and activity on the street will end child abuse as a result of prostitution, or do you believe that there would have to be more than just tougher laws?

**Ms. Barclay:** — Sandi said enforcement — the tougher laws and legislation and definitely the enforcement of the legislation, no, it won't. Certainly it would make a very significant impact both in terms of deterrents and repercussions, you know, for the sexual predators as well as sending out a message both of zero tolerance for the abuse and exploitation of children, but also as a sense of community responsibility and a sign to children and youth that it's not acceptable and that they don't have to be in that situation.

But certainly we need . . . as long as there are some of the issues that Sandi mentioned in terms of histories of cycles of abuse and addictions, as long as you've got systemic racism, impoverishment or disadvantaged or marginalized communities, you're going to have some of the underlying root causes that lead to the necessity of survival sex. Basically sex

for provision of basic needs.

I guess I would like to mention that the Communities for Children . . . Sandi mentioned another bunch of working groups and that, within Communities for Children. And we have encouraged other committees — like there's a committee on child poverty — to look at this issue and be available for making presentations.

Also the housing committee . . . I mean some of those committees you might think — or working groups — don't have a direct relation. But as you mentioned, if a child does not have a home to go back to or a safe situation then, you know, they end up without some place to go.

So it's part of a larger issue. But certainly having said that, we would strongly agree and support changes in . . .

**Mr. Harper:** — But at the same time, in your opinion, there needs to be more done than just stiffer laws and even stiffer enforcement. There has to be a whole social program developed to address the needs that's underlying there.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — There needs to be a lot of other kinds of family and social supports in place for the youth as well as for the family.

**Mr. Harper:** — Right. Thank you.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Committee member Kevin Yates would like to ask you some questions.

**Mr. Yates:** — I'd like to start by trying to get some understanding of the extent of the problem in Saskatoon. Do you have any idea of the number of children that would be involved in being abused on the streets.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Okay, the facts for Saskatoon. Outreach stats in September '98 from Egadz state that there were 84 children 14 years of age and under being exploited in the sex trade — oh pardon me, that's females 14 and under; 15 to 18, there were 196; and 19 and over, there were 183. Egadz will have their up-to-date stats when they're here.

So these stats aren't quite up to date.

**Ms. Barclay:** — And I'll just add to that. Again, during the press conference and that, I was impressed by the comments or understanding in terms of the issue that the numbers will vary depending on the sources. And part of that is because, as Mr. Prebble mentioned, you have a situation where you know if you're dealing with police intervention, they're going to be dealing with certain, you know, children and youth who have been in conflict with the law and have actually been picked up.

In situations where it's more hidden, we might, we still might not even have the trust of street level providers — like through Egadz, through, you know, through the program I work with, public health — we have more contact with some of these children and youth on the streets once that trust has been built. But even then, you know, we don't have full contact.

And I think the other point that should be mentioned is, well, first off, the transient nature — that we have youths in particular and adults who end up being either travelling in different communities or going elsewhere whether it be because of the heat from, you know, from being recognized by the courts or by the police; and also whether there might be a situation where they have pimps or you know members, significant others, who end up moving around to go to different locations.

Also in terms of different seasons, you would find more children and youth and adults who will be out in the streets. The actual contact and exploitation of children and youth on the streets, I should say, is also only just one little part of the problem. You've got, I mean certainly there's been a lot of coverage in terms of child pornography, the whole situation of through the Internet. There's also, you know, situations with escort agencies, massage parlours; and children who get set up through homes or places and where there'll actually be references or brought over.

So the most visible is certainly those who are out in the street. And you might get a situation where a child or youth might not even identify themselves as being involved in the sex trade. Like to them it's getting enough money to, you know, to provide some food for their families or for their brothers and sisters, and trying to find some way to get that money to put food on the table.

So to them, they're not working the streets, they're just trying . . . well like I mentioned before, are engaged in survival sex or . . . (inaudible) . . . And it might be at certain periods of time that they do that, or only occasionally.

So it's hard to get hard and fast numbers. But you know certainly the numbers that Sandi mentioned came through, I believe, through Egadz, some of their statistics that they've kept . . .

**Mr. Yates:** — Could you allude to us what you believe to be the major method of getting children onto the street. Is it through pimps, through gangs, through family? Because depending on how the method is that people are on the street may determine the types of supports needed to get kids off the street and the types of long-term treatment needed for both kids and families, and you know, maybe for the community as a whole — the types of things we need to put in place.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Okay. Saskatoon is very different than Edmonton or Calgary or Winnipeg in that the demographics are different.

Calgary, when they give you stats, let you know that the population of youth and their racial status, I guess, is based on the percentage according to that demographic. For instance, if there's 10 per cent Aboriginal people in Calgary, then there would be 10 per cent Aboriginal people working on the streets in Calgary. And it's very proportionate.

In Saskatoon, the stroll is located in the residential area where there is an extremely high number of Aboriginal people. It's also located close, very, very close to three schools. So what

ends up happening then is that you have johns who are driving around that area on a very regular basis and who are making offers to children, many of them who are not involved in the street. They are stopping and making offers to children there.

And actually it's not just children, it's whoever is on the street. I mean I work half a block from the stroll, and myself and all of my staff get offers on a regular basis. Because of that situation, you get a very high number of Aboriginal youth who are involved on the street.

Because it's the inner city, you get a high number of people who are living in poverty. You get a lot of the youth who are involved, are involved based on peer pressure. You might have three young girls, and two of them are working the street and the third one isn't, and within a short while the third one may end up working the street.

There are, in that area, several different apartments where you might have three or four youth that have the apartment together who end up performing services out of that apartment. So it just depends. It's just based on where the stroll is, mostly as to who is working the street and why.

**Ms. Barclay:** — In terms of gang activity or gang induction of children and youth in the sex trade, in terms of this city, I would have to say personally that there is not a lot of evidence of that. I could, you know, stand to be corrected, but certainly in terms of the adults and children and youth that we've . . . that have had contact or our program has had contact with, and what we're heard through meetings, that's not a big area of recruitment.

I would echo the comments that Sandi mentioned in terms of some of the ways that children and youth get drawn in. And a lot of times, as Sandi mentioned before, that a lot of these children and youth have been victims of abuse before they've even hit the street. And that could be, you know, family, extended family, they could be recruited through the school.

And I too have heard stories of, you know, of former street involved youth who've talked about not being involved with the sex trade but standing with their friend or a classmate to provide company and protection or support. And then slowly, you know, like you're out there anyways, and after a time, well this person's getting the money and I'm out here anyways, and so you get drawn in or you get recruited.

And certainly, you know, children and youth who might not even have a full awareness or understanding or have no intention can, you know, get preyed upon just by the sexual predators cruising around in the area. And you know, you get hit or called upon a number of times and it becomes a transaction to be able to make ends meet. And you don't see it in terms of being involved in the sex trade or getting drawn in.

**Mr. Yates:** — My final question. In your opinion, in order to tackle this problem in Saskatoon — and very clearly we heard this in Regina and I'm trying to find out if we have the same problem, I guess — is it important to tackle it as a family problem and to deal with it from a holistic point of view involving cultural awareness, a number of other factors in order

to . . . It's a long-term problem, often moved from generation to generation; and a family problem that needs in-depth work?

**Ms. Barclay:** — Yes. If I could just start by saying those are very good questions and you just sort of, kind of highlighted an area that I forgot to mention in your last question about does it impact the way they get recruited or the way they end up on the street. Does it affect what type of intervention strategies we need, or programs.

And I certainly agree, and yes, you're right. I mean, you have to have initiatives or programs out there for the children and youth themselves. And particularly if you're dealing with the multitude of issues, like if you're dealing with the abuse and also the substance abuse, you need to have the programs directed to them.

But if you end up dealing with them and sort of providing support and help to them and end up putting them back into a family or community where you still have the same underlying causes that led them to the streets to begin with, then they can be even in a worse situation.

I had a situation of a woman who had finally come up to us as an adult, who'd been on the streets since she was about 12, and she'd come up to us and confided to us after being gang-raped as an adult. And she had a whole history in terms of her story. But at one point she ended up going through treatment. And to see the change in her, she actually went to Cree Nation and had, you know, sort of culturally appropriate treatment program. And the light in her eyes and the hope was just amazing.

And she came back and she ended up in the same situation because there was still a struggle within her family of drug and alcohol abuse. And I came to her to pick her up for a counselling appointment the one time to deal with issues around sexual assault and abuse, and she was sitting huddled up in the dark, in the corner, all by herself. And she said she wasn't ready to go or couldn't go.

I asked, you know, where everyone was and she said — like there was no one around, not even her kids — and she said that everyone was gone. They were partying. And she didn't want to go there because she didn't want to end up using again, but yet she felt very isolated and alone. And she said, I don't know what it is, she said, I used to be so normal. And I said, no, it has nothing to do with that; the situation wasn't normal. It's just that you didn't see it; you were caught up in the cycle of distress. And now you can see it, you know, you've got other options.

But it makes it hard because she didn't have the support around her. She loved her family. She had a sister caught up in the drug abuse . . . or cycles of drug abuse. And that was her family and she loved them. But yet she felt very torn.

So if you don't have programs for healing and dealing with, you know, with the families and with the community, if you don't have the economic alternatives, you know, to strengthen families then you're putting them in the same situation or environment.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — At the Saskatoon Tribal Council Family Centre we deal with families who are at risk and generally families who have had some child abuse or neglect within the family.

And what we found is that it's not enough just to tell the families or to talk with families about the neglect or the child abuse. Instead we have to deal with a whole lot of other issues. There's a lot of issues around shame and guilt; there are issues around poverty that they need to have to deal with; addictions. There's needs to have all kinds of family support in place.

And when you're looking at healing, you need to look at the four parts of self — at a holistic model of healing. So when you have a child who is being sexually abused on the street, that's not the only issue. There are all other kinds of factors involved with that that we have to help them deal with.

**Ms. Draude:** — Yes, just a couple of quick questions. First of all I do appreciate your presentation. It was very well done and you gave us a lot of information. I'm also impressed with the list of things that you have started to accomplish and the list of different groups you're working with.

And I'm wondering, first of all, if you are starting to see a difference. Is there sort of some hope? Like with all the campaigns you've done and with the people that are made aware of the problem. The videos — I'm wondering if you've shown the videos at the native schools and on reserves, and if you're starting to see any type of difference.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — We've seen some change in attitude from various individuals, various people. And I think that if we start to see some positive change in individuals, then I think that we're starting to effect change in the way people think.

I gave a presentation a couple of weeks ago to the Saskatchewan teachers . . . or Saskatoon teachers during their conference. And I was really thrilled when many of the teachers came up to me afterward and said, I didn't realize this was happening. And the notion that children are on the street because they choose to be there. suddenly it became clear to them that it was not the truth. That the truth is, the children are out there because they have to be, they're forced to be, not because they choose to be.

So there is some change and it's slow but sure. And we seem to be getting a lot of people who are starting to recognize some of the work that we do. And when they start to recognize that, then you can see that there's some change.

**Ms. Barclay:** — I would just like to add to that. I think concrete examples of the safe house which you're going to be hearing from the coordinator, just the very fact of having a place to go . . . like having worked out on the streets and having situations where there'll be children and youth that you have no place to refer them or no place they could go if they wanted to escape the street, even if it was only, you know, for a night or a few nights. And the fact that any night that a child stays there and they're safe from the dangers and harm of the street, is a real success, and that they have a place that they know they could turn to. So I think that's a very positive change.

The attitudes or perceptions that Sandi mentioned, I agree with, that there's been a difference. And even having situations where we had the street symposium, where we had the Saskatoon Tribal Council and Saskatoon Police Services working together in co-sponsoring, I think was very positive.

And the fact that you had a number of youth who were there and participating in workshops along with different individuals who at some points they probably would have seen as their adversaries or enemies. You know, you had judges and lawyers there, service providers or workers from a number of areas. I think that that was really positive.

The fact that we're having youth coming together and they're speaking out, not only sharing among themselves to strengthen themselves, but also being willing to speak with professionals or service providers, I think that's really positive.

And I think the changes to the child and family services. It's quite shocking to me to even think or realize that before that, children sexually exploited on the streets weren't seen as victims of abuse under legislation and not seen as in need of protection. It's shocking that that was something that took this long for us all collectively to see and make that . . . have that change made.

And I think just the existence of this all-party committee is very good testimony to the work within the community that's been happening and from different levels of government. We see this as a very encouraging and positive move, because it definitely highlights the importance of the issue.

And I have to say I was really impressed. I was glad I was part of being able to listen in on the press conference, because I was mentioning to Elder Helen Isbister who gave the prayer, that I was really impressed by both the level of awareness and passion that seemed to be coming from the committee.

**Ms. Draude:** — I just have one other comment. I appreciated also your input on the legislation that was brought forth by the other two provinces. We've had reports and talks with both provinces, and I found it interesting that both of those told us they felt that the legislation was very good. And the trouble with being government and legislators is that we talk to each other. Maybe that's supposed to be good, but maybe it's not. And probably more important is that people like yourselves talk to people in similar situations in the other provinces and bring forward the message to legislators.

And I'm just wondering . . . both of those groups had . . . provinces had told us they didn't feel that there had been any of this was going underground, and you're telling us that you feel it is. Are you talking to the other provinces to get that information and just ignoring government like you should?

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — We are talking to other provinces. We've been talking with Calgary, with the outreach workers in Calgary as well as the outreach workers in Edmonton, and that's what they felt, was that it was going underground. We are going to have the opportunity in May, the beginning of May, to travel to Calgary and to Edmonton again to get some more information, to find out, you know, how it's going now. Like perhaps at the

beginning when we got the information it had been going underground; it may have changed since then.

So we'd like to find that out. And so we're taking a trip and we're going to find out that information. We're also going to participate in the Street Symposium 2000 that's going to be held in Edmonton, May 4 to 6. So we'll still be working and finding out more information.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I just have one question, a really quick one. It was just in reference to I think Jacqui when you were mentioning that part of the sign campaign that you had as one of your initiatives was to . . . the signs indicated or encouraged people to report johns. Well if you report the johns, so what? You know, they have to be caught in the act in order for any kind of repercussions.

So I'm just sort of wondering on — like I believe in awareness and so on — I'm just wondering how you saw that as a valuable, a valuable thing to do if in fact once they're reported, nothing is happening to them anyway. I mean, you know you can report but if there isn't anything in place prior to the reporting to be able to actually have an arrest or whatever it may be, but then it's sort of not very productive I guess to report.

The Saskatoon Police Service have just set a new program called DISC (deter and identify sex trade customers), and I'm not sure how . . . what it's an acronym for. But basically it's a program that they end up being involved with out of Vancouver and Edmonton and Calgary.

And basically any information about johns, about the girls on the street, are input into the computer so that there's a network at least of information. If anything happens to the girls, if the girls go missing — I shouldn't say girls, because there's a lot of guys too that are out there on the street — but if the person goes missing, then they've got a network of who's involved and who's on the street.

At one point there was talk about a john school, which would have sort of helped to determine who the johns were, and also to help to charge and a whole lot of other things I guess. But the DISC program is important in terms of getting enough information on the johns.

And when someone becomes known on the street as being a john, it can be easier to charge them eventually. So it's important to at least get that information.

So that information would be once you know the johns. Now who would that be related to in order to, you know, to end up acting . . . so that it would end up acting as a deterrent to johns. Once the information is on the DISC and so on, how is that delivered back to the streets?

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — It's through the police; everything's through the police.

**Ms. Barclay:** — And the point that you mention, I mean, certainly that's a reality and frustration. I know some community people have been very frustrated by the fact that,

you know, they know darn well what's happening.

They can, you know, see a vehicle or go past a vehicle outside the city limits along to the dump area, on the outskirts, and see a middle-aged or older Caucasian male with a 10-year-old Aboriginal girl that's looking very scared parked in a car outside. And they, you know, they know darn well what's happening or about to happen. But to actually be able to do something or take action — that's one area definitely of frustration.

I guess in terms of the signs, one of the key things was the, was the message in terms of children being victims of abuse and trying to, as I mentioned before, trying to shift public perception. The area of protect our children, report johns, I guess it can also act as a sense of being able to not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes not tolerate, and as Sandi said, to empower members of the community to take action.

And I don't think it's totally useless. Definitely if you don't have the way to charge and convict it's just sitting there as information. But if you got people that are phoning in, it does put pressure on the police; it does put pressure on to say lookit, we've got to do something.

I mean as long as you don't have calls, you don't have that pressure coming in of people saying lookit, we know what's happening. Once you get that pressure then it forces the different relevant, appropriate bodies — you know, whether it be legislatures, legislators, or whether it be the police — to say lookit, we've got to do something; we've got to find a way to make this work.

And so I think in that way it does have an impact.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — I think too — and I'll give you an example of something that happened at our office. We see people driving around all the time. We see johns picking up young girls. And one particular incident where one of my staff had seen a van drive by and there was a name on the side of the van with a phone number, the van picked up a girl, took her, came back about half an hour later, dropped her off.

So my staff took the phone number off the van and phoned that company and said, this is what just happened. And do you know where your staff is today, and why your staff is here in the inner city area picking up prostitutes and then dropping them off later? And we didn't follow up on it to find out, you know, if anything happened. But we haven't seen the van since. So sometimes just something like that makes a bit of difference.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you. Mr. Prebble here has some questions here about some . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I'm just conscious of time in terms of . . . We're just a little overtime now in terms of the schedule. So I'm maybe going to mention some questions that you might want to make some preliminary comments on now, but when we're back in the fall, may want to comment on in more detail.

I wondered . . . I'll maybe mention all of these just so you can

think about them a little bit. And then if you have any preliminary comments on them now, that would be great.

One is the question of the involvement of male children in the sex trade and whether you've got any advice for us on how we might particularly grapple with that. That's a topic that hasn't really come up yet at our public hearings.

The second is the really difficult question of what we do to address the question of family members putting children in their family on the street, which unfortunately is happening, and I think is an issue separate from the question, you know, from some of the other questions that we've been struggling with to date.

And you've identified a whole variety of reasons why children become involved in the sex trade. Those reasons could probably be involved to why families become involved. But I'm wondering if you have any specific advice on how we should address that question of say an extended family member putting their child on the street, or even a parent putting their child on the street.

And then the third question I had was the things that you'd most like government to do to support the work and supplement the work that community-based groups are now doing. You know, community-based groups in Saskatoon and Regina and a lot of other communities are doing some excellent work. And what we're looking at . . . One of the things we need to look at is how we build on that and how we strengthen that effort.

So I'd be grateful for your advice on, you know, on what you'd like to see government doing that would in effect supplement and strengthen your work and then address some other outstanding issues that in effect community groups can't address, like the question of changes to the law.

So if you've got any comments on those now, that would be great. And maybe the other option is to also . . . you could speak to those in the fall too.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Okay. There are actually . . . Your third question about what we'd most like government to do to support our work. I think that one of the major areas of concern for all of us is that of addictions. And we had mentioned that previously. And I know that because there are only three beds that are available to the youth on the street who are sexually involved on the street, we would really like to see perhaps a youth treatment centre that deals specifically with addictions and that's just sort of one of the areas.

And the other area, when we're looking at families who are accessing services, when you . . . it's one thing to get a child off the street but it's another to offer services for the child and for the family. And I know that for counselling services, a child can be . . . it can take six months to a year to get a child into some counselling. It takes that same amount of time to get a family into counselling.

So if you were dealing with a child who, you know, has been going through a difficult time, is just coming off the street, wants to get off the street, and there are no services provided to

help that child — whether it be counselling services or family services — then it's really difficult to maintain that child off the street.

So those are two areas that I would really like to see some change and probably some support.

**Ms. Barclay:** — I guess certainly this'll be something that we can bring back to a working group and I think that would be good to have a fuller discussion and be able to either submit something written, looking at some of these different areas, and being able to get more dialogue and a deeper discussion at a later point.

But I would have to agree with Sandi in terms of it wouldn't necessarily even have to be a youth treatment centre or a residential place. Certainly that's one area to look at, but maybe looking at a whole range of options and dealing with substance abuse issues.

And one of the things that's interesting to me is comments mentioned — and I don't know where, I'd have to track it down — but in BC (British Columbia) they do have programs where they're actually, well, longer-term, beyond the 28 days. We've got this magic 28 days where someone's supposed to be suddenly cured or fixed in terms of addiction or a problem of abusing alcohol or other drugs. So certainly longer term intensive treatment options, whether it be through residential setting or whether it be creative community initiatives.

I know that they've adopted different outreach projects or programs through addiction services to actually go out in the community, and they've got outreach workers that go to places like Egadz periodically to make that first contact with the youth. Being able to look at that, being able to look at dealing with the whole family, there is programs as well that look at not only having a child or youth go, but a family member.

We had one situation of a youth who actually died from accidental overdose, and through that whole process the family was struggling with issues of addictions with other family members. And the mom was . . . mother is really scared about the younger son having suicidal tendencies but also just getting caught in the spiral of alcohol and drugs.

And what they had planned to do was actually go into a treatment program, which unfortunately wasn't here in the province of Saskatchewan, but to go into treatment program as a mother and son and to deal with issues not only in terms of their substance abuse but also grieving. The counselling that Sandi mentioned, I mean that's certainly, you know, a really important area too because the waiting lists are very long. And I guess just being able to, as Sandi mentioned before, that the multi . . . looking at the multiple issues that you're having to deal with.

And certainly the strength of different programs that have been created — I'll say, you know, personally — through the Saskatoon Tribal Council, through Aboriginal governments like the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and the Metis Nation are really important in terms of having, you know, culturally appropriate programs.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Could I leave you also with something for our presentations in the fall when we . . . I understand from the office of the treaty governance that, actually Mr. Bob Mitchell had made it known to us, that there were 1,400 children in Saskatoon under the age of 13 that are not going to school. So there is a whole educational component that has to be thought of here, and some of his suggestion and recommendations were that somehow we have to have a culturally sensitive educational system for First Nations people because a higher percentage of those 1,400 are First Nations people.

So I just want you to be able to think about that. And maybe as you go back to your meetings with Communities for Children and you bring forward some suggestions, and if there is something that you feel that government can do in that aspect, it would be good for us to hear that.

**Ms. LeBoeuf:** — Thank you. We do have a working group for children not in school through Saskatoon Communities for Children, and Rebecca Elder is the Chair of that particular working group. And they have actually done quite a lot of work in establishing Estey School and some other kinds of programs for children who are not in school, and I'm just wondering if perhaps they might be invited as well to give a presentation about that specific issue.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Sure, we could do that, Sandi. That would be good. That's a very positive suggestion.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Good point. Okay, thank you very much. We appreciate more than words can tell all the work you've done and your willingness to come here, and not only your willingness, but your desire to see everyone that has a part to play in Saskatchewan do that very thing so that we can do the best we can be here for our children. Thank you very much.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — So we'll take a five-minute break and give our next witnesses from the safe house an opportunity to get set up.

**The committee recessed for a period of time.**

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — . . . a little bit behind time, but hopefully everything will work out anyway.

We're fortunate to have with us Gloria Swindler, and also Michael Quennell — is that the way to pronounce it, Michael . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Thank you — from the Saskatoon Tribal Council. And Gloria is the program coordinator of the safe houses, from what I understand; Michael is the evaluation consultant for the safe house.

So I'm going to just quickly maybe . . . I don't know if you were here throughout the other presentation or before it, but I'll introduce the members of the committee to you. And first of all sitting beside me is Peter Prebble. Peter and myself, Arlene Julé, co-chair the committee. And we have just on the far end June Draude — she's the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Kelvington-Wadena. And we have Kevin Yates; actually, Kevin, I have to apologize — I can't remember your constituency.

**Mr. Yates:** — Regina Dewdney.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Regina Dewdney. Okay. And Ron Harper is with us. And your constituency?

**Mr. Harper:** — Regina Northeast.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Regina Northeast. Thank you. I have to be the Speaker of the House before I'll remember all these.

Absent today are two other committee members. Don Toth is the MLA from Moosomin, and as well Carolyn Jones is the MLA from . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Saskatoon Meewasin.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Saskatoon Meewasin. So we'll certainly thank you for coming and ask you, Gloria, if you'd like to start your presentation.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Okay. Sure. Well like you said, I'm Gloria Swindler, and I'm the program coordinator of the safe house.

We opened our doors on December 16 of '98 to . . . I should backtrack a bit. We had an open house, invited community members and everybody to walk through. Then we opened our doors to children on the 16th. We did not get our first child till January 8. The children that we got were children that had visited the safe house with a teacher. And I think they just wanted to check it out. It was a fun to be and . . . But from that point on it, it started to pick up with children coming more often, you know, starting to utilize the place.

The way we have it set up is there's two staff to each shift. We have a very . . . This is purposely done — is it's very casual, very non-judgmental. And the reason for that is because children need a place where they can feel safe, where they can be who they . . . they can show who they are without worrying of the consequence, where they can finally be children, you know. And that is very important to the staff and myself.

So we, we're very . . . We're not rules, rule bound and we're not staff driven. That is very important to say that because we are there for the children — not for the staff and not for rules. So we're very careful in that.

The children that we initially got were children who were addicted to a lot of drugs and really had a hard time. They'd stay maybe for a night and take off because of their addiction. So it was very transient; all the clients were very transient at the start. Like, you know, they'd be there one day and you'd think they were going to be back but you weren't sure. So when Michael goes into the evaluation, it'll show why we lost a lot of numbers because we initially did not keep a lot of record keeping but we've gotten better at it.

So a lot of the children that come to the safe house are already involved in the system. They're already part of the department. They've already been in care at some point of their lives, they've been involved with the justice system at some point in their lives. So we've worked very closely with Social Services.

In fact, as well, some parts of the courts where I've had to go to court and speak on behalf of a child to be released to us even though we're not legislated to keep children — like if the child wants to leave, we can't do anything; they can leave — so we make that very . . . I've made that very clear to the courts but they've gone ahead and released the child to us.

So we've worked very closely with Social Services in terms of, they know when the child is there but they don't come in and take the child. Like, they give us the opportunity to work with the children. Like, we have two children right now that are going . . . that their mom signed a section 9, okay. They were going to try and separate the two, and we requested that they leave them there until they could find a home for both of them to go into, that they not be separated. And Social Services has been very good about working with us on that.

The children that come to us come from very — I don't want to use the word dysfunctional, but that's what it is — a lot of poverty. It's like teaching them all over again that it's not okay . . . what's happening in their families is not okay. And try to be gentle about it because a lot of them have a lot of anger towards their parents. And try to make them understand that their parents came from that same environment and working that through with them. And I think in doing that we also prepare them into going into another home. And it takes a lot of work, a lot of work working with them to prepare these children.

I'm trying to think of what else I wanted to say. I'm not good at this so I'm sorry if I'm . . . I think I'll take it to a lighter side for a while.

We have a dog named Sam who is very much a big part of the home. We've had kids who can't talk to us, who are very scared, whatever the reason may be. And there's a number of times they've laid beside the TV and they're crying. And Sam will walk over and lick their faces, lay beside them. So he's been a very important part of our house. But he hates men and I wonder why. He does not like . . . there's something about men. He just does not like men. He tortures this guy that comes from Social Services — chases him around.

We've had some funny things happen where, you know, we really have to be careful that the children we're getting . . . Like, when a child walks in we can't say, so are you involved in the sex trade. You know eventually that will come out, hopefully. But we've had funny . . . One situation that was funny where a girl came over; she brought her little sister, all her belongings, and a cat, you know, because mom had gotten mad at her and she knew about the safe house so she figured she could bring everybody over but she really did not need the safe house. But we kept her one night, let her mom know she was there, and then the next day we were able to take them back home. Those are funny things, like the cat needed help as well.

I think at this point I'm going to let Michael take over for a while and talk about the evaluation.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Okay. I'd like to start off by congratulating actually Gloria and her staff in the information they have collected over the past year. And they've done a really good job. I've been involved in other organizations and they don't

seem to collect information as well as the safe house staff. So I'd like to give them that praise as well.

I've also been a little bit involved in some of their program development, just sort of watched from the side and they do deliver several, sort of try to deliver several areas of support to children and sort of in a holistic way.

And first and foremost, I guess, they're providing a safe, non-judgemental place for children. And then they're meeting the children's basic needs by feeding them, clothing them, etc.

They also try to provide them with . . . if they need some medical attention or need to go see a doctor or to go see someone out in the social service field, they sort of provide accompaniment to that and make sure that the children receive some services.

They also provide some cultural education. They bring in elders and provide opportunities for the children to participate in some cultural activities such as sweats, and they have an elder come in and is available to the children as well to sort of reacquaint them to their cultural roots. Because I think many of these children are caught between their Canadian culture and the Aboriginal culture and don't know always where they lie.

I believe they also have someone come in and provide some counselling services from Addictions as well as some, I guess you would call more therapeutic counselling as well, at the safe house. And they also deal with other sorts of basic needs such as just through running sort of a healthy, happy home because I've been there very many times. You know, the kids cook and make their own lunches, and they learn nutritional habits and personal hygiene just going through their routines of a normalized home in which Gloria and her staff are trying to do there.

I'll describe the house a little bit, I think it's on Avenue S, and it's located close to the river. I believe it can occupy five children a night; there's five beds. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so youth can come at any time. I'll spend a little bit of time with the charts and just share with you a little bit of information that's gone on in the past year.

And again this was for the first year, so you have to remember that you had to get a word of mouth out into the community. You had to develop a sense of trust within the community with the children for them to come, etc. So I think the numbers I'm about to present are very congratulatory of the program today.

In total in 1999 there was 57 youth came to the safe house, there . . . read my own notes, but there were 97 youth intakes. So some youth came back more than once which should also be an indication of satisfaction and comfort level with the safe house. It's almost like the youths saying it is a place that's working by them coming back.

And then to describe who is coming to the safe house. This chart here . . . and I can provide charts to the committee if they'd like. I didn't bother making many today. But this is the age range of youth coming, from age 9 to 17. The vast majority age are . . . the medium age of the children were 14 years of age



though the age range from 9 to 17 years; 47 were 14 years or younger and all of those children were Aboriginal.

Here looking at the gender breakdown, it's three-quarters of it were female, one-quarter being male. And the light green down here is First Nation background; the dark green is Metis; and the yellow is non-Aboriginal. So you can see sort of see the ethnic, cultural background — breakdown, who's using it.

Here, along here is the monthly intakes from January to December, and this is the number of youth coming in. So you could have one youth coming more than one time. This is counting intakes, not children. And you can see the fluctuation months. But then you're going to get an accurate picture of bed occupancy again. Five beds is full. April they were at full capacity.

And so you can see it fluctuating and again it would be sort of options available to the children because they use the safe house as one option. In summer time they might be able to survive on the street, or stay out all night, travel around a little bit easier.

So the usage of the safe house will I think change a little bit. So you see it's due to the circumstances of the children. And then this is just the intakes day of the week and then some of this information will become more interesting as we collect it every year. But for the first year, this shows us what days of the week they're coming at.

Down here, this one is intake times — what time of day the kids are dropping in. And while each of these portions here are one hour, this one here is 12 hours from 3 a.m. to 3 p.m. So not many children are coming in there. We've clumped that together.

You can see the number of kids coming from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. in the morning, when they're coming to the safe house.

Reasons for coming to the safe house. They're almost all safety related — problems in the home, no place to go, etc. When you ask the direct question, if you're wanting to get off the street, i.e., involved in the sex trade; it's a low number of 7 to 8 per cent reporting that. But that would be the same with asking a youth in high school — do you use drugs? It's something that you wouldn't commonly say right up front. But that might be something that they would open up to staff later on at the safe house.

The length of stay again reports satisfaction or competence in the safe house to the children. Where you have 26 per cent staying one night, 20 per cent staying between two days and a week, another 22 per cent staying between one week and two weeks. Some staying between two and three weeks, and then about 8 per cent staying greater than a month.

The ones that are staying for a long, considerable amount of time — Gloria might be able to correct me if I'm wrong here — I believe are sort of almost wards, Social Services wards. And they have no place to place the children. And the best place for the child is living in the safe house for the time being. So they do provide that service on occasion for Social Services.

And again, just to sort of show that the youth are . . . again this long graph here shows the youth are feeling safe and using it. The purple here is first stays, and green is repeat stays, as far as duration over time. So people are coming back and staying long periods of time. So it shows that it is doing something for their lives.

Also referrals. They did receive referrals from a wide range of agencies and by self referral and by word of mouth. And again, the numbers by word of mouth are increasing, which shows the word's getting out on the street that it's a place that they can trust — a place that they can trust and get some immediate help and services.

I guess I did listen in a little bit to your earlier discussion where you were talking about the number of kids out of school and some of the solutions and things. And in going over the files with these children and youth and speaking with staff and being involved with the tribal council, I think this is a really important piece to the puzzle that you're dealing with — with sexual exploitation. It's giving us a safe place for these kids to go to.

I wouldn't necessarily say these 57 kids are directly involved in the sex trade, but they're in high-risk conditions for it if they didn't have the safe house to go.

I was speaking to one mother a couple of weeks ago where they actually phoned the safe house, and there was a young girl — she wouldn't go home, so she was wandering the back alleys at 3 in the morning. So she went over to the safe house. And then her circumstances could be better dealt with in the daytime as far as finding her a safe place to live.

But if I may, I also passed to Peter another project that the tribal council is part of, and we'd certainly want to make a connection with the safe houses because it's really giving these children some other opportunities in life and showing them that there are other opportunities and supports for them other than their present set of circumstances. And I don't know if the committee has heard about it, but it was announced a couple of weeks ago. It was called the City Centre project, and it's a child and youth centre being opened on 20th Street and Avenue F and G.

And the intent of that place is really to look towards what sort of conditions or opportunities are needed for children to grow up healthy and providing support for them. So we're really looking at sort of a lifespan approach at children and youth — what ways are needed for them to grow up healthy, and providing sort of supports and resources where some gaps exist.

And where we see a project such as this and the safe house connecting is those children being able to . . . being brought over, connected to the activities of the youth centre. And there we're wanting, we're wanting to draw kids in because we know we've turned off many of these kids, many of the kids involved in the street trade. They don't trust Social Services and the police department, etc.

So we want to draw them using recreation and things that will build their self-esteem and their social skills, etc. So we're using recreation as a drawing card to come in and they'll get involved in sports and crafts, music and drama, etc. And then

we hope that through a trust building relationship — much like the safe house — they'll open up to staff. And if they need extra support in addictions or if they want to talk about family members, we'll have counselling services there, etc.

And much like the holistic framework of the safe house, we'd want to attach them to alternative school services if they needed them — nutritional services — and have easy access to medical or social programming, etc.

And I guess I brought this up because I really think you need a holistic approach to addressing the issues. And you need the . . . you need, I guess, different type of projects to deal with sort of different levels of the issue but they need to be integrated and connected. But maybe I should stop there.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Well that was, that was very informative and good and it certainly twigg'd a few questions in my mind. But I'm going to this time . . . Is there anything more, Gloria, that you wanted to add before we get into the questioning?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well I wanted to add that the safe house is a good start, but these children need more homes like this, more safe homes because foster care hasn't worked for them. And working with the children, talking to them, they say they don't want to go to a foster home because it's not home. You know, they want something like the safe house, where there's a group of them and they can be together and they share the same problems, whereas there's too many expectations placed on them when they go into foster care.

And we are working on trying to get satellite homes in place. That's part of the safe house. It's like foster homes but we call them satellite homes. So we're working on that. It's part of . . . it's ongoing.

I guess at this point too, I'd like to ask that, I feel the number of children that have walked through the house and they're getting — there's starting to be more and more of them — that we need longer-term funding for the safe house. And we need more safe houses.

**Mr. Quennell:** — One thing that the stats doesn't show, in those 57 children in the 97 intakes, is the number of children that the safe house has served just on a temporary basis, where a number of kids will come in, have supper, get their clothes cleaned, and they may not stay a night. And those aren't in the figures.

**Ms. Swindler:** — See SaskTel did a whole bunch of care packages for us. And I think they gave us 200 care packages and we're down to about 50 of those care packages. And they delivered them in, oh I'd say about September last year. And we're down that low already because when kids come in they might stay for an hour, two hours, but we give them a care package so they can clean up.

**Mr. Quennell:** — One other thing I'd like to mention, you had mentioned a number of children that are out of school in Saskatoon. That's estimated at 13 to 1,400. And they're largely Aboriginal as well and I would . . . actually there's your feeder

system for exploitation on the streets because they don't see themselves as having an opportunity.

If I could share one story, actually, and it's again providing more opportunities for children in the inner city. I think an event was happening last year and they took some young girls from the inner city to the University of Saskatchewan to watch some volleyball. And it was amazing some of the comments from the young children. One of the young girls saying, you know, what a university was; and the rest of the girls didn't realize that you could play sports when you get older, you know. You can only do that as a young child and stuff like that. And how quickly children must grow up in the inner city.

And the other thing is that, as you probably know, you have children, everything costs money to do stuff. And kids have to pay to play basketball, to take a bus somewhere, to go swimming. Even to go swimming at Harry Bailey pool, when you think if you have a couple of siblings or children to bring along, it's quite an expensive outing. And if you're trying to do it on social assistance you just can't afford it.

And when we think of the power of recreation and as far as our own health and our children's health, and what's simply missing from these children is places, safe places to play and grow up as children and have support. And they don't have that and I think just providing them with some social health resources that the majority have access to in the city . . . but we tend to overlook that in the inner city.

And that kids do not have anything to do after certain hours, and it might not even be safe to go home so the best place is to be on the street and then all sorts of things can happen on the street. Sometimes, I've heard reports too where school is the safest place for kids where they'll sleep during school hours because that's the place where they'll sleep.

I'm actually quite amazed at the ingenuity — and I guess people use survival instincts — of the children in the inner city, of what they go through. And also the motivation, and I can't stress how much, at least from my perspective on it and limited experiences, is how much these children do want to succeed. At Estey School they recognize that they need a math and science teacher and they tell Rebecca Elder when she went there, where's our teacher?

There's stories of children who stay out all night and then look for a bus ticket to go to school the next day. They want to go to school. They know they need school to succeed in the economy and participate in their communities and stuff. I just think they need a fair opportunity.

**Ms. Swindler** — I think also what our home has provided is a prevention of the kids getting involved in crime so that they end up in our institutions which are not healthy for them.

I recall working at a some young offender facility for a number of years and the kids used to tell me they got into trouble because they didn't have anywhere else to go and nothing at home. You know, no food to eat so they'd get into trouble so they knew they'd have a place to stay. So I think our home has allowed the kids to have a place to stay so that they don't have

to worry about where their next meal or where they're going to sleep.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you for an excellent presentation. Well I think we'll move into questions, and I'm wondering if Ron and Kevin, June, if any of you have questions that you'd like to start with.

**Mr. Yates:** — Do you have any estimation of the number of children involved in being sexually abused on the streets in Saskatoon, and we heard earlier numbers of 196 and 84. Are those numbers, in your estimation, accurate or . . .

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well the place was made for kids who are being abused sexually, and I guess our assumption could be that any child that walks through the doors is somehow involved in the sex trade. So if those are the numbers that the people who work right on the street level with the children, if that's the numbers they're giving, then that must be the numbers that are out there.

**Mr. Yates:** — My second question is around the safe house itself. You have five beds and you have a fluctuation in occupancy based on a number of factors. Do you think that there would be a higher utilization in the city if there were safe houses in other parts of the city?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes, for sure.

**Mr. Yates:** — Because this access or getting to the safe house is an issue, I guess. People who . . . children that are in that immediate vicinity or community can get to it easier than perhaps from other areas of the city. Is that a factor in your opinion?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — June, do you have some questions?

**Ms. Draude:** — Yes, I do. How is the safe house funded?

**Ms. Swindler:** — It's funded through Justice, Saskatoon District Health Board, and Social Services.

**Ms. Draude:** — Do the police and Social Services workers bring children to the safe house?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**Ms. Draude:** — Is that how the majority of the children come?

**Ms. Swindler:** — No, self-referrals. The high number is self-referrals that come to the door.

**Ms. Draude:** — Are the children, most of the children, in the safe house going to school right now?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes, the majority are in school.

**Ms. Draude:** — Okay. And have you found that you have a need for an addiction counsellor there?

**Ms. Swindler:** — For sure. But we also work very closely with Calder. They have a worker that comes twice a month for a full day. And then we work with — what's that called now? — addiction services, where the woman comes in the evenings and provides information for the children.

**Ms. Draude:** — So if you could have a wish list, would it all revolve around money for the safe house?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes, lots of money.

**Ms. Draude:** — It's a short list then.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I know that committee members sometimes, I'm sure, have questions that come to mind after they have actually finished their line of questioning but if we have time, you know, we'll get back to the committee members that have already asked questions because sometimes there's real good questions that come forward and, you know, information provided by yourself. So we don't want to miss out on anything so we'll watch the time.

Ron, would you like to ask some questions?

**Mr. Harper:** — Yes, thank you. I believe Michael used a term that a number of the children that come through the door of the safe house are, if not involved in the sex trade, are certainly in a high risk of eventually being involved. Of the children that come through, do you have any mechanism or is there any mechanism available to you to approach the family to first investigate the home situation and perhaps strike up some counselling with the family to try to address whatever the cause was with the child ending up in your safe house in the first place?

**Ms. Swindler:** — We could try that. But when we try and contact the family we have no way. Either there's no phone or calls are not returned. So it's really hard to . . .

**Mr. Harper:** — So there's no mechanism available to you to contact, say, another group that would do this . . .

**Ms. Swindler:** — Oh yes, we . . .

**Mr. Harper:** — . . . or is there a mechanism that, within the present system, that would be able to start a dialogue with the family to assess what the situation is in the home and perhaps even some communication or dialogue with the members of the home to see if they can . . . to resolve this situation.

**Ms. Swindler:** — That's why we use Social Services. They do a lot of that work for us. They do all the assessments.

**Mr. Harper:** — And in your opinion, the present mechanisms that are available to you, are they being successful?

**Ms. Swindler:** — It some cases, but in some cases, no.

**Mr. Harper:** — What percentage of cases would you say are successful?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Oh, I think about 30 per cent.

**Mr. Harper:** — Thirty per cent.

**Mr. Quennell:** — I think many children coming to the safe house are already connected to workers, whether they be in Social Services or Justice.

**Mr. Harper:** — Okay. Now is there any common element that the children that are coming to your safe house, I would say, all possess? Any common circumstances that they all would share?

**Ms. Swindler:** — They're all poor.

**Mr. Harper:** — Okay.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Like I said before, they come from generations of involvement with drugs and alcohol and lack of parenting skills, you know, the whole works. They come from that. That's where these children come from.

**Mr. Harper:** — And the children themselves, how would you describe them. Would you describe them as being ambitious and buoyant, or would you describe them as being withdrawn and isolated?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well initially they're very quiet, but as they become more trusting of the staff and comfortable in this setting, they become kids, what kids should be — laughing, chasing each other, having fun. That's what they become.

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I just wanted to give you a chance to confer for a minute. Feel free to do that at any time.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Oh, I was going to make one point and I don't know how fair a point it is. But the fact that the kids are already involved within the human resource system whether it be Social Services or Justice and they end up at the safe house, is sort of a comment about how well this system is working for the children.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thanks for that, Michael.

I wanted to ask — just to give you a little bit of notice and time to think about this — I wanted to ask you some questions around prevention strategies that you'd recommend that our committee look at. You've talked about one which is quite global, actually, in nature, of the city centre community partnership.

Also I want to ask you in a moment some questions around . . . your advice around addressing the whole question of children not in school.

Just to come to some specific questions for a moment while you have a chance to think about those others. The safe house was set up in Pleasant Hill. And at the time one of the considerations was that that's where a lot of the children who are involved in the sex trade are currently living.

How are you finding the ability of children to access the safe house from other neighbourhoods? You've kind of inferred already that there are some problems around access. How's it working for kids in King George and Riversdale and other neighbourhoods that are a little further away? Are you finding that those children have access?

**Mr. Quennell:** — I'm making it from just thinking of some of the addresses of the children; they are from Riversdale and King George.

**Ms. Swindler:** — The ones that we find is we got a call from Sutherland, that those were the ones that . . . that the girl that phoned would not leave her address and did not trust the police to pick her up, so we never did meet with her. So it's kids in the farther area that are having a hard time.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Right, yes.

**Ms. Swindler:** — And there are kids out there who need a safe house.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Yes, but there seems to be a reasonable access for children in other inner-city neighbourhoods?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Yes, well that's great. I wanted to ask a question about the group of children who are boys. Are you finding that some of these boys are in fact involved in the sex trade, or does it seem to be exclusively girls who are involved?

**Ms. Swindler:** — It's exclusively girls. We've had one boy who's been involved in the sex trade and why I can say that with, and know about is because I worked with that child at a young offender facility and I know he's involved in the sex trade. The other boys are not; they're not involved in that so . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Are they on the street, Gloria?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes, they're on the street.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And at risk of . . . are the boys at risk of becoming involved with pimps?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes, that's what they're in risk of becoming . . . pimping the girls.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — What's your sort of . . . what's your experience in terms of — you know we've spent a lot of time as a committee looking at the involvement of young girls and youth in the sex trade — but what's your experience in terms of the boys becoming involved in the elements of the sex trade that are also been exploited nature to some degree but are not . . . that don't actually involve being sexually abused, but could involve being an assistant to a pimp or something like that. Like to what degree are you finding that's a problem for young male children in the neighbourhood?

**Ms. Swindler:** — For the boys that have walked through our

place, that's one of their main concerns because either their cousin or their brother is involved in it. But to put a number on it, we really don't have that because we don't have that much contact with the boys as we do the females.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Right. Do you have any advice for us in terms of the whole . . . Like, Michael, you were mentioning that you see that children who are not in school as almost being the beginnings, or I think you used the word feeder-system for the problem of children being sexually abused on the street. Do you have any advice for us on how we might address the whole issue of children not in school as a prevention strategy to preventing children becoming involved in the sex trade? And obviously in and of its own merits as well.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Well I think you need probably several strategies. And we would need one for school age children who are not in school or attending school right now.

But I think as a preventative strategy, if you look at the demographics of the inner city, they're going through a population boom right now. The zero to age 24 is expected to double in the next 10 years. If you think of 60 per cent of the adult population in some of the neighbourhoods only attaining grade 10 education, etc. — which we know doesn't make you very eligible for the employment opportunities — the number of families that are presently on social assistance, etc., sort of describes these circumstances and opportunities of people living in the core area of Saskatoon.

And again, going back to recreation and maybe even some simple solutions to what may appear to be complex problems, I would suggest opening up more services for parents and young children in the inner city.

Opportunities where parents can bring in their young children, play, which we know — if you look at the literature in healthy child development and the amount of let's say brain growth that happens between zero to six — just having children having the opportunity to play with toys, blocks, marbles, etc., has a tremendous influence on healthy growth and development. Young children being able to play with other children. Developing social and coping skills at age three to five.

All these things that even shows up in literature already as showing, sort of giving kids the foundation to be successful at school. When children are given these opportunities and are followed through school, there's been sort of control studies showing where children are not given these opportunities and what happens to them. Anyway, by providing these healthy opportunities to children, they're actually used as predictors of school retention to grade 8, etc.

And at the same time you could do other social things as well. Parents could come in and learn parenting skills. They would be forming social networks, etc.

And at the same time you could do . . . and again to bring out, many of these families are turned off by the way we've set up our institutional services. And providing informal parent-child centres — you could almost call them development centres — you could do informal interventions. And where maybe some

children are lagging behind, we could catch them at an early age as far as providing some support.

I know in our own health care system, we do a very good . . . well somewhat of a job, between zero and two with immunizations with young children. But we don't see children from age two to five. And those are very important years of healthy growth and development, and where you can catch some delays, etc., to help children be successful at school.

And a lot of the anti-social behaviour there happening to kids — if you look at when kids are either forced out or voluntarily leaving school — is around age 8 in the core area, and that's due to their inability to adjust to a school setting, etc., because they haven't been given these opportunities in their younger life. So we're almost setting them up not to succeed in school and so, age 8, 9, they start dropping out, playing hooky. They don't see anything in school for them as well.

I think another important issue is the whole issue of role models and them seeing that other people have successes and that they too can have successes. Having people like Gloria around in a job, and the children seeing that there are work opportunities for them and that they have a place in the community and the world, I think, is very important for children as well. And we need to do a better job of that.

I'm probably not the right person to give solutions towards the children out of school, but I think too the other thing that we need to begin to address as a society is FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and FAE (fetal alcohol effects) which again comes out of marginalization, low self-esteem, and knowledge, etc.

And we're going to have to recognize that not only do we need to set up different learning opportunities based on cultural understandings and approaches to life, but also for some children who may have been affected through fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol effects. And we'll need alternative educational settings for them because they have different learning abilities.

You can actually have a very high IQ (intelligence quotient) in FAS but you need to learn some coping skills, etc. But there are strategies in which you can provide alternative educational settings to these children and they can become successful members in society too. And I think that's something that we need to get a handle on as well.

Also, just to share with you because I know the demographics of the inner city, some of the neighbourhoods in, for example, Pleasant Hill neighbourhood has a teenage fertility rate six times that of Saskatoon. It is a higher rate than even Northwest Territories which has a fertility rate of 135 per thousand in that age group. Pleasant Hill has over 200 on a four year average. So there are many young mothers having children without enough healthy support for their children. And again the population is expected to double in the next 10 years.

So the sooner we get on it, moving, helping, supporting these people . . . And not to put it as a negative, you can flip this and it can be very much a positive. These are the people who'll be producing income and the economy in the future and we all

know about this — the prevention dollars — \$1 worth of prevention is either 4 to \$7 return as far as not having to pay social costs down the road whether that be counselling or justice-related costs, etc. So the investment is sound.

I think that part of an . . . Actually what I was speaking is actually a part of a healthy employment strategy is providing children with an opportunity for that healthy good start to get their education, etc. And when we think of a healthy Aboriginal employment strategy, it has to extend — it can't just deal with 18-year-olds and up — it has to extend back to the mother and the children and the family and the work that needs to be done as far as reuniting them and their social fabric, but just individually with children.

I don't know if that's . . . I'm going on too much.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — No, I think that's a very important contribution that you're making. I'm going to pass it to Arlene to ask questions for a little while.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. I'm just going to refer my questions to some of the comments you made while you were doing your presentations and some of them just twiggled little thoughts in my mind. And I thought we need a little bit more information on how things are working right now and how it actually turns out to be quite valuable or successful. And also the areas where you're making efforts that you feel that you may need more resources in one way or the other, okay, in order to help the children even more.

You mentioned I think, Gloria, that some of the children that come into the safe house, you refer them to further services. Could you just give us an idea . . . Some of us might think we know what services are out there but it's always good to have it reiterated or expanded on by yourself.

What services can you refer them to, for instance, in Saskatoon — services they may need? So we talked a little bit about the Calder Centre. We understand that there are only three spaces for sexually abused children, as far as getting on with drug and alcohol rehab and so on. So we know that's far too little. Other than that, what other services can you refer them to?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well we have from child and youth services, we have Dr. Phyllis Ohm who does counselling. But she only works with kids who have been involved in the justice system. So then from there, if a child is not involved in that, then we have to look for other counselling services. So we've utilized . . . Indian Affairs has a list of all the people that you can refer to. We've utilized that list and referred kids to some of those counsellors.

A lot of our kids are involved with Egadz and we encourage them to continue participating in those programs that they're involved in.

One of the things we know that is lacking, seriously lacking, is a detox unit for youth because a number of our youth have gone on for treatment but we have to detox them at the safe house prior to them going on.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thanks. You also mentioned — I think it was Gloria that mentioned this — that there's a provision of care packages that Social Services pays for and you're down to just a few now.

**Ms. Swindler:** — No, no, SaskTel provided this.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Who did?

**Ms. Swindler:** — SaskTel.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — SaskTel. Do you have any other non-government organizations or businesses contributing, or have you ever asked or have you been able to get funding from them for any kind of resources that you need?

**Ms. Swindler:** — We've had a lot of people donate, you know, whether it's clothing, whatever. There's been people that have donated. There's been money donated. So in that sense, yes, we've had a lot of people donating different articles.

I think what we're really lacking in is clothing, and we've talked about Social Services maybe providing clothing for the children — two sets of clothing when the children are there.

We had a Christmas party and SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) donated a whole bunch of money so that we could provide the children with gifts and a meal. Because I forgot to mention on Mondays and Wednesdays, we have what is called a youth night, and it's not just for the children in the safe house, it's for children from the community. So on Monday nights we have females that come and the number is growing. So we have — what? — I think nine girls that come regularly.

On Wednesdays, last Wednesday I've had to go in and separate the boys because we've had 18 there at one night. So I've had to go pick names and tell them this week you're here, next week you're here. So the numbers are growing in terms of the kids that are utilizing our youth nights.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Yes. Gloria, when you first started speaking, immediately what came to my mind is this is an alternative family that you've set up.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — A family setting . . .

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — . . . where, where children that don't feel that they have families to go to or where there's dysfunctional families, they're now in a setting where they can, they can be directed into some healthy sort of activities and exchange and that kind of thing. So I really commend you on that. It's really what's needed.

And I think a lot of people in Saskatchewan would agree that the family unit as has been in the past is certainly not the same any more. And, you know, so we have to determine different ways.

Gloria, you were mentioning that . . . You made referral to satellite safe houses and so on. I wonder if you could expand on that a little? Do you mean outside of the city?

**Ms. Swindler:** — No.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — On reserves? Or what were you referring to?

**Ms. Swindler:** — We are trying to set up homes where . . . like we only keep the kids for 30 days. So when they're done those 30 days, they have to move on somewhere. So we're trying to set up homes that they can move on to that are connected to the safe house, so that the people who run, or who are the satellite home operators, would be closely involved with the safe house. They would be there. They would get to know the children. It would be a slow process where we would get them into that home.

We had one home, but it was located out of the city and the children refused to go. They did not want to go out of town. So we have to find homes in the city. It's like a foster home is what it is, but we call them satellite homes because we want them to adopt the same ideas and treatment that we give the children at the safe house.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So there's a continuum . . .

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — . . . of care.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. So would those, would those satellite homes . . . or I guess what you're trying to do, also from what I'm hearing, is to recognize that if a large number are Aboriginal that there would be a cultural appropriateness to this.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — To anything that you . . . any programs you have in place or anything. And that will certainly help to assist the children in feeling comfortable which they need to feel first of all. So, okay well, I'm just going to scan my notes here to see if there's . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Arlene, just while you're scanning — just take your time — just a further question on the satellite home. Is there any provision now for funding for satellite homes, Gloria, through Social Services or through some other agency? I don't want to just direct that to you; Michael may know as well. But do either of you know if there's any provisions in place now to actually fund satellite homes?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Just one home.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — There is funding available for one?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Just for one, yes.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — So the question of funding then for satellite homes is an issue . . . is it an issue that needs to be addressed?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Yes. Because I think initially when they talked about satellite homes they had talked about eight homes, and then it was taken down to two; now there's only enough money provided for one.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Gloria, I'm not sure if you're the one I should be asking this to but if you can answer fine; if you can't, that's okay.

When we're talking about safe houses . . . And so the description of the safe house that you've had to me sounds like it's an alternative healthy family setting that you're working towards. It seems to me, you know, at least I would sort of wonder how if we only have five beds there and if there's children that only stay for a short period of time — sometimes one night, two nights — I wonder how you can accomplish, sort of, the kind of counselling or skills training or whatever it may be? And I heard you mention that those were some of the things you did. How — without having a long period of time to sort of re-adapt children to new skills — how do you do that in such a short time? How will that be successful?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well like I said when we first started, our population was very transient but now the kids are staying more. They're staying longer so we are able to do a lot of the programming and providing services for them.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Is the length of time, the greatest length of time they can stay 28 days?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Thirty days.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thirty days?

**Ms. Swindler:** — No, we will extend that like we're not . . . that's just a number we gave ourselves. But if there's . . . but if they're in the process of trying to find a place that fits for them . . . like we've had to utilize Social Services, we will keep the child. Like, we had one girl who attends the Estey program — and I was going to tell Michael to mention this — she is doing really well because she's getting paid to go to school. She has money now. She doesn't need to go out of the street and try and earn money. But she stayed with us about two and a half months till she was comfortable to move on to a home.

**Mr. Quennell:** — If I may for a moment, I think they do quite a bit with limited resources, and like you say, pointing out that some children will remain there for a few days. I think that what that is called in the system is these are opportunities. These are kids asking for help and they're an opportunity and motivated in which they're seeking help. And I think it's our obligation as a society and community to respond with resources in a timely fashion in which to support them.

It's much like the adult wanting to quit drinking. He, himself, has to be motivated and that's maybe the best time to provide resources to that person. The same thing with these children, and I think maybe at sometimes just because of lack of

resources we might not be able to do the complete job.

And that's also why you need other things going on in the community. While this is a safe house a community is family, is school in the wider community. Because these communities are so marginalized and poverty, both in their own family income but also in healthy resources such as parks and community centres and things to engage healthy activities. And this is where I think that the connections need to be made with the children.

While some of it would be providing specialized services when requested by the children at the safe house but it would also be giving them accompaniments — maybe taking the children out to schools, out to other activities in the city, and opening their eyes up to opportunities — because many of the children won't leave the inner city because of racism and marginalism and poor self-esteem. So their world view, what they can dream or do dream about, is very small because they haven't been fortunate enough to see other things and to dream other dreams, the larger dreams.

And I think we really do need more money to make an immediate connection with the youth who are coming to the safe house and get them involved in other activities and also provide them supports while they might be going to school. It's going to be more of a challenge for that child to do their best in school than it would be someone coming from a healthier setting. So they would need support such as tutoring and social support to stay in school and be successful.

While we take it as sort of an indicator that they are at the safe house, they're going to school, things must be taken care of. Well in part they are, but if we can do a bit better job when these children are coming to us asking for help then it would be supplementing some of the resources. Like the concept, the idea, and the relationships are beginning, and I think we just need to support them. And I think the less . . . the good thing about these projects, and to follow them, is the lessons learned and the things that they teach us that we didn't think of.

And the children teach us by their behaviours and what they're asking of us, and we need to respond in a timely fashion and I think that's almost at the point in time where the safe house is at where they've had a year experience, they have some experience of children coming in, and they know where they need some more resources. And it's really sad to think that we can't step up to the plate and deliver to at least these 57 children.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Just one more question, and I guess, you know, certainly both of you can respond. You know we talked, like you said, a bit with . . . I have with people from the office of treaty governance. And some of the comments that were brought to our attention was its self government was something the First Nations' people are aspiring to. And they said really it's self governance that we're thinking will be really very valuable, and which translates into self care. You know, looking at self, self-reliance, and then becoming interdependent with your self-reliance, knowing your strengths and so on.

I know that throughout the province there are some Indian

bands that are really very, very productive, progressive, and successful in their development and so on, and that there's quite a lot of, I guess, wealth that is being generated.

And I'm wondering, in your sort of need to be able to figure out where resources, financial resources are going to come from, has the Saskatoon Tribal Council ever initiated talks with bands throughout the province that are successful to see whether they might be able to contribute some of their wealth to this kind of a cause?

**Mr. Quennell:** — If I may, I've had the opportunity to work up north a little bit with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and the Prince Albert Grand Council. And I think — well I think they're all First Nations and I don't want to speak on their behalf either — but I think an outsider's point of view is that they are not rich First Nations. They're doing the best with limited amounts of money at this point in time and are trying to start some economies such as up north with the lumber and mining and are going into joint ventures with the province.

Also I think, too, to recognize with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, they receive no money for off-reserve people. And the majority of off-reserve people tend to be in the younger age groups. It's due to housing on the reserves, maybe a federal policy of housing on reserves, which pushes families and young people off of First Nations and they come into the major urban settings of P.A. (Prince Albert), Saskatoon, Regina.

I guess I'm not really answering your question. I could quickly answer I don't think they have the wealth to do that.

But also the Saskatoon . . . what I would really like to say is the Saskatoon Tribal Council receives no funding for their urban services, and what they're stuck with to run a core organization, both to develop programs and deliver services such as a safe house, they're forced to take a percentage off — not that they want to — off of program dollars they would receive from various funding pools to run an office.

So they're continually challenged to actually run high quality programs because they don't have core funding to hire an administrator, receptionist, etc.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay, that's good. I haven't any more questions at this time.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I just have a couple more. But before I ask them I'm wondering if other committee members have other questions. Let's try to see if we can wrap up in about 15 . . . no more than 15 minutes.

**Mr. Harper:** — What level of funding would be available to the safe house, say, last year?

**Ms. Swindler:** — It was 287,000.

**Mr. Harper:** — \$287,000?

**Ms. Swindler:** — I think that's what it was.

**Mr. Harper:** — And where would this come from?



**Ms. Swindler:** — Justice, Saskatoon District Health Board, and Social Services.

But that money, also keep in mind, did all the renovations, setting up the safe house, everything that's required.

**Mr. Harper:** — Oh, okay. So after the initial investment what would your estimate be then of the cost of a year operation of the safe house?

**Ms. Swindler:** — I don't know. We'd probably need more than what we're getting, you know. Because we do have 19 staff, six full-time, six part-time, and the rest are casual, you know. So we're always scrambling trying to take from this . . . like our budget is set up for cultural programming, whatever. And we're always scrambling, taking from that program, that area to put into this area so that it all balances out. So, no, we're not getting enough money. We're just making do with what we have.

**Mr. Harper:** — Tight budgets.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I've got two more questions. And one relates to . . . you both made reference to the problem of poverty that these families are facing. And I'm wondering if you have any specific advice for us about what the province should be doing to tackle the poverty issues that the families that you're working with are facing and the children that you're working with are facing?

**Mr. Quennell:** — I would again, without being able to speak on it all, I would think you would need a comprehensive strategy — one that looked at children, youth, families, schools, communities, etc. I think we're at a point where you could almost map out resources that families need to grow up healthier communities . . . need to grow up healthy. And you can see large deficits in some communities.

I think, too, just thinking of poverty that we do have to deal with the issue of culture. And that First Nations — that is including status, non-status, and Metis — have gone under rapid social changes in the past 100 years and that their family and social fabrics have been taken apart and we're sort of seeing the ramifications of it.

And that's, I guess . . . not only does our system need to change towards reflecting the needs and aspirations of children and youth, because our current system is based on an adult needs-based systems and doesn't necessarily reflect the way children and youth grow up.

I think the same thing has to be said about Aboriginal peoples as well. Our system is based on a Western-European model of culture, etc., and in many instances it's not appropriate to the Aboriginal culture. And we have to make some of our services more appropriate, especially considering that they're going to make up 35 to 40 per cent of our population in 25 years. And it's also a way of dealing with many of the social problems that we're dealing with right now with self esteem and loss in society and hopelessness etc.

I actually think that — I'll stop; I'm too long-winded on this — but I actually think when we think of things like an adult, or an

Aboriginal employment strategy, unless we really do something about culture, we're selling Aboriginal people short. To give people a job and not allow them their culture, basically your self-esteem, your concept of self and community is wrong. And I think we need to keep that in mind when we develop solutions and want to develop strategies out there that they have to . . . it has to take culture into consideration.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Could I just do a supplementary to that? Then the people that know best about that, about employment that's culturally related and how that might come about, are the Aboriginal people themselves. So what kind of opportunity do they have, or have they taken, to be able to present that to significant people in our society like government or whoever may need to know that and possibly try to facilitate some development of those opportunities?

Like I'm just sort of saying that if . . . you know, what you're mentioning is that we have to be careful that we don't sort of continue to try to offer employment, some sort of job or whatever, that we deem is the job or whatever.

**Mr. Quennell:** — I don't think that there's . . . I wasn't talking necessarily about culturally appropriate careers or jobs or whatever, but I think that we have to provide . . . some of our public institutions have to reflect Aboriginal culture. Our school system has to respect Aboriginal culture and content etc., and I think we can . . . our own society can learn a lot from Aboriginal culture as well, and vice versa.

I wasn't trying and . . . I know you're not saying this. I'm not talking about particular jobs for Aboriginal people, I'm talking about providing cultural resources in society generally for them, that . . . much like we have, that we just sort of take for granted . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me? Sure.

I'm talking too much; I'll be quiet.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Like I said before, I worked in a young offender facility and providing our youth and children with the history of their people and what has happened in the history, in their history, they need to understand where the breakdowns happen because a lot of kids don't understand what happened. Like I for a long time, personally, could not understand . . . like I could never put my finger on it that there was this sadness on our reserve but what for? Like I couldn't understand.

But as I become more educated and understood my history, I knew what that sadness was, you know, what it was. So our children need to understand their history, need to understand where they came from, need to understand what happened, and then from there they will understand their parents as well. Not that they have to make excuses for their parents or whatever, but the reality is this is what has happened. And in order for our people to start getting better, they need to go back and understand where they came from. And that, I think, is very important.

Another part that I want to talk about is foster care. We need to have more Aboriginal families involved in foster care. But a lot of our people . . . a lot of my people are not self-sufficient. They cannot . . . this is like a job for them. So the foster . . . the whole

payment system has to change as well. You know it needs to get away from that middle-class, white middle-class, paying system where, you know, dad was working out of the home and every now and then, like six weeks down the road, the cheque would come in and that's okay.

A lot of Aboriginal families are interested in taking care of Aboriginal children, but they cannot do it with a paycheque that comes in every six weeks. And these are good people; they will provide good homes.

That's all I have to say.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thanks for sharing that experience with us.

I have one more question and that relates to kids not in school. And, Michael, earlier you were making reference to what might be done at earlier ages to address the needs of children not in school. Some of the youth that are obviously staying at the safe house and other youth who are involved in the sex trade who are in that sort of 12-, 13-, 14-, 15-year-old age group are not in school. Some of them are; some of them aren't.

Do you have any suggestions about what we should be doing as a society and as a government to address the needs of kids who are in that older age group but are still of a compulsory school attendance age and who are not in school right now? Do either of you have any comments on that?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well you know a lot of the kids that, you know — and I'm not just saying this — a lot of the kids that are at the safe house are in school. That's the only good part they'll tell you that they have going for them is that they're in school. And the ones that aren't, are pushing to get back into school.

So to continue, I guess, to place an importance on education for the young people, like they . . . What was the question again? Sorry, Peter.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Well for those who are not in school, I mean presumably and this may be . . . I mean I continue to be impressed about how many of the kids who have been pulled into the sex trade are attending school. But I'm also conscious of the issue you raised, Michael, which is that there's a lot of kids who are not in school. And some of them are involved in the sex trade obviously. And all of the children who are not in school are at risk of being drawn in to criminal activity, substance and drug abuse, the sex trade.

Do you have any advice on what we do for kids who are . . . You know you offered some advice about what we do for younger kids to get them school-ready and to get them excited about school. What do we do to respond to the needs of children who are in that 11- to 15-year-old age group and are not attending school, and are obviously at very high risk of being pulled into activities like this?

**Mr. Quennell:** — You have some projects which you could look at. The alternative school program at Estey, they have a junior and senior program for kids. Egadz also runs a program. Again it's providing alternative education and it could serve

many different groups of kids. It could serve as a place for kids who can't possibly learn in the classroom setting as it is now and need an alternative situation, such as the kids with FAE and FAS.

It could also be a place where kids who have been out of the school system for a little while, return to school gradually at such a centre, pick up one or two classes, and then through encouragement and support maybe go to a school that has — such as community schools do — have a range of supports in the school such as a daycare. They have addiction workers, nurses, etc. And you can feed them back into the school system that way as well.

But again I think you have to provide some resources right now in a different manner than just the school setting. Because they're not in school for a reason, these 1,300 children. And some of them are forced out by the system because they're deemed as too difficult to deal with. So after nominal count happens in the fall time, they're gently pushed out of the system.

Some kids leave because they don't want to be there. They don't see a purpose, they don't see a future in school, and it gets boring for them. And life on the street might be a little bit more exciting and challenging. Maybe school isn't very challenging for them as well.

And then the whole issue of surviving. Whether you're having to come from an unsafe home, whether you have enough food in your stomach to concentrate, whether you've been able to sleep the night before, etc. — there's all these deterrents of their success at school.

And while we can't maybe fill them all immediately, there are some things that we can do such as alternative school settings, etc. And also resources for them to do things that kids just need to do to grow up to be healthy — sports, recreation, dance. Things to make them feel good about themselves, some self-esteem.

I saw a program actually in Edmonton and a man started it for street kids. And he used drama to draw kids out because in school you're always judged — math, science, how your marks are. He used drama to get the kids to begin to talk about their lives and develop their self-esteem. And then they developed interest in going back to school.

To talk about another program — if I may, just for a couple of seconds — is the Saskatoon Tribal Council parenting program. There you have young mothers struggling — marginalization, loss of parenting skills, etc. — but as their kid . . . as they watch their child develop in the program, as they develop in the program, many of these young mothers — they're 17, 20, 25 years old — they want to go back to school too. They not only want to see their kids in school; they want to go back to school too. And providing some adult basic education late in the afternoon or evening, etc. with some child care support, etc. provides confidence for the mother, provides confidence for the child as well.

You can look at some of the successes at Nutana Collegiate

where they have support for the parents and their children. And these are young mothers. Like in Nutana, I believe there's 115 young mothers in a population of 500 children. And many of these are inner-city kids. But these are kids that Nutana School has provided them the support, the structure in lives that they know they can go back in consistency and always get help, even when they leave school.

It's much like the safe house. It's building those relationships, that consistency, that you're there for them all the time. That it's just not a stop-gap thing. And when you think of us growing up to be healthy — you know, we had family, we have support, you have high school — you have these transitions in life and the supports. And that's what's missing for a lot of these kids.

We have short-term help for them. We have a 28-day addiction program and then we stick them back in the community without any sort of resources or information in support of how to build on what they've gone through. And I think that's what we need to do. We need to fill out the program a bit more for them.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I just wanted to ask your opinion on the location of — maybe, I don't know if you'd call it a safe house — but when we're talking about sort of a comprehensive look at all of this in the province and we're talking about having an integrated system . . . I know in other jurisdictions, Ontario, actually, Alberta, and Manitoba, they have got part of the healing, the time going through healing. And I'm not quite sure just what part it is, whether it's detox or whether it's skills training or whatever. But they have them in locations outside of the cities. Because a lot of the girls that may go through detox within the city and so on — and I presume this would be older girls — find that there is the lure of the streets still there and the environment is still there and the fear is there.

So rather than stay in that environment, they've found that it's just more successful and better for the girls to be outside of major centres where the activity has been prevalent and where their pimps are.

So I know in Manitoba they've started something outside of Winnipeg, I believe it is. And I'm just wondering what your thoughts are as far as a part of the healing journey being maybe possibly in a setting where there would be maybe a bit of ranch style situations so that some of the skills and so on that they need to learn and a certain comfort zone with nature and that kind of thing is available.

Do you envision that as part of the healing treatment that could be beneficial. And I want to know if you're thinking certain age groups, what age group do you think that that kind of thing would be, you know, sort of a . . . something like they might have at Ranch Ehrlo, outside of Regina. If we need more of that kind of thing, then you know, do you think that's necessary?

Because I'm just reflecting back, Gloria, on you mentioning that all the kids are . . . they're used to the inner city, they don't want to go too far away and that kind of thing because that's home. But the question is, is that the healthiest thing for them, because the negative environment that they were in is so readily available still and they can still be back in it?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Like I said before, the children would like to see a group home setting for them because they don't see foster care as an alternative because they have their own mom, they have their own dad, and you know, that's too alien for them. But for . . . if it was to be outside of the city, it would probably be good as long as it was set up as a group home.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. Specifically for drug and alcohol rehab for instance, if there were young people that needed that as part of their healing journey, do you see that it would be more beneficial for that to be inside of a city or outside of the city?

**Ms. Swindler:** — Well with kids that have succeeded in the treatment programs, and drug and alcohol are ones that are tended on reserve, to honour their . . . so.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay, that's what, you know, we needed to know. Whether or not government ends up doing something to help or whether it's non-government organizations, community people and so on — we need to know where the best setting is.

**Mr. Quennell:** — If I may though, I think that's temporary and we really need to look at why we need to take them away from the community in the first place is because it's unsafe and there aren't resources for them in the community. And to take them away and to heal their chemical addiction to a drug doesn't address the social causes of why they got on the drug in the first place. And I think we need to start up setting up healing or healthy places for these kids in the inner city as well.

And addiction issues as well. And I guess you can get advice from people in the addictions field. Addiction-free children and youth are quite different than for adults. With an adult who has been addicted, you're saturated in drugs and the whole detoxification of getting off drugs is a much longer period of time.

With children, what you're dealing with is a lot of anger and rage and some addictions. For them to get off the drugs is a lot shorter period of time. What you really need is the social support and trust in building a relationship which I think would take place best . . . some of it would take place where they live in the community and making that place a healthier place than shipping them someplace else. Sort of trying to fix them and then having them come back to the same communities and struggle with the same set of circumstances.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I think, you know, a person might have to specify whether they're girls or young men that have been sexually abused and would be say maybe between the ages of 16 and 18, you know, rather than . . . We might have to specify because we're looking at the safe house here as being a safe, comfortable, warm, home setting for children that have come in whether they've been sexually abused or not.

And their whole issue of sexual abuse is very fearful to girls that are afraid of pimps and afraid of, you know . . . if they're not on the street, they're in big-time trouble. Like we've been told that sometimes it's better to be away from the environment for part of the healing process.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you for the really major contribution you've made to this process. Gloria, thank you; thank you, Michael. We're very grateful to you for taking a large part of your afternoon to help us. We hope you'll feel when we're done that the time was well spent.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you very much.

**Ms. Swindler:** — Come see the safe house if you have time.

**The committee recessed for a period of time.**

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Ladies and gentlemen, welcome, and we want to say how very pleased we are that all of you are here. There's an issue, as many of you know, in our province that we feel it absolutely necessary to deal with and that's the abuse and exploitation of children on the streets. And we will start by introducing the committee members to you and also after that we will introduce the presenters that are here with us this evening.

My name is Arlene Julé. I'm the MLA from Humboldt and I'm co-chairing the committee.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I'm Peter Prebble. I'm the member of the legislature for Saskatoon Greystone. I want to thank you very much for coming. And we're also going to introduce the other committee members. Why don't you go ahead, Arlene.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — All right. Just seated to my far left there in the wonderfully bright pink jacket is Ms. June Draude; June is the MLA from Kelvington-Wadena. And sitting next to her is Mr. Kevin Yates, and Kevin is the MLA from Regina Dewdney. Ron Harper is to my right, and Ron is the MLA from Regina Northeast.

There are two committee members that were not able to be present with us tonight. They are Ms. Caroline Jones — she's the MLA from Saskatoon Meewasin; and as well Mr. Don Toth who is the MLA from Moosomin.

We will just mention to you now the mandate of the committee and the committee's key principles.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I'll just review the key principles of the committee and that is, first of all, the principle that every child is everyone's responsibility and that it takes a community to raise a child, and that we're all responsible for all our children in the community.

Secondly, the principle that the involvement of children in the sex trade is child abuse. It's not child prostitution — it's child sexual abuse and exploitation.

And we've been trying to, as I know, have all of our groups in the community working on this issue. As a special committee, we're trying to drive that point home.

And thirdly the zero tolerance of child sexual abuse is our objective as a special legislative committee. Arlene, do you want to review the committee tasks?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — The committee was set up as a Special Committee To Prevent The Abuse And Exploitation Of Children Through The Sex Trade. So the tasks of the committee — it has been determined — is to address and to make recommendations to stop the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade within Saskatchewan. The committee will consider, and they'll report on, consultations with stakeholders that have an interest and seek their . . . and will seek their input on the next steps that we have to take here in Saskatchewan to deal with this issue.

The committee will also consider and report on the strategies employed by other jurisdictions in Canada and the effectiveness of the approaches that are taking place there. And we'll also be considering and reporting on the reasons why children end up on the street in the first place.

And so we have a public hearing process, and in order to facilitate that we intend to listen to the views and concerns of Saskatchewan's residents including the youth. And there will be consultations in the three main urban centres in Saskatchewan, but as well there will be consultations with people in the smaller areas that are affected by the issue because all of us are affected by this issue.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — You may want to make note of this web site because on the web site for those of you who have access to the web you can get the full *Hansard* proceedings of the special committee. So the web site is posted here, and I'll just ask Randy if he'll leave it up on the screen for a minute so that those of you who'd like to get the proceedings can write it down.

Also on the screen you'll see our address, you can get in contact with us by writing to members of the committee and to our technical adviser, Randy Pritchard, at Room 239 in the Legislative Building. And you can see the phone number there as well, which is 787-4003. So if you, in addition to contacting Arlene and myself and any other member of the committee that you might wish to be in touch with personally, you also can communicate directly with the committee by contacting Randy Pritchard at this number.

And I should formally introduce you, Randy, although I think most people know who you are. But Randy is our technical staff person and Margaret Woods, is our committee Clerk — thank you Margaret — from the Legislative Assembly Office. So Margaret is one of the three staff people who give us support, not only in the Legislative Assembly when the legislature is sitting, but also in these special committees.

And with that I'm going to turn it back to Arlene to ask our first witness to come forward.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. We have with us tonight and we're really very appreciative and more than appreciative to have these young people from this area come to present to us their stories. And we have a young woman named Sarah and a young woman named Chasity who will be presenting. And accompanying them is Jacqui Barclay from the Saskatoon District Health, Outreach.

We just want to mention, Sarah and Chasity, that we all have — most of us anyway — have children and that we're pretty ordinary people. So we hope you'll feel really comfortable and know that you can certainly take your time and present to us those things that you think it'll be really helpful and valuable for us to hear. So if you'd like to come forward and just sit at the table up here, there are microphones where we can hear you a little bit better.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you for coming before our committee. Chasity, thank you for coming and for bringing your baby; it's pretty special.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So we'll just ask whoever is prepared to begin just to begin and feel like you're sitting in your living room on your couch and you're talking to people that really love you, because we do.

**Sarah:** — Okay. You can hear me right? Okay. All right. Hi, my name is Sarah. I met most of you and you already might know my personal story, what I went through in my life. I would like to tell you the positive side of my experience.

Like many young people in the sex trade I went through shame, hurt, pain, and loneliness. When I was 16 years old, I quit the sex trade because I was sick of depending my life on the streets. The streets is a cruel place where there's violence and people don't respect you.

For a while I had money to take care of my needs, but it mainly went to my addiction. I was used by my friends and my boyfriend, and I was always pressured to get money and it became my first thought in the morning when I woke up. Even when I wasn't working, there were johns who would try to pick me up. It was always in the back of my mind.

I don't want to blame my family or anyone else, because it was my choice to sell my body. I did not know the consequences or what would happen to me. Each moment it took away my childhood, my innocence, trust, beauty, and my ability to grow inside.

When I quit I did not heal right away. But I had one hope, maybe it wasn't too late for me to be a normal teenager. But I wasn't, because it made me different from other normal teens. I did not go on dates with boyfriends or hang out with a group of friends and have normal fun. Inside I felt so old for my age. I skipped a part of my growth. I felt like 20 or 30 years old.

The feelings I felt were hopelessness, anger, depression, and oppression from my family's problems. It was tough to quit because my friends were still in it. I had to give up my friends because they were unhealthy. It left a big void in my life and I was very lonely and had no money to care of myself. My dad didn't have enough money to give me and my sister because my mother left us.

But somehow I survived with the willpower not to work, to go back on the streets. It wasn't easy, or magically healed overnight, or took a 10-week program. Someone who has been doing drugs or has been working on the streets for years usually doesn't heal or quit overnight. It takes years to heal and regain

self-esteem, and to find at least one person to believe in you and show they really care.

But what helped me to heal was talking about it. At first I didn't trust no one because I'd been hurt so much. One day I was reading a newspaper and there was a healing circle to talk about being in the sex trade. This was the first step for me to trust someone. This healing circle talked about issues in the sex trade.

After the healing circle one of the ladies I met asked if I want to go to Out from the Shadows into the Light: International Summit of Sexually Exploited Youth in March 7 to 12, '98.

This experience changed my life. At first it was painful and hard to talk about it because I'd been hurt so much. I wasn't alone no more because it happened to many young people around the world. We realized we need to find a way to change how society treats us.

This summit was a safe place where we were accepted and no one tried to change us. Within time I learned to empower myself and I wanted to help other youth because one person gave me a chance to accept me for who I am.

We have to stop discriminating sexually exploited youth and children. Sexually exploited youth and children shouldn't been seen as victims because they can learn to empower themselves. They need time to learn and find love inside and to start to heal.

Many sexually exploited youth are still suffering from oppression, and poverty, and self-esteem. All it takes is for one person to make a difference in one person's life. I don't want you to see me as a victim but as a person who survived. And that's everything. Thank you.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you, Sarah. Thank you very much. Sarah, if you don't mind, just after Chasity speaks to us, then the committee will ask you maybe a few things just to help us to become more knowledgeable and to make sure that we have the right path to helping people like yourself and to empowering you.

Okay, and Chasity could you . . .

**Chasity:** — I'm Chasity, and I'm 16 now. The first time I started working on the streets I was nine. Why did I do it? To support myself. I had no one to depend on. I was somebody . . . I was an adult trapped in a nine-year-old's body. I had no respect for myself. I had no respect for anybody.

I started doing drugs. I was 12 when I first started. It wasn't easy at first, but it wasn't . . . I got used to it after a while. First thing I did in the morning was have a fix, and last thing I did at night was have a fix.

I had no self-esteem. When I first started trying to straighten out, it didn't work. So I'd try again. And I'd try again. And I'd try again. And every time I went back thinking it'll work this time. It'll work. Somebody will be there for me. But it never.

I was 14 when I got pregnant with my little girl, and that's what

straightened me out. She's one now. And April 23 of '98 was the last time I got high, pulled a trick, drink, any of that. On January 30 I had my little boy. Still, you hear people, oh she ain't going to make it, she ain't going to make it. She's going to go back to her old ways. She'll give up her kids. I couldn't imagine it.

There's — I don't know how you'd put it — there's nothing out there. There's absolutely nothing out there that I want besides my babies. That's it.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you both for speaking to us and speaking out. It takes a lot of courage to come forward and testify before a special committee. And we really, really appreciate it. And we have a great deal of respect for your courage and your inner strength in pulling yourself out of extremely difficult circumstances at a very young age. You're both very special people.

Jacqui did you want to say anything before we ask questions?

**Ms. Barclay:** — Actually, it's up to the committee. I did have a presentation if you wanted to hear that and then ask questions. Or if you wanted to ask some questions now. I'm hoping that we'll have a chance to hear from Chasity and Sarah about some of the things that they felt were important or what worked or what's needed.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Why don't you go ahead too, Jacqui. If that's all right with . . . Sarah, is that all right with you? And with you, Chasity? Is that okay if Jacqui speaks too? And then we'll ask you all questions together.

**Ms. Barclay:** — Okay, thank you. I did have some copies of my presentation.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — While we are just waiting for these to be handed out, I just wanted to say a special welcome to the Child Advocate who is with us tonight, Deborah Parker-Loewen . . . Deborah Loewen-Parker. I'm never quite sure what it is Deborah, but it's good to have you here.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Her husband, Rob, is here too.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — And her husband, Rob. Sorry. As well I know that there are people that work with Deborah that are here too. Welcome to all of you.

**Ms. Barclay:** — To begin with I'd like to thank members of the legislative committee for the opportunity for our Street Outreach program from Public Health Services, Saskatoon District Health, having the opportunity to present this evening. And I should mention besides the other hat that I was wearing this afternoon, working with one of the working groups, I am a street outreach worker with the Street Outreach program with Public Health.

And Public Health Services established our Street Outreach program in 1990 as a disease prevention and health promotion response to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. We started out basically as a project that was seen as a need, and we now have evolved into . . . recently into being an actual

program under Public Health Services. We have here tonight Maureen Laurie, who's my supervisor, who has done a lot to establish and make ourselves a full-fledged program.

I should also mention that we operate . . . although I'm a street outreach worker, we have a couple of other casual street outreach workers, and we have both a full-time and a part-time public health nurse who goes out on a regular basis with us. And so we have kind of a combined experience with the workers who work with the program in areas of social work, community development, and as I mentioned, a nursing component.

Faced with the threat of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome), it was realized if Saskatoon hoped to contain the spread of this disease it was critical to devote attention to those engaging in high-risk behaviour — those who are often hardest to reach. And our program focuses on reaching out and making services accessible to street-involved youth, sex trade workers — both male and female — and injection drug users; and this is of all ages.

And some of the philosophy and principles of our program — I thought I would mention a few of those areas because it kind of is instructive in terms of how we try to carry out our work on the streets. When we actually make contact with children and youth, the first thing we try to do is build trust and gain confidence. With any of the people we work with we do not judge them, but we accept them where each person is at. And we begin our work with individuals respecting where they are at.

We recognized, if we want to reach out and make connection with children and youth on the streets, that we have to go where they are and not expect them to come to us. And the philosophy of the outreach program is we actually have a van that enables us to go out through different parts of the city where we can be waved down, or go to different places so that we're actually out there on the streets.

We have realized that we need to find creative, non-threatening ways of establishing contact and trust, because we often act as the first contact or a lifeline. And that's been something that's been mentioned both in terms of ourselves and Egadz. When you're actually a street outreach programmer right out there, you sometimes become a first contact with those who are hardest to reach, who might not have a tendency to access conventional services or programs, whether it be health or, you know, financial or whatever.

Our program is based on the philosophy of harm reduction. And I thought I would spend a little bit of time dealing with that because it's so important and there's often misconceptions about harm reduction measures.

The basic underlying principle of harm reduction is to reduce the risk or harm to one's health and one's life. It recognizes and respects the reality of where each person is at. And that doesn't mean that we approve of or agree with the person's involvement in the sex trade or their involvement within drug use. But rather than judge a person we accept the reality of

where they're at in their present life situation and we try to work to help encourage and support healthier lifestyles.

For instance, by providing condoms to individuals engaged in high-risk behaviour, one can reduce the risk of contracting HIV, AIDS, hepatitis, and other STDs (sexually transmitted disease). By immunizing for hepatitis B, one protects high-risk people from the harm of contracting hepatitis B.

By ensuring clean needles are available if someone is going to inject drugs, one helps prevent the spread of HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis C and B. By providing referrals to the methadone program, where appropriate, one reduces the harm of contracting HIV, AIDS, or hepatitis through injecting drugs by no longer shooting up at all.

And by referring children and youth to the safe house, which you had a presentation earlier this afternoon, one ensures a safe place for sexually exploited children and youth to escape the dangers and uncertainties of the street, even if it's just for a night or two.

One thing, despite what some might assume, the principles of harm reduction aren't inconsistent with abstinence-based 12-step programs or treatment centres. Rather harm reduction measures can be part of a continuum and range of intervention strategies for help. Likewise traditional healing methods in terms of the Aboriginal community . . . harm reduction measures aren't inconsistent with that philosophy either.

Harm reduction also means providing . . . means we try to reduce the dangers, risks, and harm associated with street life while living life on the streets. It also means providing referrals and support for those trying to escape the street life altogether.

So in the spirit of harm reduction, any child or youth drawn into the sex trade will be safest from harm if they manage to escape the street life altogether. Away from the control and violence of pimps or away from the violence of sexual predators.

We moved from the risk of diseases caused by unsafe sexual encounters. Likewise helping youth break away from a lifestyle of drugs altogether one reduces the dangers associated with the abuse of drugs such as accidental overdoses, unsafe injection practices, and drug-related violence.

Earlier this afternoon we were talking about some of the reasons — and it was really good to have the testimony from Sarah and Chasity— we talked about how each youth or child has their own story and reasons why they end up on the streets and why they might continue to be there.

However, through our work there have been some common underlying root causes that have been identified. And one of them is the hardship of poverty, both as it affects the families but also if you're within a disadvantaged community and there's not very many options that are seen. Children and youth can end up engaging in survival sex to end up meeting basic needs.

A lack of economic and education chances. Children and youth can't see a way out of their life situation or any future and they

can lose the hope to dream of a different life. Likewise racism, which is systemic to our society, has a big impact. Children and youth can become deprived of their sense of pride and cultural identity associated with their ancestry.

Becoming caught up in the vicious cycle of addictions. Children and youth can get high to be able to go out and work the streets. In order to work the streets, you have to become numb, or you become high to numb yourself or to cope and escape the pain. It can become a vicious cycle because you get addicted and you have to stay on the streets to get that high.

Family cycles of abuse and addictions can traumatize and scar youth and children. Likewise the whole experience of being on the youth . . . (inaudible) . . . like Sarah referred to, creates scars that have to be healed over a life.

It can damage a sense of self worth often leading to feelings of self-hatred or self-loathing. And if a child or youth doesn't have sense of self-worth then it's pretty hard to have any hope, or to, you know, to feel that you're deserving of help, that you're worth it.

Some of the services that we provide through our program are anonymous testing for HIV, AIDS, screening for hepatitis B and C, immunization for hepatitis B, education regarding the prevention of STDs, hepatitis B and C, and HIV/AIDS. We do contact tracing and notification of infected partners. We do pregnancy testing, counselling and referrals, birth control counselling. And as mentioned, condom distribution, and education on safer sex for disease prevention and contraception.

We operate the city's only needle exchange and have a collection of used needles for prevention of HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis. We do education on safe handling and disposal of needles within the community. We respond to calls about needles found in the community. We do crisis counselling and referrals regarding addictions, abuse, violence; medical, a lot of medical; suicide, coping with HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis.

We do education and support about healthier lifestyle choices and harm reduction strategies. We try to keep a network of different community agencies and services which we can do referrals to.

Some of the obstacles . . . or when I was going through some of the things that you wanted to talk about I was thinking about some of the obstacles or issues of being involved on the streets, because that was one of the areas or questions that were asked.

And again we talked about it earlier through our working group how these children and youth are not selling their bodies out on the street by choice, can fail to see how a child of 10 or 11, or even a youth of 15 years, can make an informed choice to sell their bodies. They cannot legally or morally consent so it's not a real choice.

The sexual exploitation of children and youth through the sex trade does not happen in isolation. A child or youth does not suddenly wake up one morning and decide to sell their body on the streets. It is a symptom of much larger social problems which I referred to earlier. And this is where attention must be

drawn. We need to attack the underlying root causes that lead children and youth to the streets.

Society needs to stop blaming and criminalizing these children and youth. Criminalization creates another obstacle and mark against them. Instead society needs to recognize and treat them as the real victims they are. The children and youth are in need of compassion and help not condemnation and punishment, and they're deserving and in need of programs and services directed at helping them in the recovery and healing.

And we talked before as well about the need to also keep in mind work with the families and the community. Each and every time a sexual predator picks upon or picks up a child or youth, he destroys a piece of that young one's spirit and sense of self-worth. There's a lack of resources directed to meet the particular needs of children and youth and also their families.

Most recently, there is a study highlighting the hidden problem of homelessness, particularly for youth. And that also relates or ties in to the whole situation of children and youth ending up in the streets.

In some situations we've had contact or work with young people who have ended up with no place to stay and they've ended up either crashing with a whole bunch of other youth in a apartment or place that someone might have, or sometimes they might end up in a situation of trying to find a way to stay at a place of a trick or a john or of the person that they're with. They'll end up staying at a place in exchange for sexual favours by the sexual predators. So definitely that's a whole area that needs to be looked at.

Earlier we talked as well about the whole area of education. Many children and youth have been disinvited from school because the education system fails to respond to and meet their particular needs.

Street outreach programs can exist and serve as a first line of contact or a lifeline, sometimes the only lifeline in relationship of trust for those trying to improve their life situation. So that's one of the programs, the services, that's out there.

What also works for children and youth at risk are outreach initiatives through addiction services and mental health being able to apply the same concept of having outreach initiatives mentioned earlier. And Egadz will probably talk about this tomorrow — how they have counsellors, addictions workers, who actually come and spend time at the youth centre or, you know, will be at a hospital or that. Be in some area of contact where youth and children can approach them.

Sarah mentioned before about healing being a lifelong journey, and that there's no quick fixes. A child or youth might end up going in and out of a safe house or treatment or counselling a few times. They might be able to distance themselves from the streets only to get caught up in the cycle again. But this is not a failure. Rather it is part of the healing process, and each time one goes back, they have learned important skills and found new strength.

You must realize that there's a lot of hurts and wounds that

have been endured from the past. And when you learn of some of the things that some of these children and youth have gone through, you realize it's going to take time. And we have to be prepared to work with and accompany them at each stage that they seek our support or help.

The safe house has existed as a bright light of hope for many. And you heard a presentation before . . . I guess I just want to emphasize that for us being involved in street outreach work, having a safe place to be able to go and provide children and youth with some stability and a chance to escape the streets, even for a time, is really important.

It also provides a chance and the peace of mind to make some important life decisions while they're stabilizing patterns of life. And I mentioned earlier this afternoon, any time or any night that a child or youth stays at the safe house is a night that they've been safe, you know, from the dangers of the streets.

Egadz will be making a presentation tomorrow, but I'll have to mention that they've existed as a resource within the city for children and youth to turn to. And we work in co-operation with them both in terms of the street outreach program and the youth centre.

I'd also like to mention the diversity of housing choices which responds to the particular needs of street-involved youths, such as Pleasant Hill Place by Quint and My Home, which is coordinated through Egadz with Social Services. And I'm not sure who the other partners are, but those are housing initiatives that respond to particular needs of the youth.

There was talk a few months back about City Centre Partnership — and that's the tribal council, the Metis Nation urban council, city of Saskatoon, and Saskatoon District Health — where they're having a health and recreation centre. And that exists . . . the concept there is to have many partners coming together and to provide alternatives for youth to go instead of being on the streets.

And they'll have cross-training where you've got . . . maybe you've got a recreation worker who has training in the addictions area. And so if you build up a trust, if you have a game of basketball or if you're playing volleyball and you have a good connection with this person, they might be somebody that you can trust to open up to if you're looking for some help or assistance for yourself or for your family.

Culturally appropriate services and programs that recognize that the majority of children and youth being exploited on the streets here are Metis or First Nations ancestry. We have the STC (Saskatoon Tribal Council) Family Centre, Sandi spoke earlier, the Family Healing Circle Lodge, Building A Nation, a lot of different programs within the community.

Also alternative and community schools. Following contact, many street-involved youth not in school have gone back — and there's alternative schools such as Nutana, Estey School, Joe Duquette School — and community schools have proven their success because they have designed programs and services to respond to the particular needs of children.



And it would be interesting maybe to get a presentation from a place like Nutana, for example, where they've got integrated services and they bring together Social Services, financial workers, mental health workers or counsellors, addictions specialists. They have people trained in different areas that are right there at the school that can provide the support.

In terms of recommendations to Legislative Assembly, one of the things that we want to emphasize is that you need to keep a balance of intervention and prevention. We can't give up on the children and youth who are out there on the streets or who have been sexually exploited, we need programs and services and resources for them. But we also need to look at the whole area of prevention to prevent high-risk youth from ending up on the streets.

There still exists a need for diversity of housing alternatives to meet different shelter needs. There is a need for longer term, community-based holistic substance abuse initiatives. We need substance abuse initiatives which deal with the child and youth as well as their families where necessary.

We need programs to deal with multiple issues of abuse, substance abuse, and the whole street culture that children and youth become involved in. And I think Sarah really spoke well about how often any individual who breaks away from the street has to give up a whole network, sometimes their friends or people that they've trusted.

In terms of legislation, our program has no official position regarding the desirability or effectiveness of the Alberta and Manitoba legislation relevant to the sexual exploitation of children and youth. There are a couple of comments that should be mentioned, however.

Alberta's legislation which provides for the detention of children and youth for 72 hours is not enough time even to detox. One can't force life change or do someone's healing; the healing has to be done when the person is ready and we can be there as a catalyst and a support.

The Manitoba legislation regarding seizing vehicles of sexual predators also has had its problems. Late last week it was reported at a meeting by a superintendent with Saskatoon Police Services that a total of 68 vehicles had been seized under this legislation; of the 68 the court had to return 67 under challenge.

However having said that, we are pleased to see that your legislative committee has adopted a broad-based consultative process to review and evaluate both pieces of legislation and other relevant legislation. Furthermore we commend your committee for consulting with front-line service providers, street-involved youth, and former street-involved persons regarding the effectiveness of this legislation.

This is a couple areas of consideration, too, that I wanted to mention and that's the whole area of working in partnership. We need to have various levels and departments of government as well as different community voices and organizations working in co-operation to effectively deal with this issue. None of us can do it on our own; we need a diversity of agencies with different resources and expertise to come

together.

We need to find ways to help strengthen and rebuild the self-worth of children and youth who have been victimized. We must never give up. When asked what made the difference in escaping the streets and turning lives around, many have replied: having someone or somewhere to turn to or knowing that someone cared. And this helps to keep one's hope and spirit alive.

The whole area of recognizing and identifying one's self as victims of sexual exploitation has had a powerful impact because children and youth who have been sexually exploited realize that they're not to blame, and that they're not bad or they're not unworthy.

And the whole area I guess, in conclusion, was supporting the youth finding their voice and being able to speak out and be listened to. And Cherry Kingsley said it best. She said if you just look at us as victims, you fail to see us as potential leaders and you fail to see us as a valuable resource in helping to come up with solutions. And again Sarah had mentioned the importance of not just looking at being victims but being able to speak out. We need to give them the chance to share their stories and realities and be listened to

And I guess that's what I would like to say in closing is members of this special legislative committee are to be commended for your active concern and commitment to dealing with this pressing issue. You're to be commended for raising the profile and urgency of dealing with the issue by establishing this all-party committee.

When you have sexual predators out there who are preying on children and youth, all children and youth are at risk. No child or youth is free from risk or danger. Your work is therefore of great importance.

And I'd like to close by saying may the Creator help guide your deliberations with wisdom and compassion, and may the spirit of protecting our children and youth guide your recommendations. Thank you.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you Jacqui.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I think we'll certainly express one more time our gratitude for you coming and our respect for you and our love for you. We're going to have the members of the committee ask some questions. As you spoke, there were probably things that came to their minds that they would like to ask you about. And in doing that, remember we are all one and we need to hear from you. We're going to just ask members of the committee now to pose comments or questions. And then if you can help us out by just giving us your views on what we're asking that would be of great help and assistance.

So Ron, would you like to start?

**Mr. Harper:** — Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. My question is for both Sarah and Chasity. Did you at any time when you were working on the streets, did you at any time consider approaching a police officer to seek assistance in leaving the

street?

**Sarah:** — No, it never entered my mind. I didn't know, like, where to find help or who to ask. And you know, I didn't want to talk about my problems to anybody too. And well, I never thought about foster care; I never heard of care and stuff like that. So it just never entered my mind or no one said, you know, it was wrong what you're doing, like, it's wrong.

But I had people call me a hooker and a whore and, you know, put me down because I was working on the street and stuff. But they never told me it was wrong or you know, it was like . . . I didn't know. I had no one talking to me. I was very isolated.

**Mr. Harper:** — You didn't see the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officer or the police officer as somebody that you could approach and feel a degree of comfort in asking for assistance or asking for direction for assistance?

**Sarah:** — No, because we just saw them as like they can just charge you with prostitution and stuff. So we were cautious not to go into government cars and stuff like that because we could tell that they were undercover. So I never met a police officer who was nice enough like that.

I'm not saying they are all bad or nothing like that, you know. But it never happened like in my experience.

**Mr. Harper:** — Okay. Chasity, would it be the same for you? You never thought . . .

**Chasity:** — I've always seen them as someone to arrest me. You can't open up to them. Still now, I still get rude comments from cops that know me: Oh, Chasity, we'll see your kids in a couple of years. Things like that.

**Mr. Harper:** — Is that right?

My next question is that, in your opinion, do you think that had you been detained by a police officer for a period of time — and I have no idea what that period of time might be, whether it be 24 hours or 72 hours or a week — do you think that would have encouraged you to leave the streets and seek assistance elsewhere?

**Sarah:** — It happened to me. Like they took me home because I was under age; I was 15. And if you're 16, you're supposed to carry ID (identification). And they took me home, and they told my father. Mobile Crisis took me home and they asked, you know, we saw your daughter working on 21st, you know. She's a prostitute, is what they told her. And I got in trouble by what they said to me and they were very embarrassed and humiliated, yes. And it didn't help me at all, like. They did ask me, like, you know, do you have someone pimping you and stuff like that, you know.

But, you know, I was being pimped by a girl and she was my best friend at the time. I thought she was my best friend. But I was too afraid to admit that it was a girl who was pimping me, and it could be your own friends who's a pimp too. And it took me two years to speak her name and my boyfriend's name because I was so scared they'll come and hurt me again.

And because some of these things happened to me, like, you know, I had drug dealers after me and it was just like . . . I had to leave. I had to leave for a while to my reserve to get away from that. Even when I came back in the city, I had to hide. Like I had to walk places where there was, where it was dark. I had to come out at certain times of day because people were . . . Sorry.

I don't know . . . It was hard. Oh God.

**Chasity:** — What was the question?

**Mr. Harper:** — The question was basically if you had been detained by a police officer for a period of time, whether it be 24 hours or 72 hours or for a week, do you think that would have assisted you or encouraged you to leave the street?

**Chasity:** — It would make me rebel.

**Mr. Harper:** — It would make you rebel?

**Chasity:** — Yes it would, because you'd still need your high and once you got over . . . if you're going to go and do all these things, you're going to go and get high. It's forcing somebody to go to church, and if they don't want to go it isn't going to help them either. What are you going to accomplish by that? The same thing.

**Mr. Harper:** — Okay. If you're able to identify something that would have helped you get off the street, what would it have been?

**Sarah:** — Well maybe for me it was a time when I need help, when I try and look for help, because I knew it was getting a hold of me really bad and I knew. I tried talking to people about it but I didn't know who to ask and I was too ashamed. And if I did ask somebody, they would kind of put me down about it. So it was hard. I didn't talk to no one for a very long time and I was too afraid.

But I told some people about it. Like I told a teacher once and he was pretty cool about it. And, you know, I told him like I need help and stuff. And I don't know, he didn't really interfere with me, like took me into services or I never went to drug treatment or nothing like that but at least he listened. That really helped too.

And I think, you know, maybe when the person goes on their bottom, and you know that they can't . . . you know, they're so addicted that they can't stop, they really know, they'll probably find it time to find help. Do you know what I mean?

And a lot of times, like if I need someone to talk to . . . and sometimes I was drawn to the streets because I had this feeling of desperation, I guess. And it really helped when I went . . . I had one place to go to, like to talk to somebody about it. But this person, he wasn't healthy himself, but he listened though. And that was cool.

**Mr. Harper:** — Well, thank you both very, very much. You're very courageous young girls. Thank you very much.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — June, would you like to ask some questions.

**Ms. Draude:** — I'm not even sure if I have the right to ask you some questions. You've lived through so much.

Chasity, you said that the reserve was a safe place for you. Does that mean that there was a culture and a spirituality there that helped you more than here? Oh, Sarah, I'm sorry — Sarah.

**Sarah:** — I was just going to the reserve to get away from like the violence. Not violence, but you know, to get away from, you know, thinking something was going to happen to me. Like something really bad. And I stayed with my relatives up there but most of the time I just drank and, you know, smoked up most of the time. And when I came back too . . . I didn't fix though like when I was up there because there's no needles or no pills up there. So that really helped too.

But I didn't start reaching about my spirituality until like I started learning more about it. But I had like my relatives there and they cared about me and they're pretty cool.

**Ms. Draude:** — If the van, the mobile van that they have in Saskatoon now, if that would have been available for you, would that have helped you at that time?

**Sarah:** — You mean the Egadz van . . . (inaudible) . . . Well, I didn't know too much about them. I just thought they just give out condoms and needles. So I didn't know that you can go for help. I didn't even know Egadz could help you either. I didn't know that either.

**Ms. Draude:** — How could we get that information to other young people that don't know right now?

**Sarah:** — You can like put up maybe posters or stuff like that. You know, if you need help or you need counselling, you know, or you need someone to talk to, we're available any time and whatever you say is confidential and we can, you know, try our best to help you or . . . Do you know what I mean?

**Ms. Draude:** — That would have meant something to you then?

**Sarah:** — I think if I had like someone older than me and talk to me, you know, like, say, so how are you doing? How's everything at home? Or, what's your name and what do you like to do besides work? Or, you know, like that, like ask interests and stuff. You know, stuff like that, just as a normal person's conversation. Because I never really had any close relationship with the outreach workers. I just, I just didn't know anything.

**Ms. Draude:** — Were you going to school then?

**Sarah:** — Yes. I think I'll be graduating this year, so I'm working on that.

**Ms. Draude:** — Congratulations. Were you going to school at that time before you was . . .

**Sarah:** — When I quit, I decided to go back to school so . . . but I still, like, like I still addicted to drugs and was trying to get away from it. And I mostly focused on my work. But once I . . . I drank one night, and I just, I just broke down and didn't come back to school again for that first semester. But I went back in second semester though. But I was sober for those three months though.

**Ms. Draude:** — Is there anything that would have helped in school? Like is there any kind of information that would have helped if it would have been available to you when you were in school?

**Sarah:** — I think school helped me in a way. Like I am . . . Mr. Smith helped me — like the teacher I was talking about — he did. And he was pretty nice. But I did a lot of different things like, you know. But like in classes I was learning a whole bunch of things, in science, in like different things, I guess, so it really helped me to grow inside and learn.

And also I was surrounded by other teens. It made me different from other teens too, but it made me feel like, you know, I was normal again, and had that peace, you know, that peace with me, like that peace of being normal again. And I used to think I was different from everybody else.

And it was hard too when I was in school because some people found out that I worked on the streets, like some kids, and they were really mean about it. I was going to get beat up by these group of girls because they thought I was a bitch, right. But the reason why I acted like that, because I didn't trust no one, and I must have gave out bad vibes, so they didn't like me either.

But my friend stuck up for me, and she told like, you know, you know if you touch this girl I'm going to go after every one of you. So that was pretty cool. Like she helped me. Yes.

**Ms. Draude:** — I just want to tell you that you can't . . . You have to earn respect, and we definitely respect you. I hope some day that we can earn respect from you because I know that you've lived life.

**Sarah:** — Thank you.

**Mr. Yates:** — I'd just like to start out by saying, Sarah and Chasity, it took a lot of courage to come here. And the fact that you can come here and speak to a committee like this and talk about your experiences, there's nothing you can't do if you want to do it.

And you know, as a father and a parent I've . . . we all have had some difficulties raising our children I'm sure, but the fact that you can come here and have the courage to talk to us stands very, very strong for what you're capable of doing in the future.

I'd like to go back to the whole issue if I could for a minute, regarding the police or Social Services, or some agency being able to pick you up for a period of time to take you off the streets, and whether or not how you feel about it is you would think the majority of young people out there would feel the same way. Because there's no sense us looking at putting different measures in place that are just going to alienate young

people and not help them in the end.

Do you think the majority of young people on the street would feel the same way as you articulated it, would rebel or would feel that they were being just another form of being abused or . . . if they were in fact picked up and put in a locked facility for even 72 hours, 24 hours, whatever period of time?

**Chasity:** — Yes.

**Mr. Yates:** — So with that in mind, what would you recommend, or can you think of anything that we could look at implementing that would help you or other people your age? When you're in that . . . I would see it as a parent or I'm sure the police would see it, in that point of crisis. And we don't . . . somebody wouldn't want to see you get hurt, and being used as a sexual item in abuse. It's not . . . what could we do to help you get by that point, and helps you to deal with that issue?

**Chasity:** — You have to have a better understanding of it first though. Like we need people that, oh, they're just doing that because they need the money. And it's not because of that. You have addictions to feed.

Like you have people putting you down every day out there. There needs to be more places like this. Yes, there's the safe house, there's my home. There's the Pleasant Hill house that they're opening. But there's no home for just the boys. There's my home for just girls. There has to be a home for boys. Like there's more boys out there than there is girls sometimes. And nobody understands that.

**Mr. Yates:** — What could we do to make it more difficult for the perpetrators or the johns out there, to help you and young kids on the street? Would it be helpful to, as an example, in your opinion, and I look for your opinion on this, increase the number of police officers on the stroll? Strengthen laws that allow them to stop a car and if there's a child under 16 in it that isn't their own, give them the ability to seize the car for 24 hours? Just considering there's a gamut of things that you could do through legislation, would any of those things help, in your opinion?

**Chasity:** — Yes. Like in youth, you get arrested for pulling a trick. They get sent to school for their problems. You get sent to jail, like, what's up with that? Like that makes no sense. Like you have no support in there. Nobody talks to you about your problems but yet they get to go to school. Like . . .

**Mr. Yates:** — Just being double victimized.

**Chasity:** — Having more cops out there, I don't think that would help. Like you'd — I don't know how you'd put it — you'd make them . . . They'd find another place to go. Like I walk downtown with my kids and there's people following me all the time.

**Mr. Yates:** — So those types of measures will drive it underground into . . .

**Chasity:** — Into a different area.

**Mr. Yates:** — Into different areas, into homes. Is there anything that would have made a difference when you were growing up, in your opinion? Is there any one thing that would have made a difference in your lives or in any of the people that you know that have worked on the street — some common thing that has been overlooked by society, by government — is there anything that we could do or a series of things we could do that would create a better environment as you're growing up, as children? Is there anything we could implement in the schools, in the social service system?

**Chasity:** — Not to stereotype Native children as problems or nothing like that. Like to encourage them to have like positive self-development that they're . . . like, they can grow. You know, like to — how you can say? — they're normal. You know what I mean?

Like maybe their parents have problems, you know, and sometimes, like parents put their problems on their children and stuff. And it's not, like, the children's fault, you know. Like something is supposed to happen to their parents to be like that too.

Well when I was younger I was like discriminated because I was Native and stuff. So that's where it all started from right there. And it carried on until like I was a teen.

So I don't know how would you prevent discrimination, because it depends on the person itself. And it does hurt a lot when you get put down or, you know, somebody enjoys hurting you. And do you know what I mean? So, I don't know. Like maybe standing up for yourself, you know, helps a lot. And that's about it.

What was the question again?

**Mr. Yates:** — I was wondering if there was anything that you could indicate to us that would help to lessen the problem, to help society deal with the problem? Is there anything that could be done in school or preschool, in your mind, help change the future for children coming up today, growing up today so they wouldn't have to experience all the things you have.

**Chasity:** — I had an answer to that question, but I can't remember it. You guys watch Sesame Street? Do you? Like have you ever watched it? Well in the States, they killed off Ernie to teach kids about death. Which is kind of silly because preschool kids watch it; my little girl watches it. She loves it. I can't imagine teaching a child that young, like in preschool, something about that.

Like yes, sure in grade 4 maybe, you start bringing up the subject about sexual abuse and exploitation and stuff like that but . . . If a parent doesn't want their kids to learn about it, and they're teaching it in school, there's going to be a big controversy right there. Like there's going to be big problems right there. So it's going to be up to the parent to teach their babies about that.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Okay, I'm wondering . . .

Don't worry at all, but make yourself comfortable. And I'm wondering . . . You know, as you can tell, we're asking questions of your friends. Is there something that you would like to say to us?

**Margarite:** — Oh you don't even know what I've got to say.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Well we'd like to hear from you, Meg.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — We'd very much like to hear from you. So if you have . . . if you'd be comfortable making some comments, we'd be happy to give you a chance to do that either now or in a few minutes. Would you be able to do that?

**Margarite:** — I'd like to give a comment to yours. To better help society and everybody is educate our children from a very small age. Because if you educate them in the right way . . . knowledge is power. If they know about it, and they know every aspect of it, they'll know most likely not to go and investigate it.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — . . . in the school curriculum very young . . .

**Margarite:** — Definitely — it's a part of life. Prostitution is never going to go away. We're never going to fix the problem. But if they know about it . . . I know if I knew about it, I would less likely make a choice to, you know, to . . . the road that I followed than a better one for me.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Is there anything else you'd like to say or . . .

**Margarite:** — I just got here so I don't even know.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Would you prefer to just take part in the question and answer?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Margarite, Chasity and Sarah kind of gave us a little bit of their story and we would be really appreciative if you could do the same for us.

**Margarite:** — Okay, when I was young I grew up in a home that I thought was fairly normal. I had a normal life, other than my mother was never a part of my life. She lived in the same home but I never knew her to be a part of my life.

From there my parents split up. You know, it wasn't long before I noticed the fighting and stuff, you know, as I got older. And my parents split up; my mother fought for custody just to spite my father, and from the time she got custody of us we were abused. The stuff that went on in the house was unreal. You can't even call it abuse; it's called torture. And from there I left and I had no other place to go but the streets. That's what you see on TV you know and everything else, I didn't know anywhere else because I wasn't taught anything.

So from there I ended up, you know, being a prostitute, doing lots of drugs, ODing (overdose) several times. You know I've used up my nine lives; this is my last one. And it just carries on, it's a hole that you crawl into and you just can't get out of it.

You don't know how. And by the time I was in that hole I didn't give a shit anyway. So.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay, that's very to the point and good. Thank you for being, you know, just so very open with us. That's important and I always say, you know, speak the language and we all understand it if you don't mince . . .

**Margarite:** — Yes, sorry if I swear every once in a while, I'll try not to.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — That's all right, it's important not to mince words. Mr. Prebble and I have got some questions too and some comments.

Okay, just a couple of things. Some of the other committee members were sort of bringing the scenario to you is, if police officers detained you and locked you up and so on for 72 hours, would that help?

Well, let's put it like this. Let's just say that as your life progresses, Sarah, that you end up being in the safe house here in Saskatoon and that you're one of the people there that are, you know, helpful to kids on the streets. And let's say that Chasity is a police officer out there. And let's say that she sees Maggie, Margarite out on the street. And she says, you know I can determine pretty well, I can see that someone is luring her into their car and I want to — as a police officer — be able to take her to that safe house where Sarah is going to give her some advice about what kind of services there might be for you, and an option for your life, suggest some options and alternatives. And let's say that you both know that there's love in that house — genuine love — that there is a society where people do genuinely care about you and they're trying to protect you from further danger.

Do you think then, you know, that you would help Maggie in that way. Would you approach her and say that there is another way, that there is a place here that's safe and loving and that for a few hours we're going to try to help to determine what you're . . . help you, to empower you, to determine what your life is about and see what kind of help you determine that you might need, and we can help you with your suggestions.

So, I'm just wondering if you were the people that were the police officer and you were the social worker in the safe place, do you think that, Maggie, that you would feel comfortable with these two people helping to sort of take you from a place of danger and help you out that way?

**Margarite:** — Not in the least. First of all, you know if . . . When I was still back there, first of all, I'm a heavy drug user; I've been up for three days. The last thing I want is somebody that I despise dragging me somewhere, you know, and holding me against my will.

Yes, I feel, you know, if you're going to change you're going to do it, you know — you're just going to do it. And until you're ready to do it, nobody can force you to. And the more you force somebody, the more hate is created. Because it builds up. It's the same thing as living at home and being abused. And you're forced to do something, you know, by physical force you have

to do it. And it's the same way as being abused at home, it's just that it's legal. You're abusing somebody legally.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay, thank you. I was just wanting to commend you, Sarah, so much on your journey through life. And I guess it doesn't matter what happens to us in life in a sense, we learn from it and it's an opportunity for growth. And that's wonderful that you've come to the point that you are at.

And one of the words that you use that really stuck with me and impressed me was, empowerment. And you also said that you don't want to be referred to as a victim, that you want to be referred to as a survivor. And I suspect very soon you'll be able to say, I want to be referred to as a leader because I've experienced something that I can lead, you know, lead in. And certainly with all women and men hand in hand we can build a better society. But it's only through the knowledge that you have now that that's possible.

And Maggie, you brought up that knowledge is really very important. And so education . . . I think that probably all of the outreach workers and people in different agencies in Saskatoon, throughout the province, and throughout the country, are aware of that and I think that they extend their hand to you and want to help to be a part of that knowledge that you might need.

And certainly there's, you know, consideration that that knowledge should come a little earlier in our lives so that we're prepared, that we're aware of the choices we have and what it can lead to and so on.

But I do want to commend you and you too, Chasity, for your decision. And especially the decision to break with the circle of negative influences on your life. With those friends that, you know, that you really knew and trusted in and that you were familiar with because that's a really hard thing to do. But when you can come to the point where you say, I have to leave that because I have to heal, I have to lead my own life, it's a very courageous move.

We had a presentation from a young woman in Regina that . . . whose mother was putting her on the streets basically. And one of the hardest things was to have to say, I have to leave that love of my mother as I know it because, you know, I have to break the cycle.

So most of the initiative I think, from what I'm hearing, really comes from you people yourselves, from the girls themselves, to . . . You know, there's a spiritual turning point or a point of turning somewhere that you make the decision yourself. And you know, the rest of us really are here I guess to try to facilitate . . . I mean we all need help in our own ways also. And it is good when there's facilities and people out there that can sort of hold their hand out to you and me and help us along.

But I think it's well-known deep within each person's heart that it is up to you first of all to . . . Or you have to come to a point and you have to grow into that point where you want to change your life. So I really commend you and think that you're absolutely fantastic and a credit to womanhood. So thank you.

**Margarite:** — Liberated — I feel liberated, so don't tell everybody I'm liberated, you know.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So, you know, right now I just . . . I know that it might be difficult for you to understand legislation that's in place in the province and in other provinces and so on, because I mean that's a whole gamut of stuff that you may not be familiar with. And who was? I sure wasn't before either, and I still am not with a lot of the legislation that's in place.

But if you, if you thought there could be one law that could be placed in Saskatchewan that might be able to help, I'd ask you to just say, you know, what you think that might be. There's been a lot of talk about community agencies and, you know, the underlying social problem and how communities and so on have to work together. There has been talk about the pimps and, you know, what role they're playing in this; about the johns and what role they're playing in it.

And I'm just wondering if looking at those three aspects, if there was a law that you would like to see in place, what would it be?

**Chasity:** — Detaining the johns.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Detaining the johns. In what way?

**Chasity:** — Keeping them locked up.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Keeping them locked up. Okay.

**Chasity:** — Because right there, picking them up, that's sexual abuse. You don't . . . They're sent to school for counselling. Like I brought that up before. They're sent to school for that.

**Margarite:** — And we're sent to jail.

**Chasity:** — Yes . . . like that's not fair. Like we're the . . . like they're the victims. Like they're considering themselves the victims instead of . . .

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So the johns that are sent to school are already convicted johns — the courts have convicted them.

**Chasity:** — Yes.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — What about the johns that haven't been convicted that are still out there picking up, you know, our sisters and brothers, and they haven't been convicted. Is there any way that you think that there could be a law in place that would . . .

**Margarite:** — First of all, making it illegal. I mean, like prostitution isn't illegal. Okay. Yes. It may . . .

**Chasity:** — . . . maybe for the younger ones.

**Margarite:** — Yes. Like prostitution isn't illegal. Communicating for the purpose of it, which means saying I want money for sex is illegal. Creating, you know — which

puts barriers like you never even know. There's nothing that the cops can do.

Like I, you know, I knew the system so well. I made it my business to know that system. I was arrested three times in all the years that I was working, you know. Because I made it my business to know where I could go and had to get out of where I was, you know, if a cop picked me up, you know. But making prostitution itself illegal.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So, okay, I just have to take you back for half a second here to something you said. You said the cops can't do anything unless, you know, the johns are sort of caught in the act as such, or whatever.

**Margarite:** — They can't even do anything then. They can't just, you know, sit there and let somebody have sex with a minor or have sex with a woman knowing that there's a crime going on. They can't do that either.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — No. But they can arrest if . . . you know, they can arrest the john.

**Margarite:** — But there's no way to prove it in court. Like, yes, you know, they may have seen him pick up a prostitute. It could be her boyfriend. It could be anyone. Like my boyfriend used to sit out there, you know, right on the corner, right where I was working. And after I was done he'd pick me up and, you know, we'd go.

There's no way to tell, you know, whether it was, yes, she may be a prostitute but who's to say that it's not his mistress on the side, you know. And so on and so on.

**Ms. Barclay:** — One of the challenges that would be interesting to ask from the police representatives is they've said, sort of following on what Maggie said, is that if they see a situation, a transaction that's happening, or if they see a john or trick who has picked up someone under age, they have the ethical obligation to intervene immediately. So that because they can't allow the abuse to take place if they know that there's a situation. However, if they intervene too quickly, or if they're suspicious and they don't have enough evidence, then it won't end up . . . the conviction won't end up happening, and they won't end up going through the courts.

And so they said that that's the, you know, that that's been an area of dilemma. And it would be really interesting, you know, to press that area in terms of creative ways of enforcement. Because there's some who say, well, if you know darn well, if you've got a situation that's there, that they do have a child or youth who's in a vehicle and that they're intending or in the act of trying to purchase sexual favours, that they should be able to, you know, to catch them.

But that's one of the areas that the police have mentioned have been a difficulty. They let it go too far to get the evidence then they're morally or ethically not upholding their responsibility.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So if you go back to the scenario, okay, right now they can't really arrest the john for just, you know, being in a car with an underage person or whatever. You

know, you girls, I mean you're . . . you have to comment on this too. If, you know, once you're in the car and . . . Were there times when you just were hoping that someone would come along and help you so you didn't have to go through with this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No? You wanted to or what?

**Margarite:** — No, I just, you know, I'd lie there with my eyes closed, and just, you know, pray it would be over — not that someone would come and help me. I needed that money. You know I had a drug habit to support. You know, I had kids at home at one time and stuff. You know, I needed that money. It wasn't I wanted to be rescued; it's just I wanted to get the money and get the hell out of there. You know, the faster the better.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — If with some education now though for young people, if they knew that there was some assistance . . . Really, this was not the only way you had to live, that there was an alternative — there may be agencies or if there are community organizations and so on that come together or, you know, the business community, whatever it is, that would be putting some funding into sort of helping you move into a different lifestyle — you know, if that education was out there for young people on the streets, would you think that . . . you wouldn't think . . . like would you still think that I have to go through with this because I need money? I mean, you know, you have no other choice, the way, the situation you're in. You needed the money. But if you had an alternative presented to you?

**Margarite:** — Well the alternatives we have in Saskatoon is to live . . . Like if I wasn't using drugs and I was still working the streets, I'd be rolling in it. I mean, I wouldn't have thousands and thousands of dollars every day like I used to, but you know, like I'd be pretty well off.

But because I've chosen not to be an addict any more and I've chosen not to be abused any more, I live in poverty. That is the choice I have.

I have the choice to go to school, which I'm trying to complete. It's very hard, though. I have the choice to work for minimum wage and get absolutely nowhere anyway because welfare takes it all. So I get no farther ahead than five bucks.

**A Member:** — You get criminal marks against you.

**Margarite:** — Yes. I've got a criminal record against me that going to be there for a very long time. There's just so much that could have been prevented. I think we're all working on fixing it once it's already gone wrong, but once it's already gone wrong, there's no use in trying to fix it for years. We should be working on trying to prevent, not fix it once it's gone wrong.

Like, God, how many psychiatrists are out there and they're making millions on us.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I'm just going to address one more question and then I'll let Mr. Prebble ask you questions. And I know that many more questions will probably come to mind.

Have any of you ever encountered pimps coming from other jurisdictions, from other provinces, from other cities and so on and approaching you; and have you been sort of drawn into going into other places other than Saskatoon?

And I wonder if you could just let us know because I'm trying to get a sense here of whether or not there is sort of like the sort of Mafia-related works going on in this province, or whether or not pimping rings and so on are really coming through Saskatchewan and taking girls that are very vulnerable and so on into other provinces and that kind of thing. So do you know if there's a lot of young people that are subject to that or have any of you been?

**Chasity:** — No, I haven't.

**Sarah:** — A girl was away . . . like me and her were working, her boyfriend and her wanted to go to Calgary and to Edmonton. And they asked me if I wanted to go, me and my boyfriend. And that was the plan to do that but . . . Well, the way it works is just like you go to city to city and, you know, you work there.

Well, I didn't go because it was too dangerous and I think I was too young to go. But my boyfriend wanted to go, you know, to . . .

**A Member:** — He wanted to?

**Sarah:** — Yes, yes. So I never went though.

But I met this one guy I know; he's in Vancouver right now and he's working . . . like, he worked in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Calgary, and now he's in Vancouver. It was his choice to go there because he wanted to go. He told me, like, you just go to the gay scene and he knows where the stroll is. And he knows the hangout, so he works like city to city and stuff. But he called me — last time was in February — just phoned to tell me that he's in Vancouver and he's okay. But he's still like hustling, so . . .

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay.

**Margarite:** — Yes, when . . . in the earlier years like I've never worked for a man because I made it my business knowing all the big boys before I got going. Which was pretty slimy, but I mean I've never worked for anybody. Yes, I do know pimps from up in Toronto and BC that have brought their girls through, and I made it my business to get friendly with them also. So yes, I've had propositions to go working in, you know, in the bigger cities up in Edmonton and in Toronto, but they didn't really drag me off anywhere.

You know, I'm pretty much a player myself so you know when a player plays another player, it just doesn't work, you're pretty wise to it. But that's what they do, if they do come through by chance. It hasn't happened for a while because Saskatoon is not very lucrative — is that the word — lucrative for, you know, high price hos. I don't know what else to say . . . because most of our girls are under age and the rest of them are either severe alcoholics, sniffers, or junkies, or you know, something. You know, we all have or had a problem at that time.

It would cost them too much to keep us going, you know; it's not worth it. So . . . that's what Rob told me. He says, you know, I'd ask some of you girls to come but you'd cost too much money. So that's the reason he gave me.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I asked that question because there have been girls that have been approached by pimps from other provinces — as of course I love you, kind of boyfriend thing — and I think we all know some of the girls that ended up in Vancouver and places like that and ended up dead. And so I'm just wondering, with that kind of activity, how much of that do you think is taking place in Saskatchewan?

**Margarite:** — I really . . . like I'm not on the street so I don't know.

**Chasity:** — I wouldn't know.

**Margarite:** — Yes. I mean I don't hear much of it. I know that some of the girls that I know travelled from Edmonton and back, and you know and stuff, and to Calgary and back, but I haven't heard of them venturing anywhere else or working for anybody. Most of the girls that travel that way already have big names behind them so . . .

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — And do you believe that there's quite a value . . . I mean from what we're hearing there's quite a value in the safe house here in Saskatoon and that some people think that there should be more spaces and that there should be satellite safe houses and you feel that . . .

**Chasity:** — Yes.

**Margarite:** — Definitely, the safe house is a godsend to Saskatoon.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Good.

**Chasity:** — But the only thing with the safe house is that 30-day stay. Like what are you going to do after your 30 days? There has to be a longer stay for some people.

**Margarite:** — Thirty days is enough time to get clean.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — We talked in the afternoon about satellite homes and the representatives from the tribal council explained how they were looking for basically homes where people who were young could stay for a much longer time after they left the safe house, and safe homes where people would really understand the struggles there.

**Chasity:** — But it shouldn't be only the woman you're looking at. There's guys out there. As I said before, there's no home for a boy besides the safe house.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — That's one of the things I wanted to ask you about actually, but I want to wait until Arlene is done.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — That's fine, Mr. Prebble. I'll leave you. Go ahead.



**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Chasity, why don't we talk about that right now if you're feeling ready for that. What's your experience in terms of the involvement of boys in the sex trade?

**Chasity:** — I know lots of boys that do that. The youngest boy I know that first did that was 12. It's horrible, like. What are you going to accomplish by that. Yes we have the safe house. We have my home for us girls. Like you can say a safe house but you'd feel kind of awkward being the only guy there and having five girls. There's not even like beds, I don't think.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And are you finding that the guys are involved . . . are the guys being sexually abused?

**Chasity:** — Yes. There's lots of guys that have that done to them.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — That's really important for us to know. I thank you for sharing that. And in terms of other elements of the sex trade other than the children like yourself who were out on the street being picked up by johns, can you describe for us sort of what other roles are played by children. Like lots of people have talked to me about children who will be runners, for instance, for the pimps.

**Chasity:** — Selling drugs. I used to sell drugs to other people, selling pills and stuff. So I did that too. Like off the side I got more money too by selling pills.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Right. And what sort of other things in your experience, are children, you know, and teenagers involved in doing? Like are they involved as assistants to pimps? Are they running back and forwards communicating with the girls on the street? Are they doing those kinds of things?

**Chasity:** — Yes. Checking on them? Oh, yes. For sure. I used to do that lots.

**Margarite:** — You have to. You know, especially if your . . . like you've . . . (inaudible) . . . So in order to keep our, you know, our little circle of harmony going, we have to do it. You know, on the street it's out of respect.

**Chasity:** — Yes. I know one of my best friends died from one of his cousins, but like, the guy that stabbed him, I used to run back and forth and collect the money from his girls and run it back, which I got half of it. Like I got everything for doing it. I got high, I got drunk. But out of respect you do it like . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And are there kids doing that, Chasity, who aren't actually involved in being picked up by johns?

**Chasity:** — Yes. That's how I first started.

**Margarite:** — That's your first step in the door. That's how they do it.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And are there a lot of boys involved in doing that, or is it mostly girls?

**Chasity:** — Yes. There's a lot of boys doing that too.

**Margarite:** — Oh yes, but it's a much younger generation. When I was out on the street, we had Margaret McDonald and, you know, all the big boys out there. You know, and now all the big boys are old and there's much younger boys out there now. You know, these boys are filled with so much hate. It's terrible.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — What ages are they, Maggie?

**Margarite:** — They range from — what? — 12 to 18, 19. But you know you just wouldn't believe the hate. You can just feel it. As soon, you know . . .

**Chasity:** — Look in their eyes, and I mean all you see is hate.

**Margarite:** — Yes. You're this far away from them and your body is vibrating next to their arm because you can just feel that hate.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — The hate for . . .

**Margarite:** — Everything.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — . . . for their plight in life and the system and their . . .

**Margarite:** — It doesn't matter what it is.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So they've suffered so much pain and so on that, you know, it's turned into . . .

**Margarite:** — Yes. And because of society that's a man's role to be the strong one, you know. And which creates them into terrible monsters — killers.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — You know, when we talk about the involvement of children in the sex trade, usually what's talked about is the numbers of children who are out on the street being sexually abused by johns. But in fact it seems from what you're saying, that there's another whole group of children who are . . . I mean some of those children would become involved in the sex trade themselves eventually anyway, but in effect they are already involved but just in a different way.

**Margarite:** — Definitely, an associated . . .

**Chasity:** — You grow up around that. You see, oh, look at the nice clothes they have, look at . . . They have money all the time, they have joints. Oh, wow, they're drinking all the time. Obviously you're going to want some part of that.

**Margarite:** — Yes. Well when you leave home, you leave, you know . . . or you leave whatever situation you happen to be in at the time, you leave to something that you call fantasy and . . . sorry, which you call freedom. Which, you know, in actuality freedom is a fantasy. Right?

You know, life is life; you are never going to be free. You have to get up early in the morning, you have to get a job, you have to go to school, you know; you have to be in at a certain time to

be able to wake up and do all these things.

So we leave home to the fantasy called freedom. And you know, we're partying, you know, we're having a great time; we're out to 4 o'clock in the morning, this is excellent. But then your fantasy starts getting a little worse and a little worse and soon it's a nightmare. And then you're screwed, you know — you're screwed.

Like, I know I'm never . . . This is going to affect me until the day I die. It's going to affect me. It's affected my children, it's affected my family, you know, so many things. And it didn't have to be that way, you know, if I was educated.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Well you've still done a lot to make your life different.

**Margarite:** — Oh, definitely I've come a long way and I'm very proud of myself because it took me a very long time and a lot of bullshit to get here. But I still got a long ways to go.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — You all have beautiful spirits, I'll tell you that. And that's coming through like shining stars. What do you have as a dream for your future?

**Margarite:** — Well, what started off was, my dream was I just wanted to get clean. And that happened. My dream for the future now is to be able to work with kids, you know, work with kids like me. You know, I know I can't save the world although I very much want to. But just to, you know, help one person, you know bring one person through it. And I know the way I'm going to do that is by teaching them at a young age.

If I can stand up in front of a class and tell them what's going to happen to them when they get into a car — you know that this guy's going to drag you behind his car with barbed wire and then chop your body up in pieces and scatter you across Saskatchewan if you do this. Not to mention the number of ODs you're going to do and the number of needles that you're going to shove into your arm — a night, a year. Guaranteed you know I'm going to save somebody, you know, so . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Can you talk a little bit about some of the dangers that you faced when you were on the street?

**Margarite:** — You name it.

**Chasity:** — You name it, it's there.

**Margarite:** — You name it.

**Chasity:** — There's everything.

**Margarite:** — I've had so many crazy things done to me, it's unreal, you know. Like not to mention that, you know, you got to look at every man like a loaded gun and you're playing Russian roulette because that's exactly it. So you name it; it's out there.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Chasity, Sarah, did you want to add anything else on that?

**Chasity:** — No, that's it.

**Sarah:** — Yes, what you were talking about, like, you know about boys and stuff like that. Well, you know, some of these boys — like they're gay. And maybe if they had a role model, like someone who's been through the sex trade too and that is dependable and, you know, someone they could trust, maybe they would look up to this person as a role model.

You know if you started like a safe house for somebody or maybe to have this role model or, you know, a counsellor or something like that, you know, so these men could like . . . these boys or men could . . . someone to talk to, you know, about different issues. You know what I mean?

I wouldn't know about it because I'm not gay or I'm not a boy. But I met, like, these really great, you know, gay men and they're really nice people. And they really care what they're doing. And I know there's guys like that out there, you know, that would help other men talk about these things too, you know.

But I notice like with gay people, like gay men, like they all stick together in a way. They still communicate with each other and stuff. But sometimes, like, they get into, you know, arguments and stuff like that. But they still talk to each other.

**Ms. Barclay:** — Just to follow up on that, one of the young men that we've worked with had shared stories about his own life situation where he was really impressed with some of the programs here of youth support groups, where young gay and lesbian youth could actually meet and have a support circle and talk about some of the issues and challenges that they face within society, within the schools.

And this one, this same one that I'm talking about said, you know, he'd lived out of province at the time in BC and bounced around from different group homes and he had attempted suicide three different times. And he said, he just . . . he had no one to support, no one to talk to, no role models, like Sarah said, and he said if he would have had that, you know, it would have saved him so much pain and grief and confusion.

And I know we've had situations of stories that we've been told with some of the young men that have been out there that deal with the added issue of violence, of gay bashing. And the shocking thing about that is that it wouldn't come from some areas that you would expect. It can come from harassment or violence from kids who might come from a middle-class school that seem like such normal, good, well-behaved kids or upstanding students. And yet because of that discrimination or hatred out there, homophobia, they become acceptable victims or targets.

**Margarite:** — Yes. I know lots and lots of gay and lesbian people and I have for many years. I've lived with them. I've partied with them, you know. And they have got to be the most loving and acceptable, you know. It doesn't matter what you look like or who you are, they love and care about you and give you, you know, whatever they can to help you.

Like a struggle for a gay man to go through is unreal. You

know, yes, we have problems but our problems are drug addiction. Yes, we have also mental problems, I mean, but their mental problems are — I don't even know how somebody can live through that. I couldn't go through that anguish every day. Well I mean I did. You know, I went through if not ... (inaudible) ... you know, every day, I mean. But the way that their mind and society tortures them, I could ... I'd shoot myself in the head.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I wanted to ask you a question about the police, and then I wanted to ask you some positive questions about things that we could be doing to support you and other young people like you who are struggling and have, in your case, succeeded in your struggle. There's lots of others who have that struggle ahead as you know.

But I wanted to just before we get on to that, I wanted to ask you a question about the police and also about your neighbourhood. But maybe I'll just ask the question about the police first.

Some of my colleagues from the legislature were asking you about, you know, what do we need to do to empower the police to be more helpful. And you were making the point that you basically, when you were on the street, your experience was that you saw the police, if I understood you correctly, as basically somebody who was there to arrest you. And that you basically saw the johns getting off, in the sense that they wouldn't be charged or they'd get to go to johns school or whatever the case might be.

Did you ever have the experience of the police stopping you when you were in a car and inquiring about what was happening; and then did you just ... did you then end up just having the john that you were with and yourself driving on? Or like what happened when the police stopped you? I guess that's what I'm trying to ask. And maybe you've each had experience.

**Chasity:** — I bullshitted my way through the story.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I'm sorry, Chasity, I didn't hear you.

**Chasity** — He lied through it, like.

**Margarite:** — There's nothing that they can do.

**Chasity:** — There's nothing ... Like where did you ... where're you going? He's driving me home.

Well, why can't you walk. Cause it's cold out. Kind of like that. Where did he pick you up? Stupid stuff.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — So you're saying that you just lied to the police.

**Chasity:** — Yes, like, they don't do anything. They don't do no background checks, nothing. Like if the cop knows you, obviously, they're going to say Miss ... (inaudible) ... come on let's go.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And what did they ask, what

do the police ask the johns that you were with at the time?

**Margarite:** — Oh believe me, you talk really fast to get it all straight with that guy before the cops come to the window: this is how it's going to be, this is what you say, that's it.

**Chasity:** — That's all.

**Margarite:** — Don't say any more, no matter what he says to you, or you're going to jail, buddy. And they believe you.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — So you're literally giving advice to the johns, are you?

**Margarite:** — Yes, you tell them this is what you say or you're going to jail, whether he thinks it's because he's going to get arrested for being with me or whether I'm going to send it there. You know, one of the two, because you know at that time in my life I would have. I would have lied and sent his butt to jail. He grabbed me by my boob. You know, bang, he's gone.

So you know most of them really didn't have a choice but to behave, but there was the odd time when you had to walk.

**Chasity:** — You had to walk back.

**Margarite:** — Yes, there was the odd time that you had to walk back.

**Chasity:** — Or you get picked up and they get to drive away.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Did that happen to you, Chasity?

**Chasity:** — Yes, yes.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — You got picked up ...

**Chasity:** — And he got to drove away.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — ... and the john drove away? So the john was ...

**Chasity:** — That happens all the time, especially if the cop knows you. Like cops know me so well. Even to this day I walk by the courthouse: hey, Chasity, when are you going to come visit us?

**Margarite:** — You got to hate that, hey?

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I think this point that you're telling us though is really important, that there's actually been situations where you have been charged while you've been with a john and the john has walked away.

**Chasity:** — Yes. And then I jumped out of the cop's car and I got charged with escaping lawful custody.

**Margarite:** — Yes, but at that age you don't know any different. You go to court and you let this charge go through, when in actuality it was a bogus charge that should never have been there in the first place. But you don't know to fight these

things.

**Chasity:** — Today I look at my record and some of these charges I have, like they're stupid. Like I have a possession charge. I never got . . . it never went through but I still have it on my record like as a warning.

Because in the cop car, it wasn't searched after I was arrested and there was two grams of coke in there. Like it's not from me. I didn't even start fixing at that time. I was always smoking dope and drinking. And I got charged with it. They were trying to charge me with trafficking, like . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Was it the john who had the coke?

**Chasity:** — No. I was in the cop car and I got charged. I didn't have it on me. Not that time, anyways.

**Margarite:** — The cops will do anything, you know. They'll try anything.

**Chasity:** — They'll do anything to get you in trouble.

**Margarite:** — They'll try anything. They very frequently overstep their bounds. They not only overstep their bounds, they verbally abuse you. They treat you like a piece of shit.

I'm a firm believer — if you want respect, you've got to give me some. Just because I, you know, I'm stuck somewhere where I can't get out of doesn't mean I don't deserve any more respect than you. And like I've had it out with cops, right, you know, screaming matches on the street. I've a very vocal person and you know, if you don't give me respect, don't even expect me to give you any. I will talk to you like a piece of crap.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Well I guess I'm kind of missing something. I'm hearing you say that — and I really believe this — that this isn't a life choice. You don't chose to be out on the streets, you don't want to be there. Just about everybody tells me, that I've spoken to, that they don't want to be on the streets. It wasn't a choice.

But at the . . . sort of now you're mentioning that, when a police officer approaches the car, you are instructing the john on what to say and so on and you lie. So why are you lying? What are you getting out of the lying?

**Chasity:** — Because you don't want to be stuck in Kilburn Hall or Pine Grove or detention.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. So the whole attitude that, you know, that you are the one that's arrested, that's the only option the police have. Okay?

**Margarite:** — They have options.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — So they're arresting you which is completely adverse to what should be happening. Okay?

So if there was a situation at hand where, you know, people under the age of 18 weren't arrested if the police would

approach the car and you know, rather if they took an attitude of protection towards you and helped you out of that situation, because you're saying you don't want to be in that situation, if they helped you out of it. But they're not going to help you out of it if the attitude is, in their mind because the law is stated as such, that all they can do is arrest you rather than the john.

I think it seems to me like from what you're saying there has to be a sort of change in the whole way everybody in the system sees what's happening with you people and . . .

**Chasity:** — The police are ignorant.

**Margarite:** — No, I don't . . . they are ignorant, I mean, but they're ignorant you know. They're narrow-minded when you're pulled over. He doesn't go to the driver's side; he goes to the passenger side and opens the door.

**Chasity:** — Could you step out of the car? What are you doing? Where did you come from? Like 20 questions, and if you talk back obviously they're going to say something stupid which is going to provoke you to say something more.

**Margarite:** — Then it just goes on and on and on.

**Chasity:** — Then it just goes on and on and on, and then you get charged with . . .

**Margarite:** — Uttering threats or, you know, anything he can pull you in for. And they'll push you, you know, they'll push you.

**Chasity:** — Anything he can charge with. They'll provoke you.

**Margarite:** — I've been beaten by an RCMP, you know, and like just things, you know. They sit there and call you slut, and whore, and good for nothing, and cheap. Well yes, I'm going to have a problem with that.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And in your experience what do the police say to the johns?

**Margarite:** — Nothing.

**Chasity:** — Nothing at all. They're scot-free.

**Margarite:** — Don't drive down here again. See you tomorrow. You know.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Ron has a . . . Kevin, I'm sorry, I'm getting the two of you mixed up. I'm sorry. Kevin has a question for you.

**Mr. Yates:** — This is a question I asked in Regina as well. I'd like your sort of description of what the typical john is.

**Chasity:** — It could be you, it could be a dentist, it could be anybody.

**Margarite:** — Middle class. It's very unlikely that there are . . . I mean there are some, but the majority of our johns are middle to higher class working men, married with families and kids.

And it's their sickness, is not only brought to us, but it's brought home to their families. There's girls on the street that are HIV positive; they don't care whether they use a condom or not as long as they get their fix.

These guys, you know, make it with these women and abuse them and then go home and later abuse his wife and his children. And then, you know, when they find out about it, it goes from the wife and children to the children's children and the children's children and it just creates, you know, another cycle of abuse, over and over and over again.

Like men have to know that, you know, these johns have to know that this is wrong, and what they're doing is child abuse.

You know, these signs that went up, they're great signs, you know. They've been long time needed. But why are they in our neighbourhood? Well I still call it my neighbourhood — why are they there? Why aren't they over there? Why aren't they, you know, on 8th Street? Why aren't they in, you know, Briarwood? You know, because that's where these buddies are coming from. Why aren't they there? They should have to wake up to it every day. Drive to work, look at it every day . . . (inaudible) . . . that they're abusing somebody.

**Sarah:** — One thing I noticed, like what's wrong with people, like you know, with middle class people . . . one thing I noticed that is people like to ignore this issue. And like me, me and Jacqui were giving out like flyers and ribbons one day. And people, as soon as you hear the word child sexual abuse, right away they tighten up, and you know, don't want to hear anything about it. You know, I think there's still ignorance about it.

And I still think that, you know, people should be educated more about it, you know, and especially how native children are being marginalized and Aboriginal people and, you know, young children. Like people will like put them down like really bad, like discriminating. Like, you know, oh we know you're a prostitute and all this stuff.

Like, you know, even I was listening on a talk show once like in the morning, and these women were putting down these, you know, kind of prostitutes, Aboriginal people, and all this stuff. I mean, I think that's wrong to do that. Like these people don't understand, you know, where these kids are coming from. And you know, make them sound really bad about . . . like they're bad people.

And sometimes like these johns, like they're sick people. Like they make you do sick stuff. And, you know, there's no like respect, nothing like that. It's just like, you know, you're just being used. And it is abuse. I do mean it is abuse.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you, Sarah.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I wanted to ask you, just in terms of looking at some of the things that the community and the government can do to make things better for children who are on the street, and for people who are trying to heal, you know, I just wanted to ask a few questions about that. But I want you to just feel free to say anything you want in this area

that you think the committee needs to hear, and that you'd like to share.

But just to help, I have some specific questions to start off. And one is around financial support. Because I heard some of you saying that, you know, once you leave the street one of the problems is you don't have very much money. You were making more money on the street than you make when you leave.

How do you think that can be overcome? What sort of financial support do young people who are trying to get off the street need? Do you need job opportunities? Do you need . . . well you tell me what you need. I think I understand what . . .

**Sarah:** — If you're underage and you're under Social Services and your parents get your money, half the time you don't get the money, like, what we're supposed to get from your parents. Like, my parents had to pay bills and groceries and they didn't give me very much. And I was only lucky if I got, like, 20 bucks a month. Do you know what I mean?

I think there should be, you know, maybe cheques given to the young people. Like, I don't know how that's possible in Social Services but you know, like, have money available, you know what I mean. And it's hard, like, to have . . . only given money once a month. Like, \$200 doesn't go very far because you have to buy a whole bunch of stuff.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — And then when you get to be old enough to be receiving Social Services, how hard do you find that to live on? Have any of you been in that circumstance?

**Margarite:** — How could you live on \$426 a month?

**Chasity:** — I don't even get that.

**Margarite:** — No, I get more, ha, ha.

**Chasity:** — I don't even get that much. I have two kids.

**Margarite:** — You try living on that with a kid.

**Chasity:** — I have two kids to take care of.

**Margarite:** — You know, and payments on, you know, phone. You know, my utilities are paid. You know, I've gotten a little farther than some. I mean I have had a car. It's kind of missing right now and they haven't found it yet. But, you know, on the car I've got loan payment.

You know, there's so many things. I don't have my grade 12, you know, and for me to get my grade 12, there's nothing to get me there. You know, no matter which way I turn I can't get ahead. And I can't get ahead for 15 years down the road. And why the hell do I want to do that. You know. It's . . .

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I just wanted to hear what Chasity was going to say and then . . . no, no. Chasity, were you going to say something else in terms of what . . .

**Chasity:** — With two kids you can't . . . what I get . . . I still

don't get my little boy's family allowance. But 228 plus \$30 spending. I'm supposed to be getting clothing. I don't even see that. Like, I don't get none of that.

Like, so basically all I'm living off is what my mom will give me — 200 bucks a month for myself and the rest I have to . . . like, I don't even spend that on myself. Everything goes to my kids. Like, you can't buy yourself anything. There's no such thing as myself once you become a mom.

**Margarite:** — That's true. There's always something to buy. You know, with kids you stick those socks in the wash and the next thing you know, six pairs of socks, there's only three, you know. And you've got to go buy socks. You know, you dump the Pabulum off the counter onto the floor, you got to go spend 20 bucks on another can. You know, there's just one thing after another. And you could only be in a cage, you know, for so long, and then you start going . . . you know.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Yes. So it's really tough to get by financially once you . . . once you leave the street, it's very, very tough. Arlene has got a question. I'm going to just turn it over to her. It's kind of a supplement to what I asked.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I understand, you know, what you're saying when you're talking about it's difficult when you're a single mom and you have a couple of children. Do you all have young children? The three of you?

**Sarah:** — I don't have any.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — You don't have any?

**Sarah:** — No.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Okay. Then, Sarah, maybe just sort of to address this to you.

When I was visiting in Alberta, I think under Woods Homes, they have as part of helping people to become, you know, self reliant and actually get into a position where you are making some money, they start by helping to integrate young girls — after drug and alcohol treatment and that kind of thing and while . . . or even while they're doing that — integrate them into business opportunities. So for instance a catering business might be one of them; for some of the boys, woodworking, that kind of thing. So that they get a sort of sense of a business that they . . . can be established. And there's ongoing help until you are established in that business.

Do you think that, maybe that might be an opportunity? Because I agree that jobs are few, and good-paying jobs are hard to find, and especially if you're . . . didn't have an opportunity to get an education and so on. But there are businesses that, you know, people can maybe start. And do you think that that might be a way to go?

**Sarah:** — I think it's a good idea. Like to teach different skills, like how to make, decorate cakes; how to make baking, you know; get your food . . . (inaudible) . . . you know; different skills like home ec (home economics), like sewing your own clothes, stuff like that.

What else? Like, you know, even like face painting, like creative things too, like painting stuff. Like I used to paint walls and stuff like that in my room. I used to make pictures, stuff like that — like creative stuff, you know, that is fun. And that could . . . a skill that could be learned and you enjoy and stuff. I think that's a good idea.

I just had a job and I worked for a year and a half. And when I first started working it was hard because, you know, I was surrounded by middle-class, white kids. Do you know what I mean? And they got cars — you know what I mean? And they got, they got parents . . . parents. Obviously they're there to work for their money.

And the thing is, like you know, they have more help from their families than I would. Do you know what I mean? And it was kind of hard to trust them too because, you know, like I've been through like discrimination, like through people when I was younger and stuff. So I know how they act, and I know how they treat you and stuff.

And even like my bosses, like they . . . some of them didn't like me, and I had a hard time. Like I'm saying I wasn't the perfect employee. Like I had a hard time to . . . We had this computer and we had to press what, you know, your order, your food order. And I had a hard time to put minus lettuce, minus stuff, because . . . and I got so mixed up. And they were going to let me go because I didn't know that. And they put me off work for two months. And he only gave me three hours, three hours a week, like one week; and it only came up to like 20 bucks on my paycheque.

But this one girl, she said, you know, if you give this girl enough practice maybe she would get better, you know. And I did, I became, you know, a good employee, like I cleaned up really well. Well I got in trouble for, a lot of times, just for doing mistakes or something like that, you know. But it takes time just to get used to having a job and stuff. And me, I take time, like doing something. It takes me, like, two hours to do something.

So I'm glad that I had a job because my . . . I couldn't . . . like if I didn't have this job I probably, you know, would get bored and wouldn't have no money to buy myself clothes and stuff like that. And at the time when he put me off work for those two months, I was wearing, like, just skirts and dresses is all I owned. I didn't own no blue jeans. So I was really cold in the winter. But, you know, as soon as when I got money I just bought myself a whole bunch of stuff so I wouldn't be, you know, poor. So I know how that feels. But I think that's a good idea about the job opportunities and stuff.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I'm just mentioning that, you know, if there were some sort of program in the province here where you could gradually learn the skills associated with a certain business, and, you know, be part of that so that you're sort of, from learning the skills, you're taking part in it.

If we want to use, for instance, the catering business as an example — that's what we'll use — and as you grow and then you can end up having . . . getting to a point where you would, you know, join with three or four or five other people and make

that your own business so that you don't ever have to depend on somebody else, you know, providing a job for you that is, you know, maybe not something of your . . . sort of expressing your own creativity. I think it's really important because you have . . .

**Sarah:** — Well a business. Like if a business know where you're coming from, like you came from the streets, obviously they're not going to hire you and trust you. You know what I mean?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Yes, but you wouldn't have to be hired. You hire yourself. You are your own business is what I'm saying.

**Sarah:** — Well maybe, like a group of youth, you know, giving them money to do stuff like that, you know. Like have some older people like adults to teach you all these different skills and to make money off, like . . . When this one guy I met, he told me he made \$47,000 by face painting. You know stuff like that — fund raising and making money and stuff like that, like those things, that direction.

Also like those kids, like the youths themselves that doing this stuff would feel better, you know, about themselves. Like because a business is kind of hard, like under ownership, because you have to act like a certain way and you have to, you know, whatever they say to you, you have to, like, do it or else they'll get mad at you. You know what I mean? I don't know. I don't know. Cleaning toilets is this like a good thing? You know what I mean? I don't know.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Are there job opportunities that could be offered to young people who are on the street now?

**Sarah:** — No.

**Chasity:** — No.

**Margarite:** — No. The only reason I got a job coming off the street was because I made it my business to know people — like I know people that own their own businesses and stuff. But you know so it was easy for me to get a job. And once, you know, gave me another job and then another job. Like when I . . . you know, I've done contracts through public health and stuff, and the reason I was able to do that was because of my past. So you know, I never thought that where I came from would ever amount to anything.

But creating jobs . . . Or you're talking about them creating jobs right?

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — I'm talking about you becoming your own authority because I think Sarah you have a really good handle on empowerment. And empowerment, you know, that can be sort of enriched, that place of empowerment that you're at, by you becoming your own . . . you don't have an employer, you are the employer. You are the authority. You are the one that runs the show.

And I just think that it's something that maybe we need to focus

on a little bit more rather than thinking there might be a job there for us when we know that this, you know, you go through the same thing — the cleaning the toilet, the washing the dishes, whatever it may be.

It's all right because there's certainly a need for all of the work in the world, but I think that that sense of satisfaction and personal empowerment could come if a number of people could develop the skills and then sort of focus on creating your own business of some kind. And it may be something like your friend with face painting, whatever it may be.

**Ms. Barclay:** — If I could just mention something, I think you're really on the right track in terms of looking at creative ways. Definitely the economic empowerment or opportunities is critical. I mean we've all talked about the issues of poverty or living in disadvantaged communities and struggling, living in poverty as families. And certainly that would be an area . . .

But as Sarah mentioned, if you don't have the supports in place, or like Maggie said if you're dealing with records or employers who won't give you the chance for a break, then you have to look at different creative options.

And I just wanted to mention one example of an experiment that was done or a project that was done that actually Sarah would be familiar with, who had contact with, and it was through Quint, a community economic development corporation which brings together the five inner-city communities within Saskatoon. And they did a project or initiative called mapping core community assets.

What they did is they identified and selected 16 youth. And these are youth coming from the core areas, who had a diversity of experience and who would be considered experiencing obstacles in terms of furthering education and employment opportunities.

And what they did is they sent them out in the community to identify what . . . Well, first off, what gaps there were in terms of services within the communities, what was needed, doing interviews with different residents, with different organizations. Then they sent them out to look at what assets there were in the community, what was there.

And it was a really beautiful initiative in the sense that these youth were hired. They had a job. They had a voice. They got to go out, practice their skills, and develop confidence and empowerment, like you mentioned, in terms of being able to meet with different people, interview them. They made lots of contacts and learned which organizations and resources were out there for help and assistance for them, but also to get contacts. And like Maggie said, it's who you know and getting your foot in the door. And so they got to meet different potential employers.

And the other key thing about it was the fact that these youths got a chance to meet and spend, you know, time together and be able to support each other and debrief. So if there were struggles that they experience or discrimination, issues of ageism or being against them as youth, they had a support network to go back to.

And we work with different adults in terms of facilitators to actually be a support, but they got sent out to go do your stuff. And I thought . . . I mean that only happened once, but it was a really, to me a really powerful experience. And the connections are still there too because the youth got to meet and know each other and keep in contact.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — I just have a couple of other questions. It's getting late and I think we need to stop very soon. But I just wanted to ask you a question about empowerment.

Sarah, I really sense that that conference that you went to in Vancouver was a very empowering experience for you. And I'm just wondering if you've got any suggestions on things that we can think about that would be empowering for young people who are on the street now in terms of helping them to get off, or young people who are trying to get off the street to sort of find the strength to keep going.

**Sarah:** — Well maybe, well to talk about it at first, to talk about different things. But it is painful to talk about it and of course you're going to be afraid. You know what I mean. And education, that's really important. Education about yourself, like you know you can prevent this from happening to you. Education that, you know, there's places you can find help. You know what I mean.

Also to share with other people about it. And also like when you start talking about it you get ideas about different things. How people should be treated. You know what I mean. Like you start talking about solutions. You start talking about different ideals, how to go about it. And like here maybe we shouldn't like, you know, be so scared of having talked to a group, like kids who've been exploited.

You know, just talk to them as a friend, the way you'd talk to somebody else and see how they're doing. Then start connecting to them and, you know, telling them like there's this place you can go for help, you know. And like there's a place you can like get bus tickets, or there's this place you can get like, you know your clothes cleaned, or things for help. You know what I mean?

And to have your needs met too. Like if you want a group of people to get together, it has to be in a safe environment. You know what I mean. And also like, to have like money available for them to be there. Like to be paid. And also like to have facilitators or adult people like there to lead you and to talk about this.

That's the key points that I learned like from these different things I've been to. Like, I've been to like Italy — Florence — where all different youth like from different experiences like, you know, came together and they talked about these things that happened to them. You know what I mean? And they were excited because they wanted to make a difference, a change. Because they wanted it to stop, like ethnic violence in West Gaza, you know what I mean? Or Philistines between Israel. Or there's one, Venezuelan people they want to prevent . . . they want to preserve their cultural identity because their government didn't recognize their culture or their different

languages, and they wanted to preserve their traditions, stuff like that.

I think the best idea is just to network with all your resources around, maybe like Saskatchewan or across Canada or even around the world, especially about issues with sexual exploitation.

I know it would really help me is networking with a lot of people, and collecting their phone numbers and collecting their e-mail addresses and talking to them. I never learned how to use the Internet until I found this web site address and actually went there by myself and asked this person to help me out, those things, you know what I mean?

Again all organizations together doing something, you know what I mean, for youth, or how to bring awareness into communities, or I don't know, different things, I guess.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Yes, well you've given us a lot of ideas to think about. I just had one other question that if one of you would like to answer I'd be grateful for. And that is just whether there's anything apart from what we've already talked about that either the community or government or individuals in the community can do to help you with the healing process that you're going through and that you know that other people on the street who are trying to get off, are going through as well. Like what can help you on the healing journey, I guess is what I'm . . .

**Margarite:** — I think first of all you guys need to, well not you guys in . . . I mean everybody needs to open their eyes okay? This is not just in my backyard, but it's in your backyard and your backyard and yours and yours and yours. I think we need to make it very aware that this is out there. It's not, you know, just in Africa where they kidnap girls and stick them in a house and slave them around for 25 cents. This is Saskatchewan and yes we do have prostitutes, and yes picking up a woman on the street is child abuse, and it needs to be publicly noticed.

It needs to be on TV, it needs to be in magazines, you know, in Chanel and all those places. People need to know that this is happening, and yes you have to recognize it, and yes it has to stop.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Thank you so much for what you've done for us this evening. I just feel like all of us who are, not only members of the committee, but I think everybody who's present tonight feels that you've just made an enormous contribution towards us understanding more about what we need to do, and understanding the struggles that young people are going through who are on the street right now, and sharing your struggles with us. It was a very special thing to do, so we're very indebted to you. And we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for what you've done.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Yes, you have one more thing to say. Go ahead Maggie.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — You'll have the last word.

**Margarite:** — I just want to ask you, you know — I hope us



coming here has done something — but please don't put it on a back shelf. Help, please.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Well we're trying to find the ways, Maggie, that we can help, but we want it to be meaningful. We want to make sure it's something that you have identified and other presenters have identified. Obviously, there are gaps in the system; obviously, there are problems in the system; obviously, there are problems in individual lives; and obviously, there's problems with the whole overview of the picture.

But there's also some very good things happening. There are your spirits that are determined that your life is worthwhile, that you're going to move forward and onward. And that's very hopeful. And we'll be listening and certainly considering everything that is being said so that we can put forward recommendations to help.

And there will be, I guess, this fall I think a public forum again in Saskatoon where people can come to the podium and give further views and so on. So feel free to come to that if you get the opportunity.

Yes, Sarah?

**Sarah:** — Okay, it's just an idea. Maybe, like, you're saying youth and children are important, right? Why don't you, like . . . you're talking about prevention too, right, with children and youth?

And I notice many . . . Well some people I met, like some young girls like 12, 13, 14, they're really vulnerable — even the young boys I met too, you know. Maybe you should have a centre that promotes healthy self-development for children and youth. You know what I mean? A place where they can develop and there's youth participation that's involved, even for those who are exploited. You know, what I mean? That they do different things, like, you know, in this centre or group or whatever. You know what I mean? Like, get them involved into different arts and crafts. Or let them have a good time while they're doing it, like, having fun. Or, you know, learn how to dance. I don't know, like different things like that.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Some opportunities to help them celebrate their life.

**Sarah:** — Yes, yes. Them being part as a child or teenager, let them have that little sense of being, you know, as a teen, as a young person. Yes, because everybody else is just trying to be somebody else and trying to be older. You know, like you kind of wonder where's your sense of yourself, who are you.

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — That's very good, and obviously, that's one of the things that are missed oftentimes when poverty drives you to, you know, this kind of activity. You miss that whole part of your life. And so you're saying we can take where we're at right now and help people to retrieve that part of their life by having some sort of a program in place that can . . .

**Sarah:** — Also like we can't forget . . . we know women who are in their 20s or 30s, they've been exploited when they were

like, you know, 12, 13, 14, 15 — we can't forget them either. When you guys talk about children, you know, you guys always talk about children, children but you know most of these girls have been exploited as children. And you can't forget them either.

And most of them don't have skills either and need to be taught those skills, you know, to function, to live, you know. Like, I don't want my children to live in poverty. You know what I mean?

And I know how that is. If your parents don't make enough money, you know, like, \$20,000 a year or something — you know what I mean — it's really hard on your family and on your siblings. And, yes . . .

**The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé):** — Thank you, Sarah. That's really very, very informative and helpful. And the committee has heard you, and this is — if we don't scribble it down here. You don't have to worry about that because it is being recorded, and all of this will be reviewed so thank you.

Is there anything else that anybody would like to say?

**Chasity:** — . . . about opening a group. Like, I think it should be run by kids or somebody that has been exploited. Because, like you can run as many groups as you want, but you ain't going to learn the things that you learn from out there.

**Margarite:** — We can teach you . . . that we can teach them. You know, a lot of the jobs that are out there are given to people that have their Ph.D.s or have been, you know, to university for many years. You know, what I know, they will never know. And they will never truly be able to help somebody like I could.

**The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble):** — Well you've already become a helping process in a lot of ways in your life. I know, those of you who I know, already I know you're doing some pretty special things. And you've helped us a lot tonight.

Thank you for that really good advice. Sarah, Chasity, Maggie, Jacqui — thank you.

I'd like to ask if a member of the committee would make a motion of adjournment. Kevin? Is that agreed? Agreed.

So we come back tomorrow. Randy, I'm just going to look to you for help for a minute — 9:25 do we start, or is it earlier?

**Mr. Pritchard:** — The hearings start at 9:30.

The committee adjourned at 9:28 p.m.