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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Published under the authority of The Honourable Ron Osika, Speaker

The committee met at 1:30 p.m.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We're pleased to get underway with the formal part of the hearings. And I believe we're hearing first from members of the Prince Albert Integrated Youth Committee. I believe that we're going to have presentations from Delphine Malchert and Lynn Mourot. So if you'd like to come forward. Thank you very much for coming this afternoon.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Welcome, Delphine and Lynn.

Before you get started, ladies, we'd just like to express our deepest gratitude for you coming forward and sitting with us today so that we can hear what you know and what you find important.

I'd just like to ask you to speak into the mike and speak fairly loud so that we can be sure to hear you.

Ms. Malchert: — Co-Chairs, committee members, staff members, my name is Delphine Malchert. I am a member of the Integrated Youth Committee; that's the capacity for which I am appearing here today. I'm also the community school coordinator for Riverside Community School in Prince Albert.

The Integrated Youth Committee is a representative group. It represents various groups and agencies from within our community. It came into being as a result of a series of public consultations — very similar to what you're doing here — around the city of Prince Albert. And we, during these public consultations, were to ask the question — what do we need to do to address the needs of youth in Prince Albert? So Lynn and I both co-chaired that committee.

And also it came as a result of a question that came to city hall — should we have a curfew? The age-old question. So Lynn and I set about hearing consultations from the community. And the community said a resounding no to the issue of curfews, and further to that made a number of recommendations.

The most important and always on top of those recommendations that we should form a youth activity centre, that we should put together . . . the city of Prince Albert should have a youth activity centre and someone to coordinate that centre. Should be things for youth to do — not necessarily a means of trying to control them such as a curfew, but let's establish lots of things for kids to do. And at the heart of that, at the centre of that, a youth coordinator and a youth activity centre.

Now we took those recommendations back to city hall and presented them, and they were unanimously accepted by our city councillors. Only at that particular time there was no money to put that process into place. So they heartily accepted our recommendations and endorsed them 100 per cent. So we did form a committee after that and very shortly did secure money to make that happen.

And the city became a full partner with us in providing a place for that activity centre. The monies came first from Social Services, from the child prostitution money that was set aside at that time. That was a couple of years ago and I'm sure all of you remember that initiative. And subsequent to that, monies from Social Services and Justice to put together a full team, youth coordinator — and you'll be meeting some of those team members today — and a team of outreach workers were put in place.

So we're here today as members of that committee. Lynn and I and among others sit on the Integrated Youth Committee, and we oversee and work hand in hand with that team in order to put activities and outreach in place for the children and all citizens of Prince Albert.

So Peggy Rubin and her staff will be coming to talk to you a little later about the nuts and bolts of that and how it works and their observations and concerns. And right now Lynn Mourot, Integrated Youth Committee member, will be expressing some views from our committee on the proposed legislation.

Ms. Mourot: — I'm Lynn Mourot, and as Delphine says, I also sit as a member of the Integrated Youth Committee. I think one of the really neat things about that committee is that it not only involves a cross-section of organizations and agencies within the city, it also involves youth. So from the beginning we have also involved youth in asking them what it is that they think they need. And I know when Peggy and Glen talk later, they will talk about some of the outreach and some of the views of youth.

I think I'll speak to some of the recommendations in the interim report, but I guess the gist of what I'm saying is that we really are supporting community strategies particularly to deal with young people rather than any kinds of legislative strategies. The legislation, in my mind, should deal with the people who are breaking the law — the adult perpetrators.

In regard to the 72-hour lock-up which Alberta's had and which I understand has just been struck down, our committee was very opposed to locking up victims of sexual exploitation, because in our mind we were revictimizing the victims — we were turning them into criminals. The perpetrators, not the exploited children, are the ones who should be locked up. Now we realize that that's very, very difficult for police to do and someone alluded to that earlier, but we shouldn't be locking up the children.

We realize that the intent is to get these children off the street, but there has to be a better way to do it. And I think when Glen starts to speak later he can talk about some of the outreach efforts that have probably been more successful than any lock-up kind of activities because that establishes trust, and it's building trust rather than building walls.

In terms of impounding the vehicles driven by the perpetrators, we support this recommendation as long as it's not in lieu of charges. The man still needs to be charged. But if money, weapons, vehicles can be taken from people who deal in drugs or hunt illegally, then they should be able to be taken from perpetrators. But again they still need to be charged with child abuse or sexual assault — it can't be one or the other.

When we talk about deterrence of offenders, johns school met with mixed reaction with our group because we didn't support men being sent to johns school instead of being charged. Men who sexually exploit children should be charged with sexual assault or with child abuse.

Once they've been charged and convicted, then we might support them going to johns school as part of their sentence to learn that sexual exploitation of children is child abuse. But that would need to be as part of, or in addition to, adult sexual offender treatment programs; it couldn't be instead of. Again it needs to be as part of the regular sentence for sexual assault. It can't be a lesser type or a bargaining tool.

A major issue for us in terms of the john school, other than the fact that this is a criminal offence, it shouldn't go through any kind of mediation or alternative measures, would be the designation of a john as high or low risk to reoffend. Who would decide that and on what criteria would that be based? Just because this might be the first time someone is caught, doesn't mean it's the first time that that someone has sexually exploited children. So to designate someone and say, well sure they get a freebie and they can go to john school, doesn't make any sense.

The other thing about any legislation is it must be enforceable. There's not much point in having legislation out there if you can't enforce it.

As I say, we really, really think that community strategies are much better for children and that any legislative measures should focus on the perpetrators — the pimps and the johns.

There were other recommendations that we thought were very, very important as well — long-term healing, shelters — but again that's focussing on issues after the fact.

The real effort needs to go into prevention. And that includes a lot of involvement in family and community, which is time consuming and costly. And it also involves as we've tried to do at the youth centre, finding positive alternatives for youth and finding ways that trusts can be built and that they can find that there are positive alternatives to being on the street.

I'll stop there, and if you have any questions we'd be pleased to answer them.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, then. Did you have any more that you wanted to bring forward, Delphine?

Ms. Malchert: — I did have a question.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay.

Ms. Malchert: — Is this a good time to ask it?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Please go ahead and ask it.

Ms. Malchert: — Okay. I recall, Arlene, that you mentioned something about education for children, about how they may be approached. Is there anything in your consultations across the province? Are people actually involved in that kind of education in the schools? Have you heard of any?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, well there is, in Saskatoon, there is one school that does have multidisciplinary services or many facets of help, you could say, for children, from the health agencies, from Education, Justice, Social Services. And it's sort of, it is working very well. There has been people bringing forward to us the importance of making sure that children are in school because there's a definite correlation between truant children and children that end up on the streets and end up in the sex trade.

So we are going to be hearing more from people that are sort of professed in that knowledge. When we go to Saskatoon again we have some people that will give us a presentation on that and on the stats in regards to that.

So we definitely, you know, have to look at education being there for children and to find a way to be able to make sure that children that are on the streets that are truant, that are not going to school, can be placed in school again. And there has to be sort of something there, some reason that they want to be in school, I guess, you know.

So we have to look at that. And the other avenue of education is to educate the public generally, on, you know, have a look at our system here and have a look at what's happening. There's something very, very wrong and that means that just about every community, with every agency, with every organization you may have, might have to be talking to each other about the illness within our communities and that it has to change.

So I don't know if that answers your question, Delphine, but education is considered now one of the most important components in assisting children into a healthy lifestyle.

Ms. Mourot: — I have one other question, and I guess it's a very basic one and that is what is your definition of children? In terms of . . . by that I mean what age? Is it 16, is it 18? Because if we're looking at 18, then there's a vast difference between a 17-year-old and a 13-, a 14-year-old.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — There is, there is, and there's a whole . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — . . . under 18 basically, but I don't think we're . . . we're not trying to cut it off at 18 either. The reality is we've found that a lot of children . . . a lot of the adults who are on the street today and who are involved in prostitution of activities of one kind or another as adults got pulled into the sex trade as children — as young as eight, and lots of them under 14, and of course many between 14 and 17.

The reality is that The Child and Family Services Act in the province is primarily focused on those under 16, with some services available to 16- and 17-year-olds. But I don't think we should limit ourselves, you know, to 17 and under, but that has been the primary focus of the committee's activity.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — There's just . . . it's just that sometimes, that there is so much hurt and damage done that sometimes people are 17, 18, 20, 30, 40 years old, and they're

caught in a place in their lives when they were 8 or 10, and that's where the pain started and that's where their pain is focused. And so, as far as age focus, you know, focusing on age, we'd look at children as 18 and under.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — The healing goes on, we've realized, way beyond the time that children become adults. So, you know, this healing process is going to be a lengthy journey and is a lengthy journey for everyone involved.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Did you have questions for any of the other committee members, ladies? Or did the committee members, possibly, have questions for . . .

Mr. Toth: — Yes, I'd like to ask a question. You mentioned about johns, the fact that you felt that they should be charged . . . all johns should be charged, that no consideration should be given to the fact that this may be the first time, maybe, had even committed the offence and the . . . I raise the question on the basis of families involved and how do we protect families as well. I am wondering if you've given some thought to that, or if you've got a response in regards to that versus just an outright charge because someone has been on the street and exploited a child.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I think, Don, maybe they need a little more clarification on what you're asking.

Mr. Toth: — On basic, say, first . . . like I think you had indicated you don't believe that anyone should be . . . if it's the first time they've been charged, that there shouldn't be some consideration given to some other aspects of protecting families, versus everyone should be charged.

Ms. Mourot: — Well I guess my first question would be is . . . the first time he's charged is probably not the first time he's done it. And the second thing is, do we give the same kind of freebie to other types of sexual abuse or child abuse?

I personally think that everybody should be charged.

Mr. Toth: — No, that's fine. And I'm just quizzing some of the thoughts behind that.

Another question I would have, and this one I've been really struggling with. While we talk a lot about the johns on the street, as well I think we need to be mindful of the children on the street. And the question I have is, why are these children on the street?

And we may get into some of that later with some of the other presenters, but just from your observations or whether you've worked with any, I don't know, have you got any suggestions? I think we need to go beyond just charging johns. I think we need to find out the reasons why there are young people on the streets, especially children, and how we can provide other avenues that they can pursue rather than being out on the streets, involved in the sex trade.

And I think we're talking here with a group, people who represent a youth-coordinated centre. I would assume that that's one of the purposes, is to try and create some other alternatives for young people, but maybe you could give some thoughts.

Ms. Mourot: — Well I think there are many reasons the children are on the street, and it comes back to perhaps when I was making the comment that we need to look at prevention. Because most of the children who are on the streets are there because of things that are going on at home — maybe a dysfunctional family. It may be families who have put them on the street to earn money. It may be poverty issues. It may be homelessness. It may be a number of issues that result in children turning to the sex trade as a way to survive.

Ms. Malchert: — I just wanted to make the comment about feeling connected. In the work that we do, in all the different aspects of the work that we do, we notice that when young people are feeling a sense of connection to the community, that things can turn around for a young person. And that's really one of the main focuses of the youth centre is in seeing every child — and someone mentioned at the beginning — as a valuable and contributing member of the community.

How do we do that as a society? How do we make it so that we all have an opportunity to be a valued and connected person that people respect and value in our community? How do we do that and really mean it? How do we not look down at a certain aspect of our community?

We have to change our attitudes, I think, and look at the community not from a deficit model, you know, all of these people that don't have things to contribute, and turn it around and see everyone as having something to contribute. And that sounds like a glib thing to say, but if we don't really mean that, the part of the community that's feeling disconnected knows it and they're not going to take us seriously if we don't take each other seriously. So we have to begin to look at ways to make that happen.

Ms. Mourot: — And that's one of the things, I think. And again the youth centre staff will talk about the fact that everybody who comes to the youth centre is seen as an important person with something to contribute and there are many, many activities that go on there where people can share their strengths and have that connectedness and have that sense of belonging and have positive alternatives to being on the street.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Are there any other questions?

Mr. Yates: — A couple of quick questions. In our previous hearings we've heard testimony from a number of police officers involved in the prevention on the streets, and they've come up with a problem that's basically summarized like this: they can watch the activity going on but they feel they're very limited in their ability to stop it. And they have brought forward ideas and we've talked about ideas about perhaps expanding the powers under The Highway Traffic Act to stop the vehicle and ask every person in the vehicle for identification, and more or less increase their ability to access and prevent.

Would you see that as, with your understanding in dealing with youth on the street, as a helpful solution? As an example, they could stop and ask them for identification; failure to have

identification, they could take them home or they could, you know, take them out of that environment. And would those types of things be helpful? Or are those just stop-gap measures that wouldn't do anything to deal with the real problem?

Ms. Malchert: — Well, personally, I would see it as a stop-gap measure, but I come at things from, I guess, a different perspective.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. My second question has to do with community solutions. I don't disagree at all with the concept of community solutions, but is there the capacity in our communities to deal with this problem in a comprehensive way? Could Prince Albert, with assistance, does it have the capacity within the community to do that? And do all the communities involved have that capacity?

When we're looking at community solutions or a community-based solution, we have to look at the capacity of our communities to deal with the problem and does it exist in the community? And do you believe it does in the city of Prince Albert?

Ms. Mourot: — I think it does. But it takes a real change in focus in that there would need to be a public awareness. There would be a need to be a commitment to families and to children in a way that that commitment isn't there now. And there certainly would need to be additional funding, because if you're going to work in community and work with some of these children and do preventive work, you need to put all kinds of resources into working with the family. And that is a long-term solution.

So if you're asking, is it something the community could do quickly? No. Is it something the community could do in a long term? Yes, if it was a concerted effort and if there was community buy-in.

Mr. Yates: — Okay. Would that include treatment as well? Community solutions in regards to long-term treatment?

Ms. Mourot: — Treatment for whom?

Mr. Yates: — For the youth involved.

Ms. Mourot: — Yes, because I think that comes with building connectedness in the community and building an attachment to community. And if you do it in isolation and the child comes back to the community, they don't have connectedness here.

Ms. Jones: — Would it be fair to say that by the time youth come to one of your community centres that there's already a fair bit of damage done in terms of their health, in terms of their lifestyle? Their vulnerability, perhaps, is a better word.

I guess what I'm trying to get at is, does it need to start sooner than your integrated youth services?

Ms. Malchert: — But there's probably, definitely and certainly, damage done; whenever someone is violated, there's damage done. But it depends . . . I think it all depends on how that person is received when they come either to a youth centre or any service, or even a disclosure if they're talking to another adult, that they certainly shouldn't be treated as an outcast or someone that has some horrible disease and everybody jumps back from it.

These kids are just kids — the same as any other kids. They've just been in different circumstances. They're very resilient. And I think if we look at these young people as being what they are — and that's perfectly normal young people with just some tough circumstances — and look at their potential and their possibilities, I think that recovery can be a whole lot faster. It just depends on how we look at it.

Ms. Jones: — I guess that's the point that I'm trying to make is that your services to youth would end up being quite focused on recovery and reclamation of the person as opposed to prevention.

And, I mean, I know you're limited in where you can go. You have a service for people . . .

Ms. Malchert: — I would say both.

Ms. Jones: — You'd say both?

Ms. Malchert — Absolutely.

Ms. Jones: — So you have . . . You would have kids coming then that have not yet been involved in abuse or . . .

Ms. Malchert: — Oh, absolutely. We have kids from all over the city coming, in all different circumstances. And that's our goal. We don't want a centre for just . . . so that people are looked upon as one certain kind of kid or another certain kind of kid. This activity centre is as the whole community should be, and that's a place for everyone where everyone gets to know everybody else.

And there's nothing that makes a community stronger than people meeting each other, people that had stereotypes in their heads about what other people are like. You only have a stereotype until you really meet those people face to face. And I think that a lot of young people have really had their minds changed by meeting other young people who come to the centre. I think it should be a place for all young people.

Ms. Mourot: — And when we developed the youth centre we had real problems with the concept, at-risk youth. And we then talked about all youth being on a continuum of risk — whether it's my child, your child, or a child who's on the street. Everybody's at risk in some way so it's just a continuum of risk. And it was easier then to conceptualise that all kinds of kids could come to the centre.

And I also think that we do a fair amount of prevention there. And I'm sure that both Glen and Peggy will also talk about the preventive kinds of things that are done there, as well as the healing and the reclamation.

Ms. Jones: — Okay, thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We'll take one more question

and then unfortunately we're going to have to bring this to an end. Forgive us; the time is a little compressed.

Does anybody else have another question they wanted to ask?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I have just one I must ask. You have the opportunity today, ladies, right now to just, if you can in summary form, help us to know if you were legislators and if you had the legislative power in your hands to make some changes, to fill in some gaps, to take some steps in order to not only stop the activity but ensure that people out there in our society — perpetrators — know that this is not to be tolerated, what would you do? Where are the gaps? What's wrong?

So many good people like yourselves . . . There are agencies out there, there are people working, genuinely working, sincere people caring about these kids, and still we have the numbers of children on the streets on the rise. I mean, this is not stopping; it's getting worse.

And we all know how precious these human beings are. These are our brothers and sisters, our children. They're everyone's children.

So it's escalating. What's missing here? What are we not seeing? Help us.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Maybe if I could just as a very small supplement to this, a friendly supplement, what resources do you think you need at the local level that you don't have right now to do the job? Anyway, I'm anxious to hear a response to all these questions.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I would appreciate if you could just help us to fill in the gaps. Where are the gaps? What's going wrong? What's happening that is . . . What is not being addressed?

Ms. Malchert: — Well I guess one reason why people are involved in this activity, I think from the side of the youth, is that there's money to be made and people need money. Unfortunately I think for some of our young people there aren't a lot of ways for them to get involved in activities where they can support themselves, and in some cases they are supporting themselves.

I don't know the answer to your question, but I do know that there's a fair bit of money to be made in this business and maybe we need to look at some alternative ways. One of the things we've looked at at the youth centre is how do we help young people to be able to get involved in activities where they can make some money. You know, maybe set up some . . . We've thought of a lot of different things. A restaurant, for example. To start a restaurant where the kids can actually help us set it up and plan the menus and work.

I think we really have to be creative and look at ways to not only connect kids to the community but where they can actually make some money before they get involved in activities that are illegal.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Just to give you a little ray of hope. When we did hear from some of the people in Alberta, there were strategies like that that had been employed, and it wasn't necessarily a restaurant but it was catering businesses and that kind of thing.

Ms. Malchert: — It does a lot of different things.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes. Okay, so what would you say, like when you say the youth need to have an avenue to make money, a way to make some money, because a lot of this activity is because they are impoverished. Okay. So then when you hear that there's a 10-year-old child, numbers of 10-year-old children on the streets, are we looking at them in the same way and saying, you need to make money, and that's why, you know, if you had money, you wouldn't be out here? Or is there something that we're . . . What else do we need to address?

Ms. Malchert: — Yes, there's probably at 10 years old something a lot more serious going on.

Ms. Mourot: — Yes. In my mind, that's where the preventive work and the family work needs to take place. And as someone who worked for Social Services for 20-some years, I think that we really need somehow to beef up the preventive services aspect of The Family Services Act so that there is work done with families early rather than later.

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

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

A Member: — Thank you for your interest and your . . .

A Member: — Thank you for listening.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We now have the pleasure of hearing from Glen McMaster and Peggy Rubin from the youth activity centre. And I understand there's some other guest youth who are going to join you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Sure. Yes. For them to come up whenever they like is just fine.

Ms. Rubin: — I just have a few things to say. And because I was sitting back there, I thought . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Welcome, Glen and Peggy. It's really good to have you with us today and we're just really eager to hear from you. We're listening.

Ms. Rubin: — Okay. I'm Peggy Rubin and I'm the youth coordinator. This is Glen McMaster. He's one of our outreach workers.

Basically we run the youth outreach program which has a youth activity centre; also has a youth outreach van that goes out three nights a week. We do walkabouts around town. We go out in the van, which Glen does and a couple other of the workers, and we work with kids on the streets. When we're downtown, we are the outreach van; when we're in the suburbs, we are the youth activity centre.

We give out food, condoms, information, anything the kids

want — relationships, smiles. It doesn't matter; we're there for kids. We're there for anybody. Then we'll tell you a little bit more about that.

I guess, just to respond to some of the questions that you asked the other board members, I'll get right into it. At the youth activity centre we went to youth and asked them what they wanted and they told us their vision for five years.

Everything we do in Prince Albert is run by our P.A. youth council. It's run by the youth. They tell us what to do; we do it. Okay? They have an amazing amount of power and they have been amazing in what they've started.

We started a literacy program. It's for street youth on the street that want to go to school. We're open from 10 to 2:30. You don't have to go to class. You don't have to be registered. You just come. You can come one day a week. You can come one hour a week. You can come every single day. And we help them with their literacy skills, computer skills, employment skills, exactly what you're talking about in terms of training.

If you're working the streets and you don't have . . . You have to replace it with something, which I think some of these young people will tell you. If you've been on the street for a long time, you can't just say, well get off the street. You know, you have to replace it with something.

And the kids that are on the street that are 10, 11 years old, it's because they feel like nothing. They come from families where there's gambling, alcohol abuse, no one's home. The kids are on the street because they're making money, you know, to feed their brothers and sisters. This is, in some ways to me, a very easy problem. It's just basically making people feel good about themselves and cared and loved.

And I think in terms of our youth centre, some of the kids that have come off the street is because they come to the youth centre and they eat there every day, and they . . . You know, we have food. We serve them meals.

Whatever they want, we have. We have everything from recreation to cultural things. We have music. We give out music lessons. There's 80 kids taking music lessons free at our centre. There's a literacy . . . Nothing costs a dime. All the kids want, everything, it was free, because these kids can't afford, you know, to go to gymnastics and pay. Anything they want, they can get.

And basically it's fundraising. We're involved in almost every community thing that happens in town, which is, you know, Drug and Alcohol Week, Week Without Violence. They give back to the community.

And I guess I'm feeling . . . Like for us to start working with kids that are on the street, the community has to care about the kids on the street. And they don't, you know. Our kids see two or three kids together and they're a bunch of teenagers and they're getting into trouble is an attitude you get from the everyday people.

We have a community centre. We have a hundred kids down there a night. People call and complain because they're all standing out front smoking, you know. There's two or three kids, maybe five kids smoking, and they complain to me: what are those kids doing? Well I could tell you what they could be doing if they weren't down at the youth centre. I'm sorry. I get very passionate about this because it really pisses me off. But anyway.

Basically, you know, these kids are incredible kids, and if you took their energy that they have and you ask them to create programs, they would create them. So to me, you have to give kids the ability and the money and the encouragement to start. And I think you start young. You don't start . . . Our centre is at 12 years old. We need centres everywhere in town and we need them to start at 8, 9, and 10, because that's where the kids are starting. I was a teacher for years. The kids in grade 5 are smoking dope and doing drugs way before the kids are older.

And nine-tenths of the kids on the street are there because of a drug habit. They're not there because they want to be there. Has nothing to do with making big bucks. If they were making big bucks, they wouldn't be on the street any more. They'd be living in big houses and having big . . . You know, they don't make any money. They're there basically for their drug habit or to support their family or anything else.

Okay, Glen.

Mr. McMaster: — Took the words right out of my mouth. My name is Glen McMaster, and I'm sorry about the hoarse throat because I got a cold. So I won't ramble on.

Since July and August and September the outreach van has come into contact with just a little over a thousand individuals. And out of that number and with doing our own stats, it breaks down to about one-fifth are 18 and under that are working the streets here in P.A. So it's approximately 20 per cent out of the thousand people that we ran into in the three months, which is a very high number for the population of P.A.

And I've also looked at it, well maybe it's because it's a penal city. That shouldn't make a difference, you know. Just because we have more jails than anywhere else in Saskatchewan, maybe we got more pedophiles.

And I agree with the 72-hour lock-up but not for the youth. For the johns, it should be. Because they're the ones that are going downtown. They're the ones that are doing the crime.

And that was our stats, and there are my feelings before I get too frustrated.

Ms. Rubin: — I guess I should say that when we looked at our stats, basically when I first came to Prince Albert three years ago, they said there was about 30, 35 girls under 16 working the streets.

That's not true. Basically what we see on the street is, right now, I would say . . . Now there has been a decrease since we've been on the street because I have to admit we have made a difference with a lot of the kids, so there's probably one girl under 14 right now that we know that works on a regular basis.

And there's probably 10 to 15 under the age of 18 that we know.

Now there's a lot of stuff that goes on that we don't know about. There's the generational stuff that happens. There's a lot of kids that get picked up in taxis and taken to other people's homes and all that kind of stuff. And I think that's my concern, is what do we do with that? That's a scary area because, you know, we don't see it on the street, the police don't see it on the street, and we have to learn to sort of deal with that.

Our concern isn't just kids that are working on the streets. Our concern is anybody on the street. So it doesn't matter to us who you are. And you can be 50 and we'll stop and talk to you or you can be 10. It doesn't matter.

Do you have any questions?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, I'd just like to get a little clarification first on the figures. Thank you very much for sharing this information and your perspective.

I think it's really important for us as a committee to be very, very clear about what you're saying. See, you were saying, Glen, that in the course of what you estimate to be three or four months you've had contact with a thousand different individuals with the van? Thousand different people.

Mr. McMaster: — There is a couple there that are repeat but I wouldn't go . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — But the vast, vast, vast majority of them are not repeat?

Mr. McMaster: — Right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We're talking about a thousand different individuals. And you're saying of those, about one-fifth are 18 or under?

Mr. McMaster: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And the individuals that you've had contact with, are these people who are out on the street or are these people who are involved in some way in the sex trade?

Mr. McMaster: — Both, because we travel all over the city.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right. Now let's try to break those down. I mean, both numbers are really crucial. And anybody who on the street is at high risk of being pulled into sex trade obviously.

But in terms of . . . but the first figure, the thousand people, is adults and children who are on the street in some way?

Mr. McMaster: — Just walking around . . .

Ms. Rubin: — Yes, every time we see somebody we have a stat form that we tick off with the information, if we gave them condoms, what we did. So it includes everybody.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And that is somebody who took advantage of something that your van has to offer.

Mr. McMaster: — Yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — They came up to the van and they got a sandwich, or they got condoms, or they got advice, or you referred them.

Mr. McMaster: — Or just to say hi.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Yes, whatever. So you had contact with a thousand people. And then 200 of those you're saying are under 18 basically.

Mr. McMaster: — About 20 per cent, yes.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — How many of those then do you estimate are involved in the sex trade in some way? First of all, how many female children do you estimate are involved in some way?

Mr. McMaster: — Under 18, on a regular basis here is probably 15.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — So there's 15 female children under 18 who are involved on a regular basis. And then on an irregular basis, how many more do you think are involved? I realize these are just estimates.

Mr. McMaster: — Ballpark figure, probably another five to ten.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And then what about boy children who are either acting as runners for johns or who are actually involved in the sex trade themselves? Are there any?

Mr. McMaster: — That are actually prostituting themselves? I don't think there is any.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And what about who are working with pimps? You know kids who are 12, 13, 14, 15 working with a pimp, acting as a runner between the pimp and a young child who might be on the street.

Mr. McMaster: — I'd go with a good majority would be; probably half would be.

A Member: — How many would be?

Mr. McMaster: — Seven, eight.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Seven, eight boys?

Mr. McMaster: — No, that are actually being pimped.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Oh I see. So you're saying 7 of the 15 are being pimped. And then in terms of boys who are acting, who are in some way involved . . . kids who are . . . boys who are 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, who are, say, runners on bikes, do you have that kind of phenomena here?

Mr. McMaster: — That's tough to say because there are some nights we will see a lot of really young kids downtown with bikes and then for a week we won't see anybody, and then the next night we'll see a large number of them.

Ms. Rubin: — He can't give you the answer to that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — No, that's fine. I just wanted to get your sense of the . . . I'm going to pass it on to Arlene and other committee members who may have questions. Thank you for sharing that.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Fortunately the committee members do cover off a lot of the questions that we as Co-Chairs may have, so we're going to be really leaving most of this up to them right now. But in your outreach program do you have an opportunity to talk to the children? Do they have an opportunity to talk to you as sort of a person who cares about them?

They've identified you as people they trust, they care about. Do they talk to you about their lives, their past lives? Do they talk to you about incest in their homes? Do they talk to about sexual abuse by family members? Do they talk to you about what they have been through in the past? And do they talk about maybe they're not selling or having to sell themselves on the streets to get money, but that they are being basically used or forced into this activity in their homes?

Because that's an important question and I need an answer to it, because we need to see the bigger picture. Because sometimes when that is happening in the home, and I think that that's a bigger problem than any of us would even imagine, unfortunately a lot of those young people end up on the streets after. So . . .

Ms. Rubin: — I hate to interrupt you, but could we let the youth come up? I know they're anxious and they came and they were supposed to come in at 2, and maybe they can speak too and if you have any questions . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Sure. Okay, Peggy, thanks.

Mr. McMaster: — I think they'd be the best ones to answer that question too.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — All right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Welcome. It's very nice to have you join us. Could you just for the sake of the record, the *Hansard* record, and also for the benefit, above all, of all of us, could you share your names with us? If you're comfortable doing that; some of you may want to remain anonymous, so that's also all right.

Tracy: — My name's Tracy.

Ms. Ermine: — My name is Jaydeen Ermine.

Patti: — My name is Patti.

Nancy: — My name is Nancy.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Hi, Nancy and Patti and Jaydeen and Tracy. Thank you for coming.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Did you have some comments that you wanted to share with us or stories or . . .

Tracy: — Actually yes. I have an opinion on your 72-hour lock-up. As, you know, how you guys are speaking about these children that were on the street when they were younger and then they quit, and then they ended up going back to the street.

You take those children that are between 13 and 18 and you throw them into a jail for 72 hours and you expect them to be rehabilitated in some way after . . . You know, when you lock a kid up like that you condemn them and you make them feel worse about themselves. Because you're assuming . . . For one thing; you don't know the whole story behind everything.

A lot of it has to do with the foster care system. A lot of these kids are runaways. A lot of them aren't with their families where they want to be, or they can't be.

When you take a kid that's that young and you tell them, well you're a prostitute; you're being locked up for 72 hours because you did something bad — a child doesn't learn from ridicule at all. They learn to rebel. And I'll guarantee that those kids will be back out there again, because you guys . . . Like the youth centre does a lot for . . . like my kids go to the youth centre, and my kids are 10 and under. And if they didn't have that and the friendship centre, those two places to go to, my kids would probably be hanging out downtown.

I was one of those kids that was 13 years old. I did it for survival. It's called survival techniques. I got more family love from people on the street than I did from my own family, from the people that were supposed to be my caregivers.

You can't lock up kids like they're pets, you know. The johns are the ones that are supposed to . . . you know, if you stand out there, they're the ones coming down. We're not flagging them down. They pull right over; it doesn't matter who you are. You can walk down Central Street here; you can walk down 13th, 12th, 11th, 10th, 9th — you'll always see someone.

The cops know who the johns are. They see it all the time. And the identification thing, the kids will just go home and get ID (identification), you know. ID is not that hard to find.

I don't think that to lock up kids, throw them away like that, is proper. You're just asking for trouble doing that when it's not their fault. It's their home environment where they were taken out from when they were so small, things that happened to them in the past.

A lot of times a lot of people don't want to trust anybody. There's that wall there, and that wall's there for years and years and years. And they don't want anyone to get close, because people that sit behind a panel and they make all these choices and, you know, this is what we think that is right. But you don't understand it until it hits home base with you.

I was a rebellious kid; you couldn't do nothing with me. I was

in 17 different foster homes, all the juvie centres here in Saskatchewan. Nobody helped me — psychologists, psychiatrists. A lot of these kids are drug addicts, a lot of IV (intravenous) drug use in this city — a lot.

And like it's supposedly so hush. A lot of people know that, but a lot of people don't want to address that, you know. And like these are . . . I know girls who work the street that are under 18. I kick 13-year-olds off the street, you know. They don't belong there.

Where's the parents, you know? A lot of the times there are parents out there doing the same thing that those kids are doing and that's where the child's learning. And that's where I think that everything has to be addressed is to the home, not taking the child from the home and then putting them here and then making the family find out and everybody else, you know. Because they're a victim.

Money is a big thing in the world for survival when you're on your own and you're 13-years-old, 10-years-old. What are you going to do? Nowhere to go, your mom don't want you, your mom is a drug addict or something like that. You know, what are you supposed to do? You've got to eat, you've got to have a place to sleep, you know. I know it.

I stick by the kids because the kids . . . you can't make anything out of ridiculing. They're not animals; they're just little people, little adults. They're not so small minded as everybody wants to think they are. They're very smart. I have seven children so I know what I'm talking about.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Would you like to add any more, Tracy, to what you have said.

We might as well go on.

Tracy, there may be committee members who would like to just talk to you according to what you've said, your witness. And you may also want to address a question to any one of us and you'll have the opportunity to do that. But before that we're going to be really pleased to hear from Jaydeen now.

Ms. Ermine: — I'd like to agree. She's right. Because I worked those streets when I was 11, but I was forced to be on those streets from a 16-year-old girl. And from my past, that's where it does come from like she says. You get taken from your home and then you get placed into foster home to foster home to foster home.

What I would like to know, how come none of the johns have been picked up and put in the lock-up for 72 hours? It's always the prostitutes. You see it in *The Herald* and that, but you never see anything about the johns. That's one thing I wonder. Because I know a lot of girls that are working those streets too. And they are some of my friends and it does bother me to see young girls on the streets.

Like me and my old man were saying if we were ever to win a lottery, and if they ever to open that . . . that Holy Family was to be put on for sale and if we could afford the money, we would buy that home and then we would . . . for the kids. The kids that are on the streets, we would open that place to those kids. That way they have a home to go to. They have people that care for them and love them and have counselling done for them and all of that other stuff.

They would have . . . how would you put it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, like a shelter, a safe shelter for the young kids. And that's what they need. They need someone that they can go home to and knowing they're cared and loved for and that.

Just like she says, the parents don't want them and that's . . . when I worked those streets, I worked the streets because I needed money to survive. I needed money to give the people where I was staying. That's why I worked those streets. I had no home to go to, so that's why I worked those streets.

But that's one thing that would be probably good is for them to have a shelter. Like they have rules there. Sure they'll like have their own little chore, be in at a certain time. Like that would be something me and my old man would . . . if we could afford it, which we can't. But if that could be done, that would probably help out a lot of those people that are on the streets. And that's what they need.

Sure there's these youth activity centres and all of that, but they can't sleep at these places. They're there to go and eat and all of that. They need somewhere where they can go and sleep. Like some of them sleep on the streets, at the riverbank, and all of that. That's sad to see.

But that's what I think they need is somewhere they can go home to, and God knows, maybe doing something like that, it will help them out. But one thing they need to do is look after the johns, not the prostitutes. It's the johns that are doing it.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, thank you, Jaydeen. Patti.

Patti: — Yes. Good afternoon. I really, really feel that the 72-hour lock-up should be for the johns. I'm really, really . . . it really makes me angry to even think that some people would even think of putting a kid in 72-hour lock-up because they're on the street. And you know, it just angers me because it's not their fault.

The kids are . . . they go to the streets because most of them are hungry. Yes, maybe they're physically hungry, they want to eat. But then most of them too, they have hunger for love and for friendship and for . . . And that's what they go looking for and they find it with other kids that are out there. And then they eventually, eventually they run into . . . there's some bad apples out there that . . .

Johns are actually nowadays — I know it for a fact — johns are actually offering drugs in exchange for sex on the street. And that, you know, that it really, really, like I said it really angers me because what these kids are doing, once they get into the drug scene, is like they're going out and having sex for — what is a pill worth actually when it's manufactured, what? — 2 cents.

And there's this john driving around in his — what? — $15,000

car, fancy suit, you know, and offering them what they want. This is what they want, the pills, right. Or maybe they give them a little bit of money because they're hungry. They take them to the A & W or give them money to go to the A & W, whatever, or McDonald's.

And as far as . . . I think it was this gentleman that was asking the people from outreach about when the kids, like do the kids talk to the . . . is there someone that the kids talk to? Like it's hard for a kid to go to . . . and just out and openly talk to someone that doesn't really know. Well they know what the kid wants to say but the kid doesn't really . . . he or she is scared to bring it out. Well I think there's a need for, like for people that, women that have been there.

And I'm speaking, personally I'm speaking from past experience. I've been out of this scene now for about 15 years. But I'm still . . . there's the old saying that you can take the woman from the street but you can't take the street from the woman.

So I find myself coming downtown and walking around and seeing my old friends and talking with them. And I also see a lot of these really young girls, you know, and they talk to me and they want . . . what they want from me, I find, is a place to come and sleep, something to eat, some friendship, you know, someone to talk to. And I try to do that, try to, but like I've just got a small apartment. I'm not rich.

But I really don't, like I really disagree with putting these kids in a 72-hour lock-up. Because all that's going to do is they're going to sit there in lock-up and they're going to be really angry, and this anger is just going to build up and build up and build up inside of them until the 72 hours . . . By the time the 72 hours is up and they're released or whatever, they're going to be so angry at the system or at the people that put them there that they're going to retaliate.

And then that's when you get into all the . . . And then they're stuck because then they get involved with the justice system and then the justice system . . . and then they get put into a receiving home, and then a foster home, and then foster home, foster home, foster home — it's just one big circle, you know. And then every time they get from foster home to another, the anger is building up, building up, building up.

And when you get a kid that's 12 or 13 years old and by the time they're 16, 17, or by the time they're jail age, that's where they're going to end up — in jail.

So I really think that it's the johns that the people should be going after. And that's my contribution.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you very, very much.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thanks, Patti.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Nancy, did you have any comments that you'd like to share with us?

Nancy: — Just pretty much I'm agreeing with everybody here. Like I've been in the scene . . . like, I'm 25 years old and I've worked the streets since I was, like, 15. It's pretty much all the same thing. It's the home life. Like I wish when I was at that age I wish I had the, you know, a youth centre to go to, to fall back on.

But pretty much, like Tracy said, like partially all the people that I know, that I grew to love are street people. And my reason for running away from home was because of the physical, you know, sexual abuse. And being on the streets, you know, I had nowhere to go, like at that age, you know, like a youth centre to go to. And basically it is what these kids look for out there is people to talk to, somewhere to go sleep, eat, you know, and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, attention. You know, it's all we . . . you know, people that . . . I know girls out there that work the street that are only 13, 14 years old and that's basically the same reason why they're out there is because the sexual abuse, you know, physical abuse.

And I know as for the 72-hour lock-up, I agree with Patti— it's not going to make them think secondly about it; it's going to make them growing up hating the justice system. Because I know I've been locked up for the same reasons. Never helped me. It just made me to grow to hate the justice system. And I think the 72-hour lock-up should be for the johns. Because if they weren't out there, the young girls wouldn't be out there. And that's all I got to say.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you. Thank you all very much. I think what you've said is really, really important for all of us to hear. And we're going to . . . We'll ask you some questions, if that's all right. And we hope you'll feel free to ask us some questions too.

But I'd like to . . . Arlene, did you have any questions you wanted to ask? And invite other committee members . . . I see Ron and Carolyn have questions, June. Why don't we start with you, Arlene.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Why don't we. You know, in all of your testimonies, I could hear within your voices and your hearts some anguish because of what you've had to live through, but also some anguish about the injustice that's out there and the misunderstanding and how people sort of misjudge and misunderstand why you have to be on the street sometimes, and how judgments can come to hurting you even more. So there's obviously a necessary need for people to come to listen, to understand, to know the truth about, you know, not only your past, but past history in this province and what has happened to the Indian people and Metis people and all people — and to women.

But I want to tell you, as you were speaking about the 72-hour lock-up and how you definitely were opposed to that, I am opposed to lock-up too. The first question that went through my mind when I heard you women was, who in God's name ever, ever told you that the 72 hours was to lock you up in jail and sort of throw away the key for 72 hours and treat you like an animal? I don't know who told you that, but it is not true.

There was a 72-hour assessment that would be done when police for instance . . . I'll just give you a little scenario here. A woman phoned me in Regina the other day and she said that her

15-year-old daughter was on . . . or 16-year-old daughter was on the street. And this woman said, she is in danger and I know she's in danger; she's been drawn into the sex trade. And she really is with a bunch of people who are, you know, using a lot of drugs so, you know, may not be able to use the reasoning.

And what she said she'd like to see, she said isn't there some mechanism in place where someone can . . . the police can apprehend her? I'm her mother. Can I not have the police apprehend her and take her to a place where she can start drug and alcohol treatment, some rehabilitation, some counselling, with me, with family, with all of us, so that we can take her out of danger?

And that was the whole intent of the 72 hours was to assist people. It's not scooping up people from the streets. That's not happening. It's to assist people.

Ms. Rubin: — But the only problem is we do not have the resources in Saskatchewan to do that. And I understand . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I realize that.

Ms. Rubin: — Just so you know. We don't have the resources to . . . (inaudible) . . . everybody.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I know.

Ms. Rubin: — Because we've had three kids last month that wanted to go to drug and rehab training and we couldn't put them anywhere. Just so you know.

Tracy: — You have to be 18 to go to the MACSI (Metis Addiction Council of Saskatchewan Inc.) centre here in town, to the detox and you tell me that there's no IV drug users under 18 in Saskatchewan? That's a bunch of . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I think that's part of the same . . .

Tracy: — The thing is with that is that these kids don't need to be sectored out like that . Do you understand what I'm saying? I'm not . . . I would never want to hear about the pain, you know.

Think of a little child explaining what someone did to them, you know? There's nothing that you can't cure that or help them; it's done, it's there, you know, and you take . . . you say it's an assessment and that, that's just like saying they're little projects, you know. Everybody is a project.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, it's a word that we used that is not a good word.

Tracy: — We can't force anyone to get treatment. They have to do it on their own if they want to. That parent you're talking about? Why didn't that parent go downtown and get her daughter or whatever, you know. I know if it was my kid standing out on the corner I'd be right there. I've taken a 13-year-old girl home to her mom more than once and I've given that mother shit, you know.

She could care less. Do you understand what I'm saying?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Right, but you do care.

Tracy: — The mother that stands at a distance and wants the cops to get involved? That's where that comes in, where the retaliation comes in for the police, everybody else. They don't want to be at home for a reason. That mother has some sort of problem, because I know if my kid was standing out on a corner I would be right there 24/7. I wouldn't let a cop, social services, anything, pick up my kid.

You know that street over there? Those kids, you can see them all the time, you see them all the time. What's stopping the parent from — they know what's going on — what's stopping them from coming and getting them?

People like me look after those little kids. Do you understand what I'm saying

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes.

Tracy: — I am a prostitute. I've taken kids and I've fed them. I've pulled tricks so that these kids have food, so that they can eat, so they have somewhere to sleep. I have a two-bedroom apartment. I've had more than two, three, four people sleep in my place at a time. You know you can't just be picking . . . and they're young, like young, and you guys can't do nothing about it, you know.

Assess someone. You can't force treatment on anybody because it will never ever work — ever. The kid has to be willing. And nine times out of ten I bet you they won't want to talk about it, because you guys look like you're in suits and everything. You know what I mean? Like a social worker. They don't want to tell you anything. They get into trouble. The more they say, the more trouble they get into.

Patti: — When you say that . . . Okay, are you saying that you're going to be picking up the child prostitutes and then you're going to be taking them for a 72-hour assessment?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — In Alberta what they have done is they have not, they have not just at random had, you know, the police just go out onto the streets and scoop them up . . . Just like you would have an outreach worker or a policeman.

One of you mentioned the police know the johns that are out there. They know who they are. They also know the people that are on the streets because they're out there, because they're impoverished, and because they know who the people are out there. They know that you were out there because you're . . .

Tracy: — There's cops taking out girls out on the streets here in the city, Regina, and Saskatoon, and you're expecting those same people that take us girls out to end up being our jailers for our children. Do you really think that there's a perfect person . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Are all of the cops the same? Do you feel that all cops . . .

Tracy: — Well, I've been . . . I'll tell you something . . . (inaudible) . . . two police officers I know in this city, that I

know that are married, have asked me out. And I've said no. And they've propositioned me more than once, okay. And these cops have access to my children? Do you think I'm going to want a cop to . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I just wanted to . . . the other members of the committee want to ask some questions but I do want to point out to you that the intent of the legislation with the 72 hours was never to lock anybody up. It was meant to help and to protect and assist you if you want help.

Tracy: — It's a constitutional right to be proven guilty first in a court of law. To have a child . . .

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — It's not seeing you as a guilty one. It's seeing you as the victim and to assist you in that. That's what it was for.

Tracy: — Isn't that what victim services is for?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I should just clarify that we haven't made any decisions about a 72-hour lock-up here. And that's why your comments are very, very important. This is simply an Alberta proposal that we are looking at among others.

Tracy: — It failed there.

Patti: — I still haven't got my question answered.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Please, please go ahead.

Patti: — I just wanted to know who was going to be doing the picking up? That was my question.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. Well as it is right now if the police . . . For instance, you were wondering why the johns aren't picked up. Well the law at hand is that it doesn't matter whether it's johns or whether it's the victim, the police don't have the tools in place. The law is not made so that they can just assess that a young person is in danger and take them out of that danger. Nor can they approach the john and take him away unless the john is caught in the act.

And so, who is going to do it? The police. If there's a policewoman . . . Designated police. Not all police are designated police . . .

Patti: — I totally disagree with that — with the police picking up the children. I believe that maybe an outreach worker along with — if they have a person that has been there, that has been on the street and knows what this child is going through, exactly what they're doing, why they're doing it — if there's an outreach worker with one of these people, persons that have been there and done it and they're now kind of on . . . they're moving on, I think that would be a better idea.

And as far as the police picking up these children . . . Okay, you say well the police are going to be picking up the johns so therefore the police are going to be picking up the children. Well the children don't have the money to flash to the police that the johns do.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay. So you would, you have then from what I am hearing, you would not be opposed to someone identifying children in danger or young people in danger and the outreach workers possibly being there too. To say, if there are the services in place, let it be maybe outreach workers would then introduce them to the services that might be there or help them with that.

Patti: — I'm not opposed to that at all. I'm sure that would be a good . . . a good answer; for an outreach worker, along with someone that has been there and knows what the child is going through.

Ms. Rubin: — And I just want to remind you that, no offence or anything, but you're here to listen to these people. And it's like you're lecturing and I don't think we really . . . We're here to tell you and then you guys can make your own decision. But we are here to tell you. I'd appreciate it if you could just listen and not lecture. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Are there committee members who'd like to ask questions?

Mr. Harper: — Yes, first of all, I want to thank you very, very much for coming in here this afternoon and sharing your experiences with us. I personally am more interested in prevention than anything else. And now from your statements there seemed to be a general theme that all four of you were experiencing difficulty in staying in your parental home and it caused you to leave.

In many cases you ended up in foster homes and, as you indicated, went from foster home to foster home. Could you share with us some of your experiences in those foster homes that would cause you to move on and on.

Patti: — Just feeling like, okay, your bedroom is in the basement; you don't get to eat with the family. And then you run away, and then you run away and then you eventually get picked up and you get put in another foster home. And then it just basically . . . And then there's even abuse, you know. Like well, I'm 42 years old, so when I was in foster homes, I was going through the system; I started at 10 years old and right up until I was 16. So that's six years.

And I went through I think about probably five foster homes. And actually it was the last one that actually worked for me, and to this day I still keep in contact with that family. They are my . . . I consider them my family. They consider me their daughter; my children, their grandchildren.

But before that, yes, I had . . . My second foster home I ran into the foster father told the foster mother that he was taking me to a Bible study. Well there is no Bible study that happens to be 10 miles out of the city, you know, in a field with me fighting and scratching and everything so that this guy wouldn't literally rip my clothes off. And I was only 12 years old.

And that was like . . . I just went through abuse after abuse after abuse until I finally found the right people.

Mr. Harper: — So the foster home system didn't offer you any

home.

Patti: — Well this was back then. Like this was about 30 years ago.

Mr. Harper: — Would that be true for all of you?

Tracy: — I'll make a statement on that. My kids were all in foster care. My kids, I almost lost my kids to the ward of the court. If it was not for my family, I would not have any of my kids. I would rather my kids be with my family than in one of . . . Not to insult you guys in any way, but I would never trust my kids to be with any one of you people. Because every foster home that a child goes into, especially in the city . . . You know, they want to make now . . . they got this thing about we have all these Native homes for Native kids.

When it was my age and what I seen with my kids is that you take a Native kid and you stick them in with a white family, you know, and there's already that stereotype there — do you understand what I mean? I went into a foster home and they thought I was a little boy. They didn't even know what sex I was, you know.

And then I got shipped and shipped. And I could only imagine what my kids went through. So I put an end to that. You know, I had to give my kids to my mom, to my brothers, to my family, you know. But to have that happen, like you guys could never understand in any means the torture and the pain that someone goes through to be held down by a person that isn't your parent and have Tabasco sauce poured down your mouth for saying the F word.

There's more abuse in your foster home system than there is in normal homes. I was never hit in my home. I was never punched in my home. My mom drank — that was my mom's big crime. But I was always fed; I was always clothed.

Because a white person phoned welfare on my mom, I gotten taken away at five years old, and I was stuck in that system till I was 16 years old, till I was old enough to walk away from the detention centre and say up, up yours. And I even phoned them and told them that, you know, I'm gone, I'm out of here, I'm on my own, you know. I ended up having a baby a year later, then another one, then another one, then another one.

And then look at me now, where I am now. I have nothing. I have kids but I don't have kids. You know what I mean? I'm a part-time parent in that I never . . . I don't know how to be a parent because I was never parented, you know. As a child I was never parented.

I don't have that same feeling and emotion or bond that everybody would have with a kid. I have a certain amount, you know. I love my kids — I know that, you know. But then they try and teach, you know, what you guys were talking about, this foster homes and that, they try to teach the parents how to care and love for their children. Well, I've had three different parenting classes — didn't teach me nothing I didn't know already. They tried to force me to go alcohol and drug treatment. Good luck! They'll be waiting a long time.

I've been a drug addict for over two years. If I don't . . . All these kids that you see that are on the street now, that's what scares you guys is to see them turning out like me. Well, they're already well on that stage. They know what they're doing — a lot of them do.

You know, not too long ago there was 10 of us that got raped by one guy. I reported it; the cops did nothing. I was the only one who come forward out of all the girls. And the cops do nothing.

Johns, back to the johns, you know. What do you guys do about them? You know, they're the ones that are the criminals. They're the ones offering the money for the sex. And then they don't pay, but then when they don't . . . How it looks to police officers, you know, these guys that are supposed to uphold the law. We're just Natives in this city; and we're just Natives and prostitutes and it's the lifestyle we live and we get what we deserve. I've been told that by a cop in this city.

I was told by a cop in this city, why don't I go home and be with my baby. Because my baby was taken away from me when it was less than 24 hours old, and my baby was going into seizures when I told them to leave my baby in the hospital — foster care, again. You know, they could have killed my kid by taking my kid out of the hospital. They didn't want to listen; I don't know nothing.

So there's a lot of prejudice in this city towards Natives. You don't see no — I'll tell you one thing — you don't see a whole hell of a lot of white kids on that corner in this city. You don't see a whole hell of a lot. You see the white kids coming downtown. They're willing to sell the drugs to the other kids. That's just . . . you know.

Patti: — Yeah, or the white guys in their fancy cars.

Tracy: — Yeah, the white guys in the fancy cars, and the cops that want to be a little bit . . . you know, get a little bit of money on the side. And it's all the truth, you know. I have no reason to bullshit about anything. I'm a very straightforward person; I'll tell you how it is.

Patti: — The foster system, foster home, I believe they're not . . . Well I guess I should speak from my experience, I guess, again.

They weren't screened. I don't know now if this screening has gotten better, but back then when I was a teenager, they weren't screened very well. Not at all. I think the Social Services were . . . I think they were so bogged down with all these children, all these runaways, and all these . . . You know, it was sort of a . . . We were sort of like bucks being passed, like you know, from one resource to another. Like, you know.

They send you to a receiving home; well they didn't want you there. You're supposed to only be there for three days, so they send you to a detention home, okay? Detention home, they keep you there for six months to a year and then they think you're rehabilitated so they send you to a foster home. That one doesn't work out so then you go to another foster home.

Tracy: — . . . they ship you off to another place.

Mr. Harper: — So what you're saying is your foster home experience was worse than your parental home?

Patti: — Pardon me?

Mr. Harper: — Would you say your foster home experiences was worse than your parental home?

Patti: — No. No, no. Actually I used to try to run away from Regina. When I was 10 years old I used to run away and I used to try to find the highway to get home to my reserve.

See, my mother came to my reserve when I was 10 and took me away from my home. And my mother was an alcoholic and a drug addict. And she left me when I was five with my father. And then all of a sudden when I was 10 she decided she was going to come and get me. So my dad felt like he was helpless. I didn't want to leave my father but my mother took me anyway. And that's how it started.

That's how I ended up through the foster system and then to the detention home and then to the jail and then penitentiary. And then I cleaned up.

Tracy: — I'd have to be exactly the opposite. Like I was through 17 different foster homes and all these places, you know. And yes, it was a lot worse than actually living at home — a lot worse. That's why I ended up on the street. That's why I ended up working.

I couldn't go home because those people were going to my mom's house, searching the house everywhere — closets, attic — everywhere for me. And the only time I'd go there is real late at night and real early in the morning. And in between then I had to survive on my own.

Ms. Ermine: — From my experiences from foster homes, another thing foster homes do is they lie to you. You want to talk to your mom and they say your mom doesn't want nothing to do with you any more. That's what happened to me.

I was told, your mom doesn't want nothing . . . She was actually supposed to be my auntie. It's my real mom's sister that adopted me. And I got taken away for certain reasons and then I wanted to go back home and they told me, your mom doesn't want nothing more to do with you and all of this other stuff.

And then I find out later on . . . I'm riding down the street and I see my mom on the bus. I'm not allowed to leave from my foster home but I missed my mom. I haven't seen her in over a year and a half. So I said I wasn't listening to the foster home. They want to pick me up, they'll pick me up. So I followed that bus and I went and saw my mom.

And they turned around . . . And she turned around and told me that Social Services were telling her that I don't want to see her.

Tracy: — And they agreed with that?

Ms. Ermine: — Yes. So I took my mom up to this foster home. Me and her went up there. I got in trouble after she left. I got a licking and I was told you're not allowed to eat or nothing, because you disobeyed us. Your mom shouldn't have never been up here.

Tracy: — You lose visits, you lose . . . because you're not the perfect kid that everybody seems to want. You know how you guys are saying this assessment stuff? That's where all these kids are going to end up, is somewhere in the system, right? The system fails. The system ain't going to get better with 72 hours. You know you will never change a kid in 72 hours, not even get them started on what they need.

You have to live the thing, experience the thing, to heal from the thing, to understand these children.

Patti: — Yes. The assessment, the 72-hour assessment would be . . . it would work if it was immediately followed up by the child spending time with someone that would . . . that's been there, someone that has quit the scene but knows the scene.

Tracy: — And culture is a big thing. A lot of kids lose their culture when they're put in these places that you guys are talking about.

I don't even . . . You know I just learned how to burn sweet grass and everything else like that and I'm 27 years old. I was raised in white families; no one taught me nothing. A lot of these people lose their spirituality.

Ms Ermine: — You're not allowed to talk Cree in foster homes because the foster parents . . .

Tracy: — They don't know what you're talking about. They think that you're swearing at them and all this other stuff, you know.

Patti: — They try so hard to . . .

Tracy: — Just like residential schools — same thing, different pile.

Patti: — What do you call that? A cultural genocide. Yes, that's what I like to call it, cultural genocide.

Mr. Harper: — One final question, Peter . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Sorry, Ron, I just want to apologize to everybody, particularly to the four of you who are good enough to testify right now, and also to members of the committee, that we're about three quarters of an hour behind and we're going to have to bring this to a close. And I'm sorry because I feel like we're right in the middle of a discussion.

I just want to point out that there's a section tonight. There's a time tonight between 8 and 10 when people can come forward and just kind of give . . . it's an open floor. And I hope you'll feel welcome to come tonight and to continue the discussion.

Ron, we'll take this final question and then this will need to be it.

Mr. Harper: — As I said earlier, I'm more interested in prevention. If there was something that could have been done

different in your life, say from the time you left your parental home, at that point in time, something that could have been done different that would have prevented you from entering into the street scene, what could have been done differently to prevent that?

Tracy: — I was shocked from a child being taken away from its parents' arms. It's permanent. Right there, you screw up the kid. Right there, when you take that kid from the parent. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Mr. Harper: — Yes, I am.

Tracy: — You can't really prevent what's going to happen.

Mr. Harper: — Are you saying then, that the best treatment would have been to be able to work with your family to prevent . . .

Tracy: — Yes, with the family rather than with other people, you know.

Patti: — If the social services system back when I was 10 years old and I was trying so desperately to get back to my reservation, if the Social Services at that time would have listened to me when I told them that I didn't want to live with my mother, that I wanted to go home to my father, and if they would have took me home to my father, I never . . . my life never would have turned out the way it did.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you all. Thank you all very, very much.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm going to suggest that we take a five-minute break, and when we come back we're going to hear from Carol Friedhoff — I hope I've pronounced that correctly; forgive me, Carol, if I haven't — who's the province-wide coordinator for the Aboriginal Women's Council.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We're going to resume the hearings. We're looking forward to hearing from Carol Friedhoff. Carol, thanks for being willing to address us this afternoon and we're really looking forward to your comments. And we'll just invite you to introduce yourself and proceed.

Ms. Friedhoff: — Good afternoon. My name is Carol Friedhoff and I work for the Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan. My program is called the province-wide program and I'm the coordinator of that. It's my duty to travel throughout Saskatchewan and hold wellness workshops from north, south, east, west, wherever; also to go into the schools and work with youth crime prevention.

We are very involved with the project called the Woman Find project. And that is where, together with Sask Justice and the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and the Prince Albert City Police, we've set up a system where we do a kit similar to Child Find. And we take pertinent ID from different women, you know, birthmarks, their health card number, treaty number, whatever. We also fingerprint the women and we take pictures and we keep the kit on file in case a person goes missing. And this happened . . . I'll just read you a small part. It said:

> In the fall of 1994 the bodies of four young Aboriginal women were found in a bush near the Moonlake golf course outside of Saskatoon. At that time a percentage of the 470 missing persons in western and northern Canada were Aboriginal women.

And that's what got the ladies from the Aboriginal Council to get going and get this project going. We're targeting women in high-risk lifestyles.

We also have a number of other programs. We have a school mediation program where we have a lady that goes into all of the community schools in Prince Albert and works dealing with conflict and how to deal with it in a healthy way.

We have the wellness centre, which is a lady that is available in the city who helps with advocacy with Social Services, with landlords, whatever they need, counselling, support of any kind. We have the Aboriginal human resources development strategy, AHRDA, so we provide funding for women in different educational areas. And we also run the alternate measures program. So we have a number of programs going in our agency.

I don't know if you guys have any more questions about the agency, whatever.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Carol, where have you seen the most benefits in . . . how have you seen . . . have you seen lives change basically because of this?

Ms. Friedhoff: — Oh, definitely. I can address my program. And this man here kept talking about prevention. And when we go into a community and we talk about community wellness, what we do is talk about the different forms of abuse and how that leads into all of the negative feelings, you know, shame, guilt, depression, a lot of anger, and how those tie into children getting involved in dysfunctional lifestyles — addictions, suicide, many different areas of problems — and how it's an intergenerational process.

And we also get into teaching people about holistic healing. And it's not just one, we'll go into any age group. We can go into the schools, and I've done presentations for kindergarten grades. I like targeting mostly the older grades but I believe that we should be into the schools at earlier ages.

And in the communities that we go to, sad to say, they're very lacking in resources. Prince Albert itself seems to be resource-rich, but many of the not even northern, southern, but rural areas, are very sadly lacking in resources of any kind. And I'd like to say that one of the problems that I've heard from youth time and time again is that most of the services available are 9 to 5, and that's not when the problems happen.

Some of these self-help lines, the suicide lines and that, are

awesome because they're 24-hour lines. And there should be more services, alternate services. Besides the 9 to 5 there should be evening services, and a lot more youth programming. I know there . . . like I said, there's a lot in Prince Albert but there has to be more if we want to see this problem start, there has to be a lot more youth programming.

And also, before you ask any questions, I believe that one of the biggest reasons for youth becoming involved in the sex trade is family abuse that starts at early ages. So we have to start targeting children when they're going to school, preschool, when they have these Head Start programs going, offering those as positive for children.

But also in the schools' life skills programs, programs that we offer — things that teach them what is abuse, teach the rights, teach the awareness of what abuse is and the rights that the children of any age, a person of any age has not to be abused, and some of the holistic healing and traditional teachings.

I would also like to say that racism has to be one of the biggest factors in why children become involved. And that I know people are tired of hearing it, but it is the truth that when the history of Canada and the residential schools and the problems and the dysfunction and the anger and the depression — all of those feelings come from being involved in a system where you are less than. Your culture, your spirituality, your language — everything is less than.

And I know that I myself, I'm a Metis, but because of my colour I know I get treated a lot different than my children would because they're dark and they look Aboriginal.

And whatever, I don't care if, racism — people want to turn their ear off — is something that has to be addressed and this happens with a lot of the johns. You hear the women talking about the big shots in their fancy cars and everything, coming up to the kids. Well I have to say that with the class system that we have, a lot of the big shots are, and I hate to say it, are white. They're other than Aboriginal. Okay. And when they come up to the young girls they're looking at somebody from the racism — less than.

So that is a huge factor and that has to be addressed and that has to be dealt with and the public has to be educated. I know people are tired of hearing it, but it has to be addressed in some way.

And I also believe that youth centres they were talking about, 24-hour youth centres, it's needed. It's a huge need. And not just in Prince Albert but the other areas that I go to. So if you guys are thinking on shovelling any money anywhere, take a look at the youth centres, okay — 24-hour youth centres, life skills programs in the school, starting as early as what? grade 4, grade 5. Start helping the youth to build their lives. Okay.

And you have a direction with the Justice program in opening the healing centres for offenders. And that looks at . . . instead of taking somebody and putting them in a six-week program. You're not going to heal anybody in six weeks. But if you take them and you're putting them in for 18 months, two years, that's a direction to go in because it takes a long time to heal; a lot of issues to be dealt with.

Addictions. In Saskatchewan there is nothing for youth really. Okay. That has to be addressed, the addictions for the youth. And that's all different ages. And I believe somehow that could tie in with the youth centres, too.

And more women in higher positions and policy making and strategy planning. We need more women to address the issues, I believe. And that has to do with the Aboriginal politics, as well as mainstream politics. So somehow we have to open the door for women.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Just open any questions that the committee members might have right now. So committee members, if you would like to talk with Carol about some of the things she said.

Ms. Jones: — I have a question I didn't get an opportunity to ask the previous presenters and I'd like to say it loud enough so that anyone else who's coming after you would have an opportunity to think about it too before they present.

And we certainly heard the last presenters loud and clear on the 72-hour detention or lock-up or whatever you choose to call it. Assessment. And we heard loud and clear that the johns are the perpetrators and need to be prosecuted. My question is how? I wanted to ask those four people because I believe that they've all been in the situation.

But our problem is, if the police see a john take a child into their vehicle and they approach the vehicle and ask the man what he's doing with this child, the child isn't going to tell. The child isn't going to say he's picking me up for sex. And so, unless you catch a john physically actually having sex with a child, they're very difficult to charge and convict and begin the process.

So my question of anybody who is going to talk to us is, how do we prosecute johns?

Ms. Friedhoff: — Well, first of all, I believe that a lot of the people . . . we have a large population of pedophiles and I believe a lot of these . . . I'm not sure, because I don't really work with the children that are on the street; I don't work one-to-one with them.

But I do have a number of friends . . . like, I kind of grew up on the street myself and I know a lot of the women involved in the sex trade or who were involved in the sex trade. And one of the things is this protection of, how would you say, the rights of offenders. Somehow that has to be opened up so that people know who the pedophiles are. If they've been charged once, if they've been charged twice, do they deserve to be protected and the community put at risk for their protection? That would be an issue for me.

I believe that if the police can't make charges then, they should keep this guy on a list. Because for sure if he's down there picking up the kids he's going to get caught again, and he's going to get caught again. He may not be able to be charged, but I mean by the second, third time you pick up a guy with

some kid in the car, you're going to have some kind of suspicions there.

So I don't know how you would catch the johns. I don't know how they do it with . . . It's hard. You can't have a kid that . . . or a woman, a policewoman that looks like she's, what, 15 years old, and put her out on the street.

Ms. Jones: — Exactly. Or 10.

Ms. Friedhoff: — Ten, yes. That's horrible. But when these guys do get caught, the book should be thrown at them. And I mean the prostitutes . . . it's good that they are being seen as victims now where they never were before. So we have to keep that going, that momentum going, where it's not going to slide back again where the prostitutes are the criminals. The johns are the criminals.

But when I hear different stories of a guy taking a couple of young girls out across and filling them full of alcohol and everything and the child is, what, 12 years old and the guy slips her a Demerol and takes her virginity and somehow the shame is on her. How does that happen?

I mean what in our society allows the shame to go to the child, to the woman-child or to the man-child, whatever, to the child, when the shame . . . And I don't know how that has to be changed but it's the victims that carry the shame and the guilt and somehow, even if they are taken to court and the john is charged, the shame still goes on the victim. And I don't know how that can be changed but that has to be changed.

Because I would believe that would be one of the ways too of getting into prostitution is if you have something like that happen.

And these girls talk about foster homes and the sexual abuse and the physical abuse and the emotional abuse, and somehow the shame and the guilt goes to them. How? Like, that process, how do you shift that? I think that would be a way to look at it.

Ms. Jones: — Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — Carol, thank you very much for your presentation. One aspect that you talked about, I was really pleased to hear you talk about the education that's so important so we can maybe start stopping the cycle. And you said you went into the school system itself and it's part of your programming.

Well do you get invited into the school system, do you have to ask to go, and how much time do you actually spend with the children? And what age are you addressing?

Ms. Friedhoff: — I have to go ask. I approach the schools and ask them to do presentations. Usually the way it's been working now is I go from each classroom and I do 45-minute presentations and I use a little bit of my own life experiences, you know, sexual abuse survivor. And I carry it on to what happened to me, to the addictions. And it's pretty good. The kids listen well.

What I would like to do and how I am setting up the program now is I would like to go into the schools and spend a couple of days. And that would be maybe the first day is to address the issues of violence and abuse and addictions and all of the negative parts, but also to be able to go into the schools the next day and to do a little bit of work on holistic healing.

And somehow it's not . . . it doesn't work well sometimes trying to get a whole group of kids in your gymnasium, but I'm sure that with older, you know, grade 9, 10, up to 12, it would all right to do full workshops, you know, with the whole school.

And the ages . . . I guess in kindergarten, I was out at Mistawasis and I had a group of . . . that's the youngest I've ever done; they would be the five-year-olds. And it was a simple presentation talking about hands and how hands are for helping and healing and soothing, and hands are not for hitting and hands are not for hurting. So a simple presentation like that.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Are there any other members that would like to speak with Carol? Peter, did you have any . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — In that case I don't think any of the other committee members have a question, Carol, but I have one and it's on the issue of racism and this is a tough question to answer. But I heard you saying very clearly that you feel that racism is one of the key root causes of child sexual abuse on the streets. And I'm wondering what recommendations you have about what the . . . I mean obviously there are a lot of attitude changes that need to take place, but what kinds of things can the provincial government be doing or supporting at a community level to be done that would help to address the issue of racism?

Ms. Friedhoff: — Much more community cultural awareness with teachers, with police, with lawyers, with doctors, with all of the people that work hands on with youth, with adults, dysfunctional adults. They have to be made aware that there are cultural differences and to understand. I think we have a big backlash where, you know, oh, Natives are getting this and Natives are getting that, and it's free. People don't understand the history, okay?

And somehow if we get into the communities they have . . . I worked last year on the Stop Racism Youth Challenge and I thought that was an awesome way to get out. It got me into the communities doing workshops on racism, and that was workshops for anybody. And I believe that there should be more of those.

But the people in power have to be educated as well. They must be taught by the Aboriginal people that have gone through the system, okay, that can tell you the everyday things that happened to them. And when you live that life, well why blame the victim for feeling angry towards the people. See it may not be the same people, but it's sort of like a back wave of racism also.

And somehow this has to be worked out. It has to be brought right out into the open, all the ugly old truth that people want to hide. And that has to be education for all levels, the everyday people as well as the big guys.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you, Carol. Thank you very, very much. We'd like to again invite you to, well stay throughout the process. And there'll be sort of a open session this evening after 8 o'clock which you would be very welcome to take part in. Thank you very much for coming.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Carol.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We're going to hear next from . . . We've got two other presentations before we break for supper. The first is from Al Dreaver and Julie Pitzel from the Prince Albert Friendship Centre. And I'd invite them to come forward now.

And then we're also going to hear from two representatives from the Prince Albert Grand Council, and then we'll break for supper.

So anyway, Allan and Julie, welcome. And we're really looking forward to what you have to say.

Mr. Dreaver: — I have a handout that I'd like to pass out to you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thanks, Al.

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

Mr. Dreaver: — Being a retired bureaucrat . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — That's much appreciated.

Mr. Dreaver: — So for the record, my name's Allan Dreaver and I'm the executive director of the friendship centre in town here, which is the Prince Albert Indian * Metis Friendship Centre. And I have with me, on my left here, is Julie Pitzel, and she's the vice-president of the friendship centre. And she also sits on the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan as the vice-president, too.

We're very honoured to be here. It's not too often that we get to tell somebody that has an opportunity to do something about a particular situation. I would hope, as you go through my notes, that you look at this as an opportunity to move on and develop some things.

The people that spoke before us that I heard, it was nice to hear them talking about some of the things that we at the friendship centre plan to do.

If you'll just follow along with me. The first, second, and third page are the, I guess, the credentials of the friendship centre in the community.

We've been here for just about 40 years. Our predecessors started out in a little one- or two-room shack house on the riverbank that they made into the friendship centre. And we've grown.

If you're parked out this side here, just to the south of the Marlboro, you'll see our facility across the street with the big mural on it. That was done by youth from this community this summer. The cost of that is about 12 to $13,000 and we did receive some grants for it.

I think it's important that you know where we're situated in this community as a friendship centre and also the services that we provide. We are a service organization and we make no bones about it. We work with the Department of Canada Heritage, the federal government. We work with the province. You'll see most of our programming services that we deliver are fee-for-services from the province through Justice or provincial Social Services.

We have, I guess, commitments that we've made, that our board of directors have made, in this community. We're also part of a greater organization which is the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, which includes 12, and of the national organization which is the National Association of Friendship Centres, which is 117 centres across Canada.

So we have the ability to lobby on a national scale and we do that quite a bit. We like to let the non-Native community know that we exist and we're here. We're been here for 37, 38 years now, and hopefully the people that come after us will be here for as long and will do the same kind of thing and move this in the direction that our forefathers of the friendship centre movement dreamed of.

And I'm going to start my presentation on page 3. If you have any questions about the friendship centre, by all means please ask. The friendship centre directors, board of directors have over the years identified a focal point, and that is the youth in the community of Prince Albert. We have further identified that our young people, not just the Native youth but also the non-Aboriginal youth, need to be included in the community infrastructure as a whole entity.

I don't think you can separate the Native kid from the non-Native kid because they go to school here. They share things; they play sports together; they're friends. And we're looking at it in that direction, in that capacity, as inclusion — one for all and all for one.

Consequently the directors have made youth programming a priority. We offer programming in the friendship centre. Our food bill for the youth on a monthly basis is somewhere between $500 and $600. We feed the kids every night; it's free. And where do we get that money from? We get that money from working bingos as an example, or we hold fundraisers, or we do something in this community that will bring in some cash to feed them. And we feed them nutritious meals.

Three months ago we had a program running where we were teaching them how to cook their own meals — the young kids. Where do they get that experience if they're living in foster homes and/or they're living in extended family situations or nuclear family situations that don't include the capacity to learn a skill or your basic skills such as cooking food.

The other thing is that the directors also made a decision here in 1995 and that was to develop a safe haven for our youth. By this I'm referring to the establishment of a 24-hour youth, community youth drop-in centre. If you'll turn to page 4, I have

included a picture of this.

This is the Federal Building that's just to the south of the friendship centre here. There's an old immigration hall there. It was built in 1926. Our directors, our membership bought that . . . purchased that building in 1995 and we intend to develop a community youth drop-in centre, a 24-hour youth drop-in centre.

The concept of establishing a facility for youth is not a new idea — people talk about it. However, no one organization or individual has had the fortitude to move this on to reality. I would like to think that our group in Prince Albert, the friendship centre, with the help of the other organizations in this community will bring that to reality. Our directors intend to renovate this facility and to offer holistic program for our youth.

At this point in time I will tell you flat out that we have not received any funding other than what we've made at bingo, and we've been offered a $10,000 grant, I guess, or a . . . from the Gateway Mall here. Marathon Realty have extended to us $10,000 that they will present to the friendship centre community youth drop-in centre. And we think that that's very, very generous of a community partner to do such a thing.

In moving on here, there is, in my mind and I think in our minds, a form of globalization in a community when they think and believe that the parents are responsible for the welfare of the children. I think it's inherent that everybody — every other person other than the parents — say well that's the parents' problem.

And I would suggest to you that it's the community who also has a responsibility for the well-being of our children. I think you heard from the ladies in front of us, before us, and then you heard from Carol, is that everybody in the community has a responsibility to the well-being of our children.

So the mandate of the friendship centre's initiative is to offer a 24-hour safe haven for our children. And we are moving that on. At this point in time we have a crew from the penitentiary, a work crew in there. We have a team mandated to start developing it. We have also done some surveys in the past and we had a group from the community. We have commitments, although they might be five years old, that the doctors and the nurses and the counsellors will come and work in there on a free basis. But we have to build the facility first, which is what we're doing.

And the reality of the statistics in Prince Albert — and these were done five years ago — indicated to us that we had somewhere between 100 and 125 kids living on the streets. I would suggest to you that that's probably increased.

And when I talk about kids living on the street, these are young people who move from residence to residence, go over to their friend's place, sleep outside sometimes. We had kids sleeping outside at the friendship centre in the past, in the summertime, because they were afraid to go home.

They're hungry. Consequently we have an evening snack program so they can come in and eat. And we also feed adults. And we don't only feed Native kids there. And also, it's open to the community.

I included in my presentation here some social work stuff and information And it's Maslow's hierarchy of needs. When I studied this way back when, when I was young and going to school, I was under the impression that there were only five basic needs. But I guess since his passing in 1963 there are seven basic needs. And I've included that in the presentation because I think it's very important that you as a committee go back to the reality of where you come from. And the reality of it is, is that something's missing here.

Why do these kids go out on the street? What happens? Something pushes them to do that; something in life. And so I guess, what are these kids missing? I would suggest that all seven needs are missing in our young people who have taken to the streets. Think about it.

You've heard today and you're going to hear more as you travel through the province, and that's . . . it's basic stuff. Safety is a very basic need. Nutrition, a glass of water, a cup of coffee.

At the same time, while we're talking about youth here, I think it's important for you to know that the friendship centre, at any given time on any given day when we're open, we also have between five and twenty adults at our friendship centre drinking coffee everyday because they have no place to go, which is another problem in terms of homelessness and issues that are there. And we are working to try to do something in that capacity.

So now what can we expect of our young people who can make a fast dollar through prostitution? We can expect that their precious lives will be shortened. They will become a deficit to our community through incarceration. What does it cost the government to keep somebody in jail a year? Somewhere in the neighbourhood of between 30 and $50,000 because you have to pay to upkeep them, and through drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs that you're . . . and the destruction of the future contributing family. Young people, you don't get the opportunity to live a normal life, as we call it, a normal life because of their past situations.

I've not mentioned the social assistance program that exists in Saskatchewan. The reason is that it's considered to be a given. Show me somebody that doesn't . . . that doesn't work, or isn't working, and they are going to be eligible to receive social assistance, and you become . . . they become part of the cycle.

In other words, it don't matter. Our social assistance dollars will attempt to house, clothe, and feed them in perpetuity. And that's exactly what happens today.

So, we're all missing the point of what do our young people need and want. We have done surveys in here — and the group of ladies that come from the Margo Fornier that were up just before Carol — we have done surveys in the community here and we have asked our young people: what do you want, what do you need? And there is committees attempting to deal with some of those issues. We are attempting to deal with some of those issues. But, I think, the point is, is that we ask the young

people in the community: what do you want, what do you need?

And if I can find the survey which we're looking for — I wish I could have and I would have presented it to you today, because it's boxed up in some papers — because we've had that facility for five years and we're just starting to make a move on it. You know, what do you want? What do you need? And they'll tell you.

One of the things that we think they need and they want is control over something that's going on in the community. But how do they get that? Because we, as the older people, say no, you can't have that, you're too young. Well, that's crap. There are some kids out there that are 15 years old right now that are adults and parents. But nobody's ever thought of asking them the question: what do you need and what do you want? Very basic stuff. Go back to Maslow's hierarchy and look at it.

It is our belief that there are solutions to having our young people exploited and the root cause is the breakdown of the family infrastructure. Our ancestors . . . our Aboriginal ancestors knew, and believed, that our children were to be cared for. That's how we were brought up. They were to be taught the values of life, the sharing of food and experiences.

For some reason, and for lots of reasons, and I could go on and on, we know today that this no longer happens. We have an education system that is continually short of funds, we have a welfare system that doles out money, and we have a penal . . . penal institutions that punish our young people for breaking the morals of the community. The first thing somebody young . . . some young guy does wrong is bingo, you're off to jail, they're gone. Or they're off to some institution.

Police don't care. They don't ask you why did you do that? You know. Is there anybody at home? And I don't mean that they don't care, I mean that they don't care emotionally; they care as a job because they have no choice, that's what they get paid to do. And what can they do about it? They can't do anything about it.

We have racism that occurs continually. And I think it's important, you know. We wonder why our young people are exploited or are on the streets. Just think about it.

I would suggest to you, the special committee, and I would really suggest, recommend, cajole, or whatever is necessary, you give us the resource base. Give us access to a resource base. Only it's financial. You have all kinds of government infrastructures in place here, but you have a little bureaucracy in there that has all their rules, that the first thing the rules do is deny access. Let us as a community develop the infrastructure for these young people. Let this community of Prince Albert move in the direction . . . in a direction that we believe will resolve the issue of child prostitution.

I know that earlier that some one of you people asked about the punishment that they deserve, the johns. I suggest you go back a little farther than the johns and look at the family, the infrastructure of the family. Why do the kids get out there?

You know, I think . . . I would ask you that you support our efforts, not the bureaucracy that currently exists, and tell the politicians, which you all are, that we can deal effectively with this situation. We have the answers. Your idea is to put the johns into jail and put the prostitutes into 72 hours of holding tank or whatever and hope that you're going to get a nice caring person walking on the street the next day. Well what about their family? What about their hungers and their needs?

The idea of having the government put together a task force or a committee is great. It's a good idea. It's about time. However I bring to your attention that you're a little late, but I would like to think that there is hope for the future of our children, their parents, and their families.

And I encourage you to continue this, but at some time I have to say this. And I took some training from the people from The Conference Board of Canada and one of the things that this one speaker told us, back when I worked for the government, was that if you ever want nothing to not happen in the government is form a committee. Okay, if you ever want nothing to not happen form a committee. So I would hope, Mr. Chairman, and Mrs. Chairman, Chairmen, that this doesn't stop here and I'm very serious about this.

The friendship centre is prepared to build partnerships. We're committed to the youth of Prince Albert, and we need the ability to move on. Your committee has the ability to make recommendations to our Premier and the Legislative Assembly. Please do so. Like do it.

You're hearing from the common folk, us people who are giving you options, alternatives. We know that there's an answer out there. There's a solution. Don't ask a bureaucrat that though because they'll give you all kinds of gobbledegook in terms of why they can't do it. So please, please do so.

In closing I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation on behalf of the friendship centre, however I must also remind you that there are no Aboriginal people on your committee. I don't know if there are no provincial Aboriginal politicians other than the two from the North. And you know I think it's an important position that we put forward to you now. How come there are no Aboriginal people sitting on your committee, hmm? But yet you come to us and you ask us for advice.

So in closing — and I will let my partner speak now — I want to thank you for this opportunity. And I will say this to you, please pay attention. Thank you.

Ms. Pitzel: — Thank you, council members, for giving me this opportunity to be here. I would like to be here as not only as the vice-president of the Indian * Metis Friendship Centre, but as an Aboriginal woman from the community of Prince Albert who has raised her children here and has made Prince Albert her home for 30 years.

I've had the opportunity to be in contact with my sisters on the streets in my different work that I have done in this community. In about approximately 1994-95, when those women were going missing in Saskatoon, we worked with some women in this community and they did a little research for us. And it was

women like the women that were here before me that went and talked to women, because they were the right people to talk to the women . . . what was happening in their lives that made them be prostitutes.

At various times we've done research in Saskatchewan, probably all over, wondering why our women and our young men are on the streets. Because this is not, I think, for just women, it happens to boys too. There are different reasons and those women try to explain to you what it was, why they went and started working in that profession. In talking to the women, there were some things that were quite common. Some of them might have been sexually abused and they ended up there. They might have not had enough money to go to university and might have decided to go and work that way.

But what happens to them sometimes is that they don't have the opportunity to get out of the system because they are sometime . . . they are locked up and then they're in the cycle of incarceration. Their life is a beginning, an ending. Sometimes they're picked up in the wintertime with winter clothes on and they come out in the summer. Or they're picked up in the summer and then let out in the winter.

When we talk about our self-esteem and our needs, we need to have a family situation to belong to because that's what motivates our work. And I'm sure if you look at yourselves and you wonder what motivated you, you will realize that you are motivated by something called family and love.

I want Prince Albert to be a community, where I raised my family, where my grandchildren are going to grow up to be safe. I want them to be safe emotionally, physically; and I'd like other people's children to be safe too. Having come from an extended family background, I know, as an auntie, I have to help protect my family . . . siblings. That's part of my duty.

And in doing presentations to people, these kinds of remarks would really connect right away when we come from the same environment.

But there are the sameness in different things that we do. We want to become part of different things to make changes; for example, maybe influence law changes, where abuse . . . Exploitation is a new word. Before that, the profession used to be called one of the oldest professions. And, Julie — what's her name, she was in *Pretty Woman* — she made it very glamorous.

But we don't talk about the other side of where our women, our sisters, are harmed and die. And sometimes they become addicted to drugs and alcohol. I would say most of the time.

And it's just one cycle, you know. Sometimes the women say they're lucky, they go to jail because they get time to heal their body a bit and try and grasp onto something to get counselling to, you know, to see what they can do. But there's a lot of peer pressure when they come out. And in that study that came out, it really pointed out that they know the answers. They know what to do.

So when you're talking to women across the province, give them the opportunity — or the men — to give you the answers. Don't say because of this legislation we're going to try and have to fit you in there. Let's see what we can do to bend and accommodate so that people can start working at walking in a healthy way.

I had two of my sisters . . . was very fortunate, they went to university. And they're no longer on the streets. That's just two of them that I know of. Others I see once in a while and I wonder how long they'll live.

The ones that have what you call made it, I asked them one day, I said, what is the reason why you decided to change your life? One of them said I'm tired of holding up the streets of the city, street walls of the city. And I said explain that to me, what do you mean? Well, when you're high on something, you're constantly holding yourself from falling. So she was tired of holding up the walls.

There was another lady, I asked her. And she said, I come to realize that I'm not a street person, that I'm a child of mother earth and I shall return to mother earth. And they could not go to work because they had been in the jail system because you have to have a CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) to work. They have a record. So there's no way in any community that some of our women and men can work if they have a jail sentence. We say we can fix things, but our legislation and the rules that we make does not give them that opportunity.

I must say that these women have continued to be models and work with other women today. And I'd like to see more of that.

I've been fortunate by the person who created me and my values that have helped me through my life. I don't know everything yet; I'm still growing. And I value what I know from the people that have been part of my life. Whether or not you consider them as proper citizens, they still taught me a lesson.

So I ask you to look at your legislation, your laws, and I ask you to listen to my brothers and sisters in a good way. And I want you to understand them. And you have to throw out your values, the way that you think — not to throw away your values but for that time try to grasp what they are saying. And I guarantee you; you will be a better person for it.

I thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you, Julie Thank you very much.

I'd like to ask members of the committee if they have questions for our guests. Don, let's start with you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you very much and thank you for your presentation.

Coming back to a couple of comments you make, Al — the issue about children on the street, you commented about the family. The presenters before us talked about family as well. And, in some cases family was one of the reasons they ended up on the street because they just didn't have the love in the home. In other cases they were dragged from it and felt that they had lost that family identity.

And somehow or other, I guess I personally feel that if we were really providing that family, that home atmosphere, if there was that love and consideration, it would go a long way in helping children feel self-worth. And that's maybe another area that . . . one of the reasons we find children looking to other means of sustenance, because of the low . . . the lack of self-esteem.

But I'd like to . . . and I'd like to comment . . . compliment you as well on coming and sharing with us. We certainly extended the invitation to many groups to come and meet with us; some haven't taken the time. I believe in addressing the issue of First Nations people as well we certainly need to hear from you.

But the question I do have is how do we really bring forward the importance of family and the value of family so that, if you will — and I'm going to phrase it this way; it may be wrong but I stand to be corrected — that parents will recognize the responsibility and really take the leadership and even involve, whether it's First Nations' leadership in trying to encourage that in the First Nations' community as well as other people in their communities as well. How do we address that? I think that's certainly an important point.

Mr. Dreaver: — Well I would like to say that the solution is simple, but I think that you all have to realize that the parents today and the grandparents today are a product of a system that was developed in . . . Let me go back to 1763, you know, in terms of the Royal Proclamation in coming forward and how the Aboriginal people on Turtle Island, in this community of Canada and North America, were subjugated, you know. Like, go back.

And then go to the fears that happened in 1885 that the non-Native people had and then come forth and look at what happened to the Aboriginal population. It wasn't until Tommy Douglas, I think it was in 1947 or something like that started to do something about the poverty on the reserves and in the Metis communities.

You know, like where I'm going with this is it's all well and good to say that these people don't have love and caring and so forth. I think they do. The street people that come to the friendship centre every day — they go someplace at night and they do things. When we're not open, they go places. And, I think like, the ladies, the four or five ladies . . . (inaudible) . . . that were here before, they showed that to you.

But what happens is, in the past — and hopefully it doesn't happen that often, you know — as soon as a kid gets into trouble, the first place they go, the police go, is they ship them off to a home. Poof, they're gone. Now they become part of the system. They're just another little grain of sand or wheat in the big system and they get lost. I think it would be very important for you, Don, to take back to your people, in terms of . . . start looking at the family and what can you do for the family, the future.

I grew up, I come . . . my parents come from, my dad is from Mistawasis First Nation and my mother is from Ahtahkakoop. And in 1947 after the war, they made a point of moving to P.A. because at that time they were both not treaty Indians. They were both non-treaty, non-status. And when they moved to P.A. they made a couple of decisions. And one of those decisions was not to teach the children, us, how to speak our first language — Cree in this case — but yet we were to become part and parcel of this community. I have six sisters, and we grew up in that capacity of love and sharing and hate and fighting like any normal, any other young person grew up, like you people grew up.

But I think the question that you have to ask yourself is how do we get the current parents, the grandparents, to bring back that respect so that their children can move on and grow up in a healthy environment and a healthy lifestyle.

I'm not trying to circumvent your question but I hope I'm answering it.

We all have a lifestyle that we live in this community, in any community — on- and off-reserve, urban, rural — and I think it's time that a whole bunch of people took responsibility for the current situation that our people, our young people, especially the people that are being exploited. Carol said it right, the word . . . I think she used the word exploitation or maybe it was Julie here a few minutes ago, and that's exactly what's happening and you've got to stop it.

Look to organizations like the friendship centre, the Prince Albert Grand Council, the Aboriginal women's council because we know what's going on in the community.

Mr. Toth: — Well if I could just add to that, I think just from your presentation today, that you're certainly making an effort. Personally I can mention that a lot of the questions, inquiries, and comments I've had, and some suggestions . . . certainly the constituency I represent has four reserves on it . . . and actually I've had, a lot more of the women have come forward and asked and brought forward some suggestions and ideas.

Now one issue that they've certainly raised — we've heard a lot about the drugs and alcohol problems — but certainly another issue that really came to the forefront and a lot of First Nations women brought to my attention was what they saw in the gambling. And their comment was it just is another avenue that destroys the family.

And so I guess neither one of us have a clear solution as to how we bring the families together but it's certainly an area where we have to really work and develop.

Ms. Draude: — I just have two short questions, one for each of you. Julie, I heard you say, and not just you today, but a number of presenters talked about going onto the street and it supported a drug habit. And yet last time when we had some meetings and some witnesses present to us in Regina, they actually said it was the other way around. They felt that some of them actually went . . . started taking drugs just to get away from the whole world of being on the street, just so they didn't have to recognize or be in . . . realizing what was happening. So I'm just trying to see what's your reaction to that.

Ms. Pitzel: — Well if there's . . . the different reasons are there for why people go on the streets and then because of the way they feel might go into drug and alcohol. They might become

also victims of someone who is supporting their habit and who is reaping the benefits of their work. I think, like, we have bootleggers and bootleggers are charged and put in jail. I think that pimps and johns should be thrown in jail too. Like, they're exploiting our children. And for, like . . . that's what the survey — the little survey that the women did — indicated. So it might be different in Regina for whatever reason.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. And Al, I do appreciate what you said about family. Because I guess that's one thing we're saying here is it doesn't matter if you're Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, the family is important to all of us and the breakdown or fear of a breakdown is very, very . . . it's a deep concern for all of us.

But something that maybe because I don't live in Prince Albert . . . we just had an excellent presentation from the outreach centre and now I hear from the friendship centre. Can you tell me: are you offering services to the same people? Are you sort of duplicating anywhere here?

Mr. Dreaver: — To be quite honest, probably. They have a youth committee over there; we have a youth committee. We offer a snack program in the evening; I believe they offer a snack program in the evening. They have activities for the kids and we have the same thing. I think you'll learn something from us is that the obvious reason is that there's two groups doing it, there's a reason for it. There's a need. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Ms. Draude: — There's a big need, but you don't have children going . . . or young people going from one to the other or . . .

Mr. Dreaver: — Oh yes, they move back and forth. Like it's open. You don't have to be a member here or a member there. I think, like, we have Nintendos; I don't know if they have Nintendos over there. We have floor hockey space. The gymnasium over there is used for basketball and volleyball and stuff like that.

And you know it's . . . there's lots of things here and we do them. But the point is is that they're being offered to the youth and in a lot of cases they're controlled by the youth. And obviously there's a reason because . . . and I guess, politically speaking, I have to say the mayor started to offer this service long, long after we did in this community.

Ms. Pitzel: — And I think the way it is in Prince Albert, there's not enough. They have the West Flat citizens group. They do recreation for kids. We're trying our best to keep our kids doing things that are more healthier for them and we're all doing our best to help them.

Mr. Dreaver: — Just to go on. There was a youth conference held here about four or five years ago . . . about three years ago up at the Coronet or the Travelodge now and the kids were encouraged to ask . . . and it was put on by the youth centre with Margo Fournier and the friendship centre participated in it a bit.

One of the questions that the young . . . one of the young, non-Native kids come up and asked me after we did our presentation is can you bring those services up onto the east hill and onto the west hill. I said, well why can't you come down? And they said, well our parents won't let us go downtown because it's too rough. So even with what we offer is still not enough. And keep the kids busy — give them options, give them alternatives. A 24-hour youth drop-in is only one option, that's all.

Ms. Pitzel: — I had the opportunity to work with the youth from Carleton high school, grade 12. And I took them to the different Aboriginal resources in the community, the tribal council's facilities and things like that. They'd never been to any of them. And he's in grade 12 so I would assume that he's 17 or 18, and the only thing that he's heard about Natives is what's in the newspaper, plus they had an Aboriginal hockey tournament. So that's all.

I taught Native studies in the school systems. And I walked into class and I asked, I'm going to ask you five questions, and you'll pass this course, I will give you a mark of 60 per cent. I said I want you to tell me who is the Chief of the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations), who is the president of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, what is the reserve in this community called, and two other ones relating to institutions. And the most the most that they could think of is two. Oh, what is a reserve, I asked them. And they couldn't answer the questions.

And that . . . I would say I was teaching maybe six, seven years ago and they could have had their whole course finished if they could have answered those questions.

So that goes to show when this one lady said we need more of an education both ways, and I think as part of human beings in this society, you know, we've really developed, we would have a better world view to share our resources and to grow from it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — It's 4:35 and I think we should hear from our next presenter. Al and Julie, thank you very, very much for sharing time with us this afternoon. And again we'd all like to invite you back this evening for what will be an open discussion starting at about 8, 8:15. So you may not be free to come but if you are, we would really welcome your presence at that time.

I know there's many questions that are waiting and that haven't been asked including two or three that I have. Maybe we can deal with some of that tonight if you're able to be here, and if not, maybe on another occasion. Anyway, thank you very, very much for presenting.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you, Al. Thank you very much, Julie.

To continue on, I'd like to introduce to committee members as well as to others that are here, Mr. Earl Ermine. He's the director of urban authority of the Prince Albert Grand Council. And after Earl does his presentation we'll have Alice Marchand, PAGC (Prince Albert Grand Council) addictions consultant, also briefing the committee on the information that she has to offer us.

So if we can start with Earl, I'd like to welcome you. Thank you very much for coming. We appreciate ever so much you taking the time, and know that you have certainly an interest, like many people in Saskatchewan, in assisting the situation, so thank you, Earl.

Mr. Ermine: — Thanks, Arlene. It's nice to be here this afternoon and listen to . . . listen to the other presenters. I think there has been a lot of information shared. I think the . . . where the First Nations and Metis come in, I think a lot of the concerns that are raised are common. I think that in a lot of instances we have . . . we're dealing with the same issues. Possibly sometimes, different approaches being applied. But I think that ultimately we are concerned about our people that are living in urban centres and their . . . more particularly at Prince Albert.

I would like to sort of give a little background information in relation to the Grand Council, the federation. Our report is going to be a, sort of straight and to the point, but it . . . initially now, I'll just provide some information that might be useful to the commission when they're dealing with hearing issues affecting our own people, more particularly the First Nations people in Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan there are in excess of 100,000 First Nations people. The Prince Albert Grand Council is comprised of 12 First Nations. We constitute 30 per cent of the First Nations population in Saskatchewan. The total population of First Nations people living in urban centres in Saskatchewan is in excess of 50 per cent. The city of Prince Albert itself constitutes between 25 and 40 per cent of its population is of either First Nations or Metis people.

The chiefs of the Prince Albert Grand Council deliver a number of services to its constituents. One of these services is the urban services office. The mandate of the Prince Albert Grand Council urban services office is to develop and implement programs and services to all Saskatchewan First Nations people living in Prince Albert.

When we're dealing with services, we're not looking at affiliation; affiliation meaning tribal councils that are open to provide services to any First Nation member that's living in P.A. There was an agreement signed between the federation and some of its major urban centres to deal with and provide services to people living in Regina, Saskatoon, or P.A. regardless of their affiliation.

So the services that we deliver vary according to the resources that we have. We have in P.A. concentrated on employment and education issues, to look at our people.

We also deal with a lot of issues affecting our youth — youth implying 16 to 29 years of age. We have over the course of the past three years placed approximately 80 youth in work placements, in job work placements. A lot of those youths that we deal with have been at probably similar situations as the girls that were in front of you making presentations this afternoon. A lot of those youth struggle.

We have a number of issues that we have to deal with when we're trying to address issues affecting our own people. I know the system, the way it's set up, is sometimes not conducive to our concerns because it's not our system that we've developed. We've just inherited a system that has been foreign to a lot of our people, more particularly those people that come in from our First Nations communities into urban centres with some expectations for a better of life, you know. And when they hit the urban centres, reality strikes and they find that life is not so easy.

And I think that we have a lot of the problems probably that are happening within our home communities back home are . . . (inaudible) . . . into urban centres. I think that . . . and those problems sort of magnify themselves and multiply themselves when you find that the system is not very sensitive to your needs. And I think a lot of the . . . and the system thrives on our weaknesses, on our vulnerability, and those people thrive on us.

Systems like the education system in urban centres, the justice system, the media that we deal with on a daily basis is not sensitive towards our lives, you know. And I think that people sort of use our vulnerability to sort of better their lifestyles. We pay a lot of mortgages in P.A., our people do, you know. So we create a lot of jobs in P.A., we're a system in P.A.

Our presentation is . . . when I spoke to Randy in relation to our presentation, I had the opportunity to sit down with some people that deal with . . . that are in the front lines dealing with those issues that affect us. Not necessarily from the Grand Council but people at large within the community that have experience and are dealing with issues affecting not only our youth but First Nations people in general.

We have our justice department that was in the Grand Council that was involved in the preparation of our presentation. As well we have the . . . two of the staff, as a matter of fact, are here — Shawna Bear and Hazel Bear. They're part of our initial discussions. We have Alice who deals with addictions and people in crisis on sort of a daily basis.

We have Sam Badger, who is one of our . . . who has done a lot of work with our youth as well. We have Florence McLeod, who's a band counsellor situated in urban centre here in P.A. We also had Priscilla Joseph, who's been, again, a front-line worker here in P.A., whose current job is as a university lecturer with, I think it's with both University of Regina; she has, as well, U of S (University of Saskatchewan) classes.

We have also Vicky Ducharme, who participated in our discussions who has done a lot of work with youth here in P.A., more particularly in the field of life skills and job-readiness programs. We have also Julie whose current work includes working with the police services here in P.A., and Elaine Davis who deals with a lot of . . . who's been sort of heading our homelessness program here in P.A.

So a lot of those programs that we try to . . . we look at the problem of kids on the street as being sort of global because your education program, all those things that I talked about, constitutes the problem that we have.

So with that, maybe I'll just turn it over to Alice, and Alice can

sort of highlight some of those issues that we've seen.

Ms. Marchand: — Thank you, Earl. Sitting here today brings me back to about 27 years ago. And it still feels intimidating sitting before a group of non-First Nations in judgment of my character. That's what it feels like here today. So that's where I want to start. And also 27 years ago, sitting before a group of people that were looking at some of the very serious issues of First Nations because of alcohol and drug abuse.

And one thing that was really evident back then and still is evident today is the exclusion of First Nations as main stakeholders on the committees. And that's pretty obvious today — our exclusion as main stakeholders sitting as committee members.

We're coming to present some recommendations to you, and unless we're included and involved and part of any piece of . . . I noticed there's a policy analyst sitting in the back. I asked him what he was doing here because he was writing lots of notes.

I guess I make it my business to know who's taking notes, because I want to know that if they're taking some notes, that I make sure that I watch what I say. Because I know that whatever we say is recorded; it's all recorded over there. And history hasn't been very favourable to us as First Nations people, as all of us know sitting in this room here today.

So 27 years ago when I presented before a group of people such as yourselves, there were no First Nations people sitting up there to listen to the First Nations people here about what we could do about the problems regarding alcohol and drug abuse.

I was one of those people 27 years ago who actually became involved in the development of alcohol and drug treatment centres across Canada. And today we actually have 51 of them that are owned, managed, and operated by First Nations board of directors.

I want to say to this lady here, Carolyn . . . I've heard a lot today, by the way, about victims. I've heard a lot about the problems of the child; heard a lot about some of the issues that perhaps drive the children to the street. I haven't heard anything — and I've only been here for a few hours — about what drives the johns to the street.

Actually in all the news media and everything I read and I hear about, what about their backgrounds? What about them? They are people too. I say look into the backgrounds not only of the victims but look into the backgrounds of the johns. What, what are they doing? Why are they doing what they're doing? Not only why are the young kids doing what they're doing, but why. How does . . .

I'm now going to use farmers as an example, not to pick on the farmers. But I remember one day at 12 o'clock I was going for a walk down the street of Prince Albert, and I was approached, and he was a farmer. But I took it upon myself to stop and ask him why he was there and what he was doing. We need to know why, what's driving them.

Is there a trade there for them? Is there something that they're looking for?

And this is a, this is a bit of humour, but I know that there's a lot of First Nations kokum sitting in this room who would be very happy to sit as a council of First Nations kokums and provide education and awareness to the people who perhaps require that — about why they're there picking up the children. I'm sure there's people who have . . . who find themselves out on the streets, picking up our young kids . . .

And they're all our young kids, by the way. They belong to everyone of us because there's a saying that it is . . . the raising of the child is the responsibility of the community. And we are all that community on this planet — everyone of us living here today.

Legislation sometimes divides us and sometimes it also brings us together. So I think if we're really serious let's look at some of these. These are some of my own insertions before I start a very, very brief presentation.

Also to you, Carolyn. You said, it disturbs me that we have to wait until the child is being entered, is in the act of intercourse. So let's change the Act to the proposition phase, because essentially the abuse happens a long time before the intercourse or whatever the phase is that we're able to charge.

I think we need to be really cautious in looking at some of our definitions, also. And I know that I sit in courts with many victims of child sexual abuse. And I sit there — and I really need to say this — because I sit there and we sit there in front of a judge who has no awareness about what it's like to be a little, young First Nations child. And yet very little interchange is happening between the community that that child has come from and the situation and that judge. And yet the judge who's been very fortunate to being raised in a very upper middle class society and gone to school and been well taken care of to pass judgment on the . . . There's something wrong with that.

Also, having the perpetrator sitting right there. No child wants to come forward. This is all . . . this is perhaps indirectly related to the presentation today, but these are some of the things that front-line workers say. Having the perpetrator sitting right there and that to me that's not justice. To me it's just total intimidation of the child. So who wants to come forward?

The stories of abuse. Today's problems are shifting to younger groups than those of 20 years ago? Why? Let's look at it together. I don't think that I can come here today or perhaps none of us can come here today alone and say why, what is happening. All of us need to play a role in it.

Today we hear of 11-year-olds working as pimps over girls younger than themselves, over girls or boys. So it's evident that these problems affect both genders.

Social programs are not in place to deal with these types of problems. In other words, I think we're all missing a layer of a problem and probably, possibly a layer of an approach.

Here in the city of Prince Albert they're called johns. I used to think . . . I came in from British Columbia 10 years ago and I'd

never heard that term being used. We used other terms and they weren't as kind. So I think we need to change the term john because in fact, many of them are — that's their first name. They come in from Melfort, Nipawin, Saskatoon to prey on the youth.

And I read in some of your literature that so far you've seen that many of the children are of First Nations or Aboriginal ancestry. So many of our children are out there — our nieces, our nephews.

Often these youth are running from various risk situations and I'll tell you, living on a reserve sometimes is a risk situation. We didn't put ourselves there. We didn't put ourselves there. We did not ask to have borders around us.

And some of the largest reservations are actually here right in the city of Prince Albert and they're called jails. Many people's children get put into university because of the jobs; the incredible numbers of advantages that the union makes sure that the people have.

So the children are running from risk situations because we don't have enough resources on our reserves also. And this other thing about that — I think another speaker addressed this — about that we get so many things free. No one really ever takes the time to sit down and ask us how much we get free.

We've had our PST (Provincial Sales Tax) taken away from us but I told her I wouldn't be political today but I did need to mention that. That has, that does, that puts us in a further risk situation — taking our PST rights away.

And we have to face these types . . . and then these youth running from risk situations come to face types of people here puts them in a greater risk as becoming part of the sex trade. And I do know today that if we're brown skinned and walking the street, we're really easy prey. I know that.

I'm not but I've had to become vigilant, militant, and very protective of my own rights, first of all as an individual, really. And I've had to work very hard to get there because I too was one of those people who lived on the streets. And as you can see today, I'm well spoken, outspoken, and I research my subjects when I speak. I was forced to do that though. I was forced to take my rightful place in this society.

Systemic re-victimization of the youth; we just shovel them from system to system to system. So systemic re-victimizations, sometimes the solution is a re-victimization of the youth.

The solutions — and we didn't come here today with solutions, we came here with recommendations — require commitment from all levels of community, all levels. Whether you wear a suit and tie or whether you walk the streets, governments and each of us sitting here, the scope of the problem, and Earl touched upon it, is exploitation of vulnerability; we're still a vulnerable group of people. We're still a vulnerable group of people.

Absence of culturally grounded approaches. We see that. The icons that make us proud for living in the cities, we don't have them. We don't have enough resources. Exclusion of First Nations as main stakeholders on the committee, and I already addressed that. And that is that we're not there. You guys sit here, we'll go there. Systemic racism, that was touched upon.

The recommendations that we've got — implementation phase. If there is to be an implementation phase and some legislation, must be managed by First Nations organizations with youth involvement. The youth must be there at the table.

Co-operative public awareness of johns. Co-operative public awareness. I remember being involved, and there's some of my kokum friends in the audience here, about seven or eight years ago. And we used to take down licence plate numbers and we used to phone the men. And like, it didn't go anywhere.

There hasn't been enough focus and concentration on the johns. It's always coming . . . it seems to come back to the victim. But we need to go both sides. Because it's both sides, somebody's being victimized.

We want the johns to be locked up, but we want there to be a piece of legislation with mandatory counselling — mandatory counselling and treatment of the johns and pimps. We need to go there because we need to make sure that the victim is safe also. And mandatory 72-hour detention of johns, because the john is the perpetrator. The john is the perpetrator. They're the predator.

Healing, healing — let's bring it to healing. Let's not bring it to punishment. We have enough punishment. We have enough places, we have enough safe homes for the perpetrators in the city of Prince Albert. We have lots of safe homes. We have the pen. We have the Pine Grove Correctional Centre for women. We have a lot of young offenders' facilities. The perpetrator has a lot of safe houses.

We need to have some safe homes for the victims. First Nations people deal with healing. We deal with healing. We cannot pass on the blame and have it imbalanced. There needs to be a balance here.

Some statements, and just very quickly, and thanks to Vickie Ducharme from our working group that came together. And she has talked to many youth, and some of the statements here are some of the following parties should be involved when apprehending children at risk — children's haven, preferably First Nations frontline workers, mobile crisis, First Nations, various Aboriginal service providers.

What I really interpret that to mean is that we as First Nations are not included enough because we really provide a lot of people jobs. Our pain, our pain, our so-called abuse, but really essentially it's hurt when we look at it all. We're acting out our hurt and we need to bring this to healing. So we need to be involved in that. Counselling needs to be provided but we also need to look at what kind of counsel. What kind of counsel is it?

Like I guess in my closing statement I'd like to say that I'd really like to see the people who are doing the abuse — that's the guy, the john. Because that's what we're talking about here

today, the exploitation on the street given some help. Give him some help. Let's sit down and talk to those, the guys who are out there because I think somebody said that the police know who they are.

You did, didn't you? Who was it on the committee that said the police know who the perpetrators are and they know who the victims are. So how do we bring together a victim/offender rehabilitation program so that we can help everybody who is out there and perhaps develop some healthy approaches to walk towards a healthier future together.

Thank you. I don't want any questions. It's too late.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you very much, and I think you've raised a lot of important issues. And if I could just very briefly speak to one of them, not as a real response and certainly not in defence of what you said.

I think the question you raise about the makeup of the committee and the absence of non-Aboriginal stakeholders is a very important issue — the absence of First Nations and Metis stakeholders in the, you know, on the committee. And it's an issue that we've discussed.

And one of the things that would have been very nice to have on the committee is one of our two Aboriginal members of the legislature to speak on the government side, both of whom right now are in cabinet. This is one of the things that we did explore and there, you know, neither Buckley Belanger nor Keith Goulet, given their other responsibilities, are able to serve on this committee and I've really . . . that would have been a big bonus to have one of them on.

And unfortunately we don't have the authority as a legislative committee to add formal representation from, for instance, the FSIN or the Metis Nation onto the committee. We're not authorized to do that. But we are very conscious of this shortcoming that you've raised. And at this point in time, you know, the only thing — and this is not a solution at all — that we've been able to do is try to ensure that we hear from as many First Nations and Metis voices in the province as possible.

But I think you're right in your criticism of the committee and I think this is something that the legislature does need to address. And I thank you for your observations which I think are quite valid, and we're all very conscious of this shortcoming.

So I would like to invite all members of the committee to . . . any member who wants to ask questions. And I want to thank you both very much for your presentation.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I would thank you also, both of you. I just wanted to make mention that we had . . . certainly it's very important that we had FSIN presentations from the FSIN. At this point they haven't actually come forward but some of the executive say that they will give us a presentation. However you are closer in your tribal councils, you know, and it's really . . . we appreciate very much you coming forward to be able to present to us so that we can learn; so we can hear what you have to say and so we can learn, and hopefully, with you, work together at this.

So are there members now, at this time, that have questions?

Mr. Yates: — Well I was extremely glad to hear the comments you made about every child is everyone's responsibility. That is one of the formal principles that this committee works on. And whether it's my child — and I have children of that age — or yours, I agree it's a community responsibility.

How do we, in your mind, deal with some of the problems we're facing? And we've heard from presenters today that we have to address the needs of the family. And that parenting skills and some of those things that we as society have taken for granted are not being passed on necessarily in the same manner, say, that they would have been a couple of generations ago for various reasons — time, being removed from the family in some cases, not having that attachment to the natural family.

How do we tackle that problem in your mind — getting the next generation better prepared to deal with those problems in the home, in the family, and parent our children a little better? Have you put any time thinking about that issue?

Ms. Marchand: — I really haven't got a clue, but I know we have a difficulty in that we have spirituality in some cases being really eradicated by technology. So I can only offer you another problem here.

That is something that we all need to really sit down and talk about as people — everybody. Because we have a serious issue and a much more serious issue especially with the Internet age too. So we're running into some areas without sitting down and talking as people, as parents.

And I think that talking, acknowledging the issues that are apparent, like the mega bingo and all those types of things that . . . I work in the area of problem gambling so I know the age of technology is just so incredible. People wake up in the morning and go to the Internet instead of saying their prayers now. That is their prayer.

To offer that solution, I really think we need to formally discuss those things in public forums and discuss about the Internet and to the 21st century. What does the 21st century hold for the family? Are we a group of . . . Is it a technological family? Are we a family on line? Like we have a different kind of family coming also; we have a chat-line family.

So we need to look at that in reality and call upon some of the more technological researchers throughout the world to help us think these things through because we no longer have even a human family; we have a global family. So I can't give you a real straight, simple answer.

Mr. Yates: — One further question. As we look at tackling the problem of youth involved in sexual abuse in our community and look for those solutions, do you feel that the First Nations communities around the province are positioned to play an active role in the delivery of services that would come out of this. I'm not just talking perhaps P.A. Grand Council, which is a very well-developed organization. But I mean, as a whole, are

they in a position to be of assistance in looking at it as a delivery mechanism for those types of problems?

Mr. Ermine: — I think there's a lot of service organizations in urban centres. In our case we have, you know, the different presenters and stuff that were, you know, in front of you this morning, today, that would be I think to some extent, Aboriginal component.

And certainly one of the difficulties we have within the Grand Council in trying to address a lot of those issues that affect our people is a lack of resources to be able to bring in experts and develop programs to address not only the symptoms but the problems as well, you know. And I think that we have, I think, a lot of talent within the First Nations community to be able to address a lot of those issues that they're talking about, you know.

And I think that even within our office we have a lot of issues we want to deal with but we're not able to because of both lack of human resources and financial resources to address those issues.

Ms. Marchand: — I'd just like to make a comment there. The urbanization of a colonized people presents its own problems and we haven't really become comfortable with our urbanization and so we're going to struggle as we urbanize.

And as Earl pointed out to you, the large percentage of the total population that lives, like, within . . . in the city boundaries, I'm really, really impressed, like, with the people, the people. Like, we have the people. We have the education. We have the background. We have the knowledge. And I know that we can mobilize to work with any situation, given resources. And I also understand jurisdictional issues around various things too.

Ms. Draude: — Just have a short comment. Alice, I appreciated what you said when you started. You said that 27 years ago you sat in front of a panel and you were intimidated, and you sat in front of them, and you're addressing us today.

Well today, if you'd be sitting in my seat, you'd see I was looking at two or four presenters with a host of about 30 people behind you that were supporting you most of the time during the day.

And I felt like we were being judged as well and maybe we didn't pass, because there was a . . . the dialogue goes both ways. And I felt like maybe we weren't addressing the issue in a way that was acceptable either.

So put yourself in my chair for a minute and look the other way and see that there's dialogue both ways that we have to address. So I did my one comment.

And my question to you is, I know that you're the addictions counsellor and so I know that you're meeting a whole array of problems that I can't even understand. But do you deal with the health district in this area on addictions as well, or are you separate and apart from that?

Ms. Marchand: — We attempt to partnership.

Ms. Draude: — Okay.

Ms. Marchand: — But I have a different definition of partnership so we have to agree on what that word means.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — I'll ask at least one question too, in regards to your comments that you really do have some very, very brilliant, good people in place. You see the picture as it is. You could certainly get things rolling if you had the financial resources.

Did you have access to the healing fund that the federal government put forward for different programs for Aboriginal people? Were you able to access that money? And if not, could you please tell us why not, or if you got a portion of it, was it enough? What happened with that money?

Mr. Ermine: — I think maybe Alice can help me on this, but the Grand Council in itself has . . . There's a number of proposals that were submitted to the healing foundation to deal with some of those issues that affect us. There was some money access to deal with the development of programs, of healing programs on reserve, okay, where the money was gotten to address those issues that need to be addressed. In urban centres I know that there is some money that's been directed to different service organizations in P.A.

We have, as a Grand Council, submitted a proposal to address some of the healing that needs to happen in an urban centre and that's currently in the system and it's being fast-tracked. Hopefully it'll, you know, direct some resources to our direction so that we can begin to address some of those issues that affect us.

But I think that . . . you know, I think that one of the girls I think certainly that presented earlier, certainly is, you know, was correct when she said that probably our generation, you know, and the generation ahead of us certainly were victims of the school system, the way it was set up, okay, the residents of the school system. I think our next generation of young people, there's a different type of abuse that they're experiencing and we're discussing here today.

You know our generation went through the abuse in the residential school system; our young people now are experiencing a different kind of abuse. And I think that we need to sort of simultaneously try to deal with those problems that go hand in hand. You know, you have some of the victims probably whose parents went through the residential school system. And I think that there is a lot of, probably a lot of confusion within communities, more particularly those people that are feeling the effects of both.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Other questions? I've got a couple of questions, Earl and Alice, if you have time.

We've heard some really important presentations this afternoon from organizations in Prince Albert. And I know you've got an Integrated Youth Committee. I don't know if you sit on . . . if the Grand Council is part of that process or separate from it, but obviously you operate a number of urban programs.

And I don't know if you're familiar with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the urban programs that it's put in place for youth on the street and specifically for children who've been sexually abused on the street. But I'm wondering, if you had some resources to work with and a joint planning process between the province and yourselves around this, where would you like to see resources put into place to address the questions of children on the street, children not in school, and children who are being sexually abused on the street by johns and pimps?

You know, if you kind of looked at that package together — all those problems are interrelated — where would you like to see resources going? And do you see yourselves being positioned to implement some of those services, or would you see those being implemented through the Indian * Metis Friendship Centre? Or, you know, what's the vehicle, I guess I'm wondering about, in Prince Albert?

And maybe this is something that needs to be discussed within the community for addressing this. Because we've had the friendship centre talk about the idea of a 24-hour drop-in centre and centre that's available to help children 24 hours a day. And we've heard about some of the services that are now being offered through the Integrated Youth Committee and we've heard about some of the service gaps. And I want to ask you, Alice, about addiction services and the gap there in a minute.

But in terms of, you know, who coordinates the overall strategy for how resources are going to be delivered in the city of Prince Albert, and if that isn't going to be done at the provincial level, you know, who does it at the local level? And have you talked at all with other organizations in the community about what services you see yourself delivering in this arena?

Because a lot of the children are First Nations children and it seems to me that there'd be some logic at least in the notion that the urban authority of Prince Albert Grand Council would be involved in service delivery.

Mr. Ermine: — I think there has to be . . . I think there has . . . the band council has certainly indicated to the city that we're interested in working with other parties that are trying to deal with some of the same issues that, you know, affect our people in urban centres.

I think that in some situations we've sat down with, for example, the Justice people here in the city, and Social Services. And I think possibly we need to control the system though, you know.

Because in a lot of cases we've been used. You know, we've been used in a lot of situations where we've been requested to develop ideas on how we can address issues. And we've sort of looked at one of the . . . Alice talked about in her presentation was the absence of a cultural . . . (inaudible) . . . approaches. And we sort of . . . That's how we approached it. And yet we were just used by . . . You know, the people that we sat with had already predetermined what type of program that they wanted to implement.

And I think that there has to be a commitment. You know, if there's any partnerships or any joint approaches to deal with issues, there has to be total commitment from the parties sitting on the table, that they're totally committed in that approach and that the approaches and recommendations and, you know, that we come up with are taken seriously.

And I think that the . . . I know that, you know, we're fortunate enough to have some people that are of either Metis or First Nations who are working currently in the public and separate school system that we have direct contact with. And they know the issues and they deal with the families that are dealing with and, you know, are crying for help.

But I think that knowing the system outside of our system is also that they also lack resources, both human and financial resources. But I think that we need to probably . . . You know, our office is unable to address all the issues that affect our people. The friendship centre is not able to do that. The Integrated Youth Committee is not able to do that. I think what's lacking is the need to empower people to be able to make those difficult decisions and choices for themselves.

And I think that although we have community development workers probably in urban centres, I think we need to have community developers dealing with the schools, dealing with the parents, dealing with the kids on the street. We need dedicated people that want to improve the system so that the community developers can sort of work with the different players that provide different services.

I think that's maybe a model that can be considered, but I think that there's other models that can be . . . I think with people putting different ideas on the table, I think that'll be just one of the models that we can consider.

Ms. Marchand: — I'd like to hear from any one of you what you're willing to do about the johns, because this is both sides. So I'm going to ask you, Carolyn.

Ms. Jones: — Well . . . (inaudible) . . . was the person who asked the question of folks and to give us some ideas. Frankly, just from my limited experience on the committee, I don't quite know how you change a law to stop somebody from doing something that you haven't caught them doing. And I certainly share with . . . You know, I mean I think that's the biggest problem that we have, and yet you have to be very careful about how many rights you take away from people just to be associated with people.

So it's a very difficult question. And I do have some agreement with what makes them do what they do, and we're heard them described as pedophiles, which I believe that they are. And I know that there's some tracking that you can do. But in any law-abiding society, you must be careful about what rights you suspend. And I'm sure that you would be in agreement with that. You don't just suspend rights for the sake of suspending them and believing that they may be a predator.

And so I'm very interested in the answer to the question. And I hope that by the end of our consultations and the end of our discussions with each other and with groups, that we can come up with an answer. Because I think it's the most difficult part of the problem that we're dealing with is how do you . . . I mean

certainly you cannot find a police person who is going to pose as a 10- or 11- or a 14-year-old girl as you can with adult, if you will, prostitution. I mean you can have a policewoman on the street trying to catch johns, and in some cases they're successful. That doesn't work very well. There is the odd person who can go on the street and pose as a young girl under the age of 18 or 16.

So I don't have an answer for you — I'm sorry. That's why I think we're on this committee, that's why we're travelling and consulting, because I think it's one of the biggest issues. Why do they do what they do? Why do the children do what they do? And how do we stop the johns from doing it?

And so I'm sorry I can't give you an answer today, but I sure hope that we can do something about it by the end of our consultation.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Alice, I'll maybe just add that one of the things that we have looked at is what the province of Manitoba has done — they seize the vehicles of suspected johns. And now most of the vehicles that have been seized have been vehicles seized from johns who've sought sexual contact with women, adult women, but a few of the vehicles that have been seized are also of johns who've sought sexual contact with children. And in the latter case it's much more difficult for the johns to get the vehicles back.

So it's just another . . . it's another, I guess, idea in terms of something concrete that could be done quickly to discourage johns from being out on the street. And we haven't made any . . . we have not reached any final conclusions on whether that should be adopted in Saskatchewan, but we're certainly going to look very closely at it.

I think what we'll do at this point . . . the time is almost 5:30, and I think we should bring our proceedings at this point to a halt. And we're going to resume at 7, and I'd like to invite everybody back at 7. At 7 o'clock we're going to hear from Donna Gamble, at 7:30 we're going to hear from Mckenzie Gamble, and then we're going to move into a session that's called public comments.

And I was going to suggest that we may want to change the seating arrangement for that and just kind of sit around in a circle and talk for a little while, if those of you who are present would be interested in that. And I think, you know, we could feel free to hear from anybody else who wants to make formal presentation and then have a general discussion. So we look forward to that.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — Could I add something?

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Absolutely.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — Could we . . . We do have elders here, and like I would feel better, because if we want to come to any conclusion about all of this that we have somebody say a prayer and have a smudging here. Because like I myself have only been here 20 minutes, and I can feel like a lot of tension.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Right.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — And I think for all of us, if we want to do this in a good way, that we should be doing it that way.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Okay. The committee will briefly confer on that, and we'll look very, very seriously at doing that.

Ms. Marchand: — I'm an aerobics instructor so I want everybody to get up and stretch. You might want to do that throughout your day though.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We are going to resume our discussion and we have with us tonight Donna Gamble-Whitehead, and when Donna is ready we're going to ask her to, just before her presentation, if she can just give us a little about her background so people . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — But before we do that, Arlene, we're going to have a prayer.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, that's right.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And so I think we should turn it, formally turn it over to Vicky Ducharme first. So Vicky, we are very honoured that you are with us this evening and we would like to turn . . . before we turn to Donna, we'd like to formally turn to you to lead us in a prayer. And we're very delighted that you're here.

Ms. Ducharme offered a prayer.

Ms. Ducharme: — Now I'm going to get . . . (inaudible) . . . to explain about the sweet grass.

Russel Badger: — The sweet grass we use is used to purify our minds and our thoughts so we can think with a good heart and get to come to some good ideas and some good, I guess, solutions to some of the problems we are facing.

And when we pick the sweet grass, like I usually get my kids to pick the sweet grass and . . . (inaudible) . . . but they meditate while they're picking it so that all our good thoughts are in going to the picking of the sweet grass. And before we pick the sweet grass, we put tobacco down and ask the Creator to forgive us for taking one of our children because we're all our children — plants, animals, and everything.

And then when you're picking the sweet grass, you just, like, you don't grab them in bunches, you pick them one at a time because babies are born one at a time, even if they're triplets. So you pick them one at a time and in doing that you're severing the umbilical cord from the mother earth and then you use that for our prayers.

And so all the prayers that went into picking the sweet grass are released during the smudging so that we can begin on a good foot.

Sweet Grass Ceremony

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We'll let you start. But before we just get started, though, Donna, I thought we've got a very nice, kind of, united small group here, so I think it's important that all the committee members introduce themselves one more time as well as if everyone can just mention their, at least, their first name.

And I just want to take a moment to welcome and to thank the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Saskatchewan Rivers for being here — Daryl Wiberg.

And so maybe if we could just go through the committee members one more time. It's hard to sometimes remember both names, but I think it's important that we at least put forward, or try to remember, first names.

Mr. Toth: — Don Toth; MLA, Moosomin.

Ms. Draude: — June Draude; MLA, Kelvington-Wadena.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Arlene Julé; MLA, Humboldt.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Peter Prebble; I'm the MLA for Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Pritchard: — I'm Randy Pritchard; I'm the technical advisor to the committee.

Mr. Yates: — I'm Kevin Yates, the MLA for Regina Dewdney.

Ms. Jones: — Carolyn Jones, MLA for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Harper: — Ron Harper; MLA, Regina Northeast.

Ms. Jackson: — Renée Jackson, from Prince Albert Mediation and Counselling.

Ms. Ducharme: — Vicky Ducharme.

Ms. Green: — Norma Green, Corrections Canada.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — Donna Gamble, jack of all trades.

Mr. Badger: — Russel Badger, Corrections and Justice.

Mr. Webb: — Murray Webb, Department of Social Services.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, Donna, we welcome you and thank you very much for honouring us with your presence and with your story and your information. And if we could just have you, Donna, just inform maybe everyone in the room a little bit about your background.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — Okay. First I'd like to say that my daughter couldn't be here because she went into treatment for a second time just for her safety so she could get it this time. She's 19 years of age and she was taken away when I was 15, when she was born. And she's struggled through her life. And she was taken away because the social worker had stated that she didn't want me . . . her to end up like a whore, like my mother and myself. And of course at that time, I wasn't. But she's in treatment so she can't be here.

My mother was going to come, but my mother gets very angry in situations like this because she was put out when she was 12 years old. And she has a very long history herself. And of course she's a mother of a former sex trade worker and also a grandmother of a former sex trade worker so it's very strong issues in our family.

And I introduce myself as a jack of all trades but I do have a job. And the job I just got hired for is hep C. I've had hep C since I was 17. I started drugs. I was fixed by an older man with drugs and I got hooked. And I'm now a recovering addict.

Me, myself, I was put on the street after my child was born and I started drinking very heavily. I started drinking actually when I was 11 because, you know, that was the thing to do as a family tradition in my family to be able to drink well. We didn't have any communication skills, we didn't have any family skills. I believe it's a lot to do with the residential school system. And there was a lot of abuse suffered within the families.

So anyways I ended up drinking more because of the guilt and the shame because I had thought I'd failed. I thought I could be a good mom. Because I got pregnant on purpose, you know, because I wanted to prove to the world that I would be a better person than what I thought my mother was.

And in fact I ended up getting drunk, blacking out, ending up with a guy. He took me to Saskatoon and they put me out on the street. They threatened my life and they threatened my family because Saskatchewan is very small; it's a small world, period. And so I ended up out there.

I did take off after about three weeks but I didn't feel . . . I had nowhere to go because of the shame I felt. And I carried that shame for a lot, a lot of years. I still carry it. Like in fact you wouldn't know how scared I am sitting here. It took me a long time to be able to be comfortable around other women because I always felt much dirtier. I still have a tendency to scrub and scrub and scrub, and that's where I came from. There's a lot of da da da da for a couple of days. You can ask any of these people. They know me.

But anyways I ended up on the street and I stayed on the street for a lot of years. Off and on I tried different things. I tried moving up North and playing Pocahontas because that was the only other role model I had. In school I was taught Indians were crap and that we were nothing.

I got into a lot of fights. I'm a big girl. I got into a lot of fights because of the racism. And I also received racism from my own family because I am a half-breed, and I don't understand the language. I always wanted to understand but my mother wouldn't teach us because of what we were being taught that we were no good to be Indians. And so I never learned that and I never really did fit in anywhere.

And so staying on the street was the perfect place because I was

accepted even though I was too tall, and some of this is all going to sound strange. I don't mean to offend anybody and you know I might be kind of crude, but I felt I was too tall, too flat. I had big feet, big hands. I went to school dances and nobody would dance with me. I'd have to drag them on to the floor.

And in school I did very well but I didn't feel comfortable with the teachers. I used to get straps all the time in one school with a big strap for things like . . . I was in actuality trying to get someone to take notice that something . . . there was a problem at home. I was the oldest of five and I took care of everybody. My mother would leave. The first time two weeks at a time, and then after a while a month at a time, and I took care of my brothers and sisters, and that was the time she left for a month at a time, I was seven-years-old. And I used to go steal candies and anything I could get my hands on to feed my brothers and sisters.

And the first foster home I was put in was a white foster home and because I believed that white people were different and better and nicer because you know I watched *The Brady Bunch* all the time; and I went there and they put newspaper on the floor away from the dinner table and they wouldn't allow us to eat there. So that validated the fact that we were no good.

I did luck out in having some good people enter my life but it wasn't a big enough impact to take away the shame that I felt.

On the street I stayed there for a lot of reasons. Number one was like I said, I had no where else to go. Number two, it gave me money. I was poor, and everybody always had something and we had nothing. We were like Dolly Parton's song about the coat thing you know, and I was very ashamed about that. And so rather than be a thief, I was going to make money the way I thought was legal. And I did. I bought decent clothes for myself and I looked good and I felt good, you know, while I was there.

And because I'd learned a long time ago to shut down — I learned at five-years-old how not to feel, how not to talk, how not to trust — it was just too easy to stay in that lifestyle and to actually have it grow. And I felt pretty good about it. And over the years it validated because — staying on the street validated it — because I heard in the papers how they talked about all these Indian women who were getting pregnant and having children and have to live on welfare. I still hear it and I become very angry because I've been on welfare and it sucks.

They raise the child tax but they lowered the social services. They made more rules so that you have to go in there and be humiliated. And so for me, I would have rather stood on the corner. Even today, I still think that if I could, I would rather stand on a corner and be called a whore than to have to go into a social worker and face a woman who looked clean and different from me and not understanding me. And of course you know within a 10 minute span of a meeting about finances you don't have that time to discuss now look it here, you know. So like whatever, I stayed on the street for a long time.

The other thing too is that people don't think about is I got my affection from there. All I ever wanted was love, all my life. If you know anything about sexual abuse, I'll say 100 per cent of all girls, women, men have been sexually abused out there. Even the men who have girls on the street have been abused in some way, have watched abuse in some way.

So on the street I was somebody. When I dressed up, I walked down the street and the one they wanted was me, you know. And they paid good money for me.

When I got off the street it was really, really hard. It was like walking into Japan and not knowing the language. I understand now. It's the same crap, different pile. But back then it was really . . . in the beginning it was really, really hard.

The other thing too is is I've had to struggle with feelings. I've been raped twice in recovery. And to me that is hard because, like, I expect it on the street and it's easy to tune out on it, right? But in recovery, as a woman speaking to other women, that's hard to deal with. I was raped last August and I had to go through the terror all over again, the fears all over again. I've ended up having a relapse with alcohol because I can't sleep. I didn't sleep for two weeks at a time. And being alone in that kind of situation is horrible. And I'm talking like from there to today.

I wrote some things down here. And I was listening and I'm really glad that some of our people were here to support. I'm really actually glad my brother is here to support me because, like, we grew up in similar circumstances, you know, and I think we're the ones who must take over.

I don't mean to criticize you guys, and I have; I know you know I have. But all I'm saying is I want someone to hear that enough already. Don't give me a rec home . . . 12-years-old, 12-years-old, being sexually abused, they built a rec place. For what? It didn't do nothing for me, okay.

You have to have peer people. In the States they have that. They have street patrol, they call it. I think it was Minnesota or Minneapolis, they have a street patrol; street people who've proven themselves in society, who actually patrol the streets.

When I was . . . when I got lucky and Peggy hired me for a while just to help out with the van in the beginning because they couldn't actually hire me because of my record, because I'd been a whore, because I'd been a criminal. That angered me. But I got to help anyways.

I'll just ask you, guess who they talk to first, the kids? Guess who they talk to first? They talk to me. You know the language is a little bit different but we came from the same place, we know the same things. In fact, I helped a kid get into detox right away. He didn't go to any of the other counsellors, the ones that didn't know. He came to me. And he got into detox, I fought hard to get him into detox by the way. There's nothing for them, young men between 18 and 25 — that's the toughest.

The other thing is is everybody's after the prostitutes. Someone mentioned the johns. While I understand about all of that. I run a johns school here in Prince Albert. And I took it on mainly because I wanted to do up my own diversion program for sex-trade workers. Funding, of course, I use whatever money is left out of the johns but they only arrest johns when it's time to

go to vote, you know.

And it's been like that all my life and nobody can tell me any different. I don't care what anybody says. Once a year they'll have a scrape up of johns and I'll have a good school that'll last me a while and I'll be able to run my sex trade work for the women. I'm also going to be running a sex trade for youth.

Because I truly believe with all my heart and soul that it's going take peers not social workers, cops, or anybody else. And that's not criticism — that's just saying if you want to help the situation you have to have people who have been there, done that, moved on, because they're the only ones they'll listen to.

It's like scared straight. I don't know if anybody knows about any of that movie, the video they do down in the . . . (inaudible) . . . it's like that but, you know, less terror. Okay?

Okay, when someone mentioned about urban centre people, well it's hard to receive funding for school, for housing when you're an urban Indian. Myself living in Prince Albert, I have to go to Saskatoon because my district is Saskatoon and that's tough when you have no money for gas or a car that . . . I just had my car towed. It's a toasted car. So like it's tough, you know. Also you can't receive help to put down a payment on a house which would be nice since most jobs and schooling is in urban areas.

And this is for my Aboriginal people that aren't here . . . the other ones anyway. Youth have no notion of the resources when they get into the city. There is no out and out big sign — this is where to go if you're in trouble. Like big billboards. We got billboards for smoking, billboards for beer, billboards for this, billboards for that, but no billboards for a line where they can call if they need help.

Because of boredom and gang rapes, girls are not taught values and traditions as women on reserves so they move, okay? And just to note, this is slowly changing but must be more highlighted, and most Aboriginal women growing up with believing that they are non-entities, and with the great number of abused and incest and gang rapes on reserves this validates this feeling of being a non-entity. Okay?

And gang rapes are alive and real in our different communities, you know maybe some more than others. And I think it's our leaders that have to push for changing that. I know I go to every reserve and I bring it up. People don't like to hear it. Even the kids are afraid to see it. I see girls turn their heads, young men look away; but I know it's happening. But people are always keeping secrets and I'm the one that's going to try and help bring the secrets out.

A hundred per cent of all women, young women and men have been sexually abused. I said that already. We all must aggressively push to confront the abuse. Our leaders must begin. Our leaders must begin this every day, all the time, in order to make the change. If not, the youth will seek relief in our cities only to find that they are more ostracized — no money, no home, no education, no family, and being an Indian.

Our leaders must implement in all our programs learning about prostitution and abuse and sexual abuse. I've had in my experience . . . I've talked to a couple of guys, you know, they ask me what I do. And I say, well I'm a speaker. And what do you speak about? Well I speak about prostitution and drugs and alcohol and, you know, try and get kids off the street. And I've had a lot of men tell me that, well that's what they ask for.

And I think that it's our leaders who need to be educated. Everybody says prostitutes all got to be educated, johns should be educated, pimps should be educated. But it's not pimps, johns, or hookers who have to be educated — it's society in general and let me tell you if I had a big TV and everybody had to sit down and watch it, I would tell them.

Even as I say this, let me also say that there are many of us who work very hard at making these changes.

Me and my brother for instance in Saskatoon, at one point in time, were taking kids in that were wandering the street. There was an eight-year-old and a nine-year-old; they were being chased by a guy in a black truck. And it wasn't the cops. The cops were too busy parked across from an adult prostitute, a woman who had chosen her career. It wasn't them; they didn't do nothing.

So the kids came running to me, a hooker, and said that guy is following us in the truck. So I phoned my brother because he had a big house and I said, bro, I said, these guys are . . . this guy's following these guys around. And he said, well just bring them over. All they wanted was a place to stay because their parents were drinking, you know, and after the weekend, they went home. No hassle. Nobody wants to lose their families.

I remember as a kid, when I was taken away it destroyed me more than if you would have just left me alone. Because all I had was my family.

As a former whore with no education, I have strove beyond my victimization for a long time. By the grace of my Creator, I have fought that belief that I was bad. I'm not bad. I did some bad things but I am not bad.

This brings me to the point of what do you want to do, build another rec centre or help heal the children?

I made more notes. How much time do I got?

Like I said before, I run a john school and a sex trade workers' diversion program. And I wrote to SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) and these guys are always complaining about, you know, the criminalization ruining their areas and businesses. I remember I wrote a letter and then I, out of my own pocket, photocopied like a hundred of them and I put them in envelopes and, you know, I walked up Central and I gave . . . I went in there and I gave them to every person, every owner of the building.

I've went to other places, housing companies and everything, and nobody, nobody volunteered their fricking time — excuse my language — to come and approach it. You know they're afraid. And that's the other thing, society's just got to get off their butt and just do it.

The other thing is, is when . . . I'm going to bring it up — Margo Fornier Centre. We had . . . Our age group was 25 — 12 to 25 — and it pissed me off because I was working with the older guys. You have to go through the older guys in order to get to the girls. Okay? That's just the way it is.

I earned the older guys' respect. Respect enough that they wanted to go to treatment. Respect enough that they wanted to talk, to change. Because they do want to change. Nobody grows up wanting to be a whore, or a junkie, or anything like that. They wanted to change. And they saw me change, you know. Other guys, they seen my brother change.

And they lowered the age because people were intimidated to walk by them, you know. Well boo frigging hoo. I'm intimidated doing a lot of things but I face that fear and I walk through. I know when I walk down 15th if there's a group of kids, whether they're Caucasian or Indian or you know whatever, when I walk through I say hi. And when I say hi, they actually are startled. Because, you know what, there's a war going on. It's the big people against the little people. And we got to . . . we're the ones who have to stop that war. Okay? That's just the way it is, you know.

These john schools, with funding and everything, you know, like I've struggled with that and even now, I just found out that supposedly there's some crap going on.

And I'm so tired of people judging me. Like, they're waiting for me to make a mistake. They are. They're waiting for me to make a mistake. And I've been attacked a number of times. But for the grace of God and the Creator, I've got good people surrounding me, you know and strong people. And even a former cop who used to arrest me all the time; Chief Quinn here, in Saskatoon, he knows me the best. He knows if I'm bad, I'm real bad, you know. So he knows I'm okay.

I'd also like to state for years and ages and centuries that women have been the blame for prostitution, for that ooh sexual feeling, you know. I always say . . . I teach . . . I do education in HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) and hep. C (hepatitis C), and I always tell men to get to know their penises and get to know the difference between their penis and their head, you know. And I mean, all men. Bottom line. That's the way it's got to be. And the only ones who's going be able to teach that is you guys, because I can't follow you around every day.

I teach that to kids. And I teach them to respect, because when you come into this world, you come into this world of a woman. When you die, 10:1, there will be a woman by your side whether it's your wife or your mother or a sister.

And I would like . . . I say this to you only because you guys are going to be making these decisions and I need you to hear all of this, you know. And you've given me the break and look out.

So, you know, the other thing too is this racism. I'm going to touch on that. Racism is alive and well here in Prince Albert; more in Prince Albert than any place I've ever lived. And from all ends. Okay? From all ends. I've been patronized by white people, by Indian people. And you know, get over yourselves. You know, I'm tired of it.

What you're doing is destroying the children, you know. I've seen it over and over, with every youth conference I go to. You're destroying it by not turning and saying oh hello. You destroy a hooker when you walk by and you won't look at her or you cross the street before you go by, you know. You do. Even a drunk, a bum — you destroy him by not saying: hey, how you doing, no, I ain't got no money. That's all you got to say. I say it all the time: no, I ain't got no money.

I'm tired of politicians pissing around with my life because, for you guys here and any other visitors who haven't been a whore or who haven't been stuck on the street, you know, you don't know what it's like. This is my life. Every day I wake up and I wonder what else I can do; what else will open your fricking eyes to see. Enough already. Enough.

I walk down the street and I see some poor kid talking to a guy and then, all of a sudden, they disappear. He comes back. His buddies go around him, and they take off to the store, you know. Don't play with my life because it is my life. All of those kids there — it's my life. You dissed my life. I worked hard, you know, to survive, you know, and I'm working hard to earn my respect in your world.

Sometimes I wonder if it's better, if it's better off just to be out there because at least I'm faced with the truth and not bullshit, you know. I know what to expect out there. Don't give me no lies, don't give me no promises, and don't patronize me. I've had people say, right on, Donna, and won't even stop on the street to say hello to me. People don't want to work with whores. People don't want to work with people coming out of jail. People don't want to work with ex-pimps, you know.

Get over yourself. If you want to work the problem, if you really want to fix it, you need us. None of your programs will ever work, and I say that with honest-to-God truth because I'm 35 years old now. When I was a kid I watched the girls . . . I watched the women out there. And if it hadn't changed from now to then, doing the same things you're doing now, it's not going to change again.

The other thing too is, is because like I've already mentioned, I've got a daughter who is on the street. I have five daughters and a son. My youngest daughter is 11 years old and I'll be damned if her life becomes destroyed because she had no real place to go. She had no real place to go because she needed help, you know.

And we've got to quit the blamings — who's the john and you know. Even with the johns, when I do my john school, I say, you know, I'm not here to dis you, you know, because I understand where they're coming from. They're either lonely, you know, or sometimes just horny, and their wives won't do it. But I talk to them, you know.

People want to blame pimps. You can't blame pimps. They grew up the same way I did. They grew up watching abuse. They grew up watching their mothers being beaten and probably their mothers being put out, so that's what they know. Quit blaming and just do something.

I don't want to see . . . like with the 72-hour lock-up they tried to push in Alberta, the biggest reason why I took my walk to Regina was for me in implementing a 72-hour lock-up. What you're doing . . . why don't you just call it residential school all over again, you know.

They thought they did better by having foster homes and detention centres for me. I was in Kilburn Hall for six months, taken away from my family; two years in Roy Wilson Centre, taken away from my family — way down south where all the people in town used to call me an Apache, black squaw. Don't do that any more, you know. We got to find other ways, and the only other way I know is peer support, peer . . . you know.

Get all the former people. I know people who are in Justice. I know people who are doing a whole lot of things, ex-street people. But nobody ever talks to them. Nobody ever asks them. I have a habit of talking, and that's the only . . . and that's God's gift, and I think that's the only reason I end up doing what I'm doing. And you know, when I keep thinking and hoping and praying that if you guys say, yeah, come on out and join us, they will, you know. Some of them are afraid and all they want is acceptance, you know.

And I think that's all I've got to say. I asked my brother to come, because my, you know, my mom and my . . . Mckenzie couldn't come, and I figured he might be able to offer some, some things for you guys if you wanted to hear him.

And I really hope I made sense.

Mr. Napope: — My name is Norris Napope. I'm a parolee. I come from Duck Lake One Arrow.

My experience on the street began at an early age of maybe nine. Well maybe even earlier than that, because when you consider the streets in terms of me living on the reserve it was more or less like the street because I was put out . . . and went to the bar, this is in '67, well up to the '70s, mid '70s anyway. But off and on.

In '69 my mother took me to Edmonton and from there I played the street, played with the people there. I'm quite open about my sexuality there where men came after young boys, young girls, right. And I was nine, ten years old. And the people that I hung out with were about the same age.

I've seen the little sisters that were there. I didn't realize that they were young; I didn't realize I was young. I just knew that I was on the street and the only form of comfort that we had was amongst ourselves or with . . . amongst perverted, old Frenchman that — not criticising Frenchmen or anything like that — but this old man took us into his home. He was a bootlegger, all right, and same with the other company that he had.

He would lull the girls in and if I can get in with the girls, then okay, I could get in . . . I can get into the house. But fortunately for me I had a mother that were friends — she was friends of these people and that. They knew me. So I started hanging out.

I did a lot of things on the street when I was young that contributed . . . maybe you call juvenilism, whatever, but I robbed people. I worked on the street. I sold myself to men and woman for the purpose of surviving, I'll say. And also for the need of having somebody to hold me, to comfort me.

A lot of times I wasn't as lucky. A lot of times I lived on the street, on a riverbank in Edmonton or I lived in a junkyard in Edmonton or I lived in the flophouses in Edmonton. I did a lot of violent acts when I was young to provide some sort of comfort for myself to let go of some of my aggression.

St. Michael's school in Duck Lake provided me with a lot of bitterness because there our supervisor, our good supervisor, Claude Lambert, and that, took it upon himself to bother the boys in that school. And the feeling that I had over the time that I was on the street and that that I was . . . I didn't feel good. I don't feel right selling myself to other men. To the other women it was all right, but to the other men it was different because I'm not supposed to be like that. I know where this penis is supposed to go. My sexual orientation began when I was maybe six or seven years old with this individual.

And Edmonton, and the progress or the decline of Norris, it happened in Edmonton, all right, and the years following I became a pimp, a street person, drug dealer, a woman beater. I come home sometimes to Duck Lake to recover, to get a sense, try to get something, clear up my head because I was doing a lot of drugs. I was beating a lot of people up, and the only safe place I had was there. It was in Duck Lake. It was my grandmother's place, and she gave me a sense of direction, at times a sense of belonging someplace.

I couldn't reveal nothing to her because she too was raised in a residential school, all right, and my grandmother at the time was 75. And a couple of adages that my grandmother always said to me, she says: when you go to town, if you're going to go there to go buy something, don't stay there, come home. But I never listened to that old lady. But today I do; I try to stay home.

Another one is idle hands is the devil's work, all right, and I unfortunately didn't have idle hands. I use my hands for abusing other people in bars, robbing them, and they catching me. I paid for that — three federal sentences already.

I don't know if I'm going to make my parole, all right. I got 11 months and I've never made my parole any time that I've been on parole. This is the first time I've actually felt that maybe I have some ground to stand on. But it is not easy, right, to walk, all right, in this world where I'm faced with a lot of obstacles that I brought on to myself, not realizing that hey, that if I have a record that I can't get a job; if I beat . . . or if I robbed the Duck Lake Hotel, now I can't be bonded for a certain amount of time — seven years — I didn't know that.

You know when I was young, okay, maybe I wouldn't have had a record but it didn't come out. Today I'm here faced with 25, 29 convictions on my record, all right, for violence, robbery, or whatever, all right. I did that and other numerous things that plague me sometimes, all right.

But here today I'm trying to take a program in town to help

myself, all right. I'm a kid on the street; I'm a kid in a bush, all right. Where I got some coping skills while I was in the pen, I got some coping skills while I was on the street, all right. I don't want to refer back to my street life because it don't make no sense to me, all right, to go back to that because I'm 39 years old. If I go back to that then I might as well go all the way because I'm tired of living the way that I've been living.

And when I walk down a street today — any place, all right — I live in P.A. today, right, and I see the young brothers and the young sisters on the street and that right, my heart is there for them because I know what they're experiencing because I've been down there but there's nothing I can do because there is no place for me.

There's no place for me to work with other people that have possible programs because they won't allow a criminal in there; they won't allow this individual in there because of his past. I can understand that. I can understand the system because I lived that system all right. I know what works and what don't, all right. But like my sister said, we try to do something on our own but we're always faced with some kind of obstacle, all right, and that is the system sometimes.

And there's the progress of some people's good intentions, brings that down. And that's what it usually does for me. I say, well I just give up on the system and that and say, yes, well I'll go back to my beer, I'll go back to the jail because I understand that. Because I don't like to be bothered with issues that I consider minute compared to the issues that are more harming when I see a young brother or sister or even my, well my own sisters and my own nephews and that, at this stage, they're there.

And I can't do nothing but give advice and sit there, as much as I like to sit at a place and say hey, come on now I've got tools to help myself. And they say help yourself first. Well, okay I'm doing that but that doesn't mean that I should just leave and just walk and turn away from the young people that are here because I was there. Like for me to take a management program and I'm all of a sudden I'm thinking to myself, I'm debating a lot to myself, I said, I ain't going to get hired nowhere, all right. I ain't going to get hired nowhere, not for a long time, not as a manager, not if I'm going to be bondable or if I'm going to be holding money. I know that, right?

But the thing for me is well, okay, if I'm learning other skills, what are you going to use them for? Well I still think about these. I don't really care for giving myself a position with my name, Norris, written on here, all right? I'm not looking for that.

To me it's like individuals that these young people are growing up to be. Where can I draw the line for them, help them find that line that says oh, stop right here before you find out that if you go to that next line in that, that will be it.

I remember a young fellow who come to the pen, well, actually several young people who have come into the pen, young people who have walked over that line of committing murder — the greatest sin on earth; not just Canada but all over, all right — and I look at them.

I had a brother there who's still in there, is doing 20 years. He's done 20 years of that sentence already because he's always screwing up. And I love him even though that individual may be the baddest individual there is in other people's eyes. I told that to him once. I love you, I said. I love you as my brother, I said.

And I spent the last 15 years of my life going back and forth and he's telling me, when are you going to learn? Look, I don't like seeing you coming back in here. Why don't you stay out now? That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to find a way. Maybe I can get my brother out too but I have to work on myself, they say.

Well okay, I'm working on myself but still I got room for other activities that I can do, all right? I'm not incapable of talking to people, young people. I managed to do that over the years and my place with my sister here today was kind of a, whoa, what's she want? I know she talks, you know, like sisters.

She's pretty adamant in some of the issues that she puts out. She's very brave. And not a woman in this culture of ours, in that preculture, you know. Caucasians, there's not a brave women out there who have gone out and did some wonderful things and that. And I consider my sister really to be brave, calling herself a whore, when I don't think she is.

I sat here wondering what she was talking about and I caught on, all right? Before I say anything I try to find other beings to help me because I can't do it on my own, all right, or I'm able to try share what I'm able to share with you.

I asked a grandmother to come and help me talk, give this woman strength, these women here talking about their children, our children that are on the street. All right, finding a place for them, an emergency place or something like that. I don't know what we're looking after here but I hope we find strength in the Creator that something good comes about in this meeting.

I can't . . . nobody can really express, my sister or I can really express what goes on in terms of what young people go through in terms of terror on the street, feelings being cut off. You know about it through psychology, sociology, whatever, all right. You're exposed to that, all right. You're exposed to that in the books.

But when you're exposed to it on the street level, when you have a knife pointed to you, when you're having your head grabbed and being pressed like this, or being thrown out on the street by drag queens, by older people who know how to use you. They use you to survive. They give you a piece, a lesson also, all right. I'll give you a piece of that guy, sometimes if you're lucky that is.

I've had a lot to swallow over the time when I spent my time in prison. I spent quite a bit of years . . . Since I was 15 years old I've been in jail, and I've had a lot of time to think. I'm not somebody who just fell off the frigging Dairy Queen truck over here, all right? I studied, I analyzed who I am — I analyzed who I am. I analyzed what happened to me from the time seven years prior to my birth. I studied that issue where my mother was. I understand my grandmother. I studied where my culture

was.

When I grew up, I tried to grasp what happened to me, all right, and then in the process what happened to me. I went looking at that kind of a grim picture but I'm glad it never went to the extent that some of my brothers have, and younger people have.

I'm here today to tell you that what you see this shell of a man has gone through a lot of scars, a lot of pain. He don't show it very much. He likes to be cool. He likes to be still . . . I like to protect myself in some ways yet, and it's not easy, you know. Like I want to be a certain way. I see an elder in my mind and that's what I want to be when I . . . when I feel I'm sitting on the ground some place and kind of everything's all right. And not at a bingo hall, eh, I mean, you know . . . you know, like to me, it's too many nights.

The white hair that I hoped to earn that are on my . . . growing on my head that I want to sit some place with some young people one day, showing them the basics of living, all right — how to make a fire, how to make a shelter, how to trap, and this or that, all right. Because I still believe that we still need those basic skills, all right, to survive within ourselves. But there is other skills that we need, young people need today.

And my sister tries her best, all right. Her efforts in that . . . ah the women that help her and that, right, our mother who help her in that. I see their efforts in that sometimes — nothing. It just gets like nobody's listening to you. Somebody's yelling. Because I believe there's something written in the Bible, just to use that as something of a background, that says when you're in need of something, knock, seek, or something like that — seek, knock; it'll be answered by that; you'll find it.

It's a long time since I read a Bible, so forgive me, will you. But I know that adage is still there, all right. It's still there, not only in Indian country or White country, but it's all over, all right, individuals.

But I hope, well, we can help young people in some frame, in some framework or something like that and I hope, like my sister said, that you can use people such as us in some way, in some capacity. I hope so, because I want to be used in that fashion also, because if you can see what I can say or something like that of what my . . . where my heart's at in terms of young people and that, where I see them as . . . is to feel that sense of maybe I'm helping that young fellow or that young woman out in terms of straightening out her thinking, all right.

I find our culture a hard road, also, all right. This Indian culture that the elders tell me will provide me some answers, sometimes it's hard for me because I'm still hanging onto the baggage that I wrapped around my neck for quite a while. But it's there and it's strong.

Within our elders, they talk to us, they burn that sweet grass, smoke that pipe, the sun dance, sweat lodge. These things are very real for us in terms of helping us. They are ancient, you know. We don't have big cathedral churches or anything like that. Oh, maybe I'm wrong. The earth is our cathedral church.

Yes, but in terms of, you know, like the things that we use are there. They help young people, help all people to understand one another, to provide some basis of coming together, to come together to help the little people because they need help. They're crying. They're crying, and a lot of them are crying.

If it's still going on today that young people are still talked about today, and I was 9, 8 years old when I was on the street providing male and female. There's not very much has changed then in 30 years, right? There's not much. All it's been is . . . I seen a poster of a young woman on some community centres and things like that, or in banks and things like that, all right. But then that's not enough — you know, advertisement. If you're going to advertise, then okay, blow it in their face. If you're going to touch a kid . . .

I'd like to show you something what I would do to an individual that touched my kid, in my own terms. Because I have the experience to do something like that. I don't want you touching that kid, mister. Or a woman, all right. A woman's different, but a man is different, all right.

I'm a protector. That's what my sister sees me as, that's what my woman sees me as. That's what my mother sees me as, and same with my young people, all right. And if it's for me to provide that young people protection, I will in whatever way I can, all right. Give them the shirt off my back or go up against the law. I will, all right. I'll do it.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I'm sorry to interrupt, but in the next couple of minutes could you bring, not your comments, but your formal presentation to a close, so that we can have a group discussion which I'd like you to be part of.

Mr. Napope: — Sure, okay. Okay. I just . . . for me, my personal experience as a little human being, I was abused over the course of the time that I'd been on the street and that. But I would do things for the young people, all right, to go out on a limb for them, to help them out. I would, because they need help and I can't really help them if my hands are tied.

You know, like my sister, anybody that's got a criminal record or something like that, I think maybe you should have a little look at it and see where that individual's trying to go also. Thank you.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you, Norris.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Norris, you've just . . . you've really touched our hearts with your honesty and with your truth. And in some ways I reassure you there's every one of us in this room that can equate with some of what you've said, because we've probably experienced some of what you've said in our own ways.

And we appreciate and we respect you as a person and we hope that you respect us. And we pray that we can work together. And we will hear what you have said, and consider.

Before we get into group discussion, we have two other individuals, people here who will be presenting. And because I

haven't got my glasses on, I'm going to ask Mr. Prebble to read this please.

Mr. Toth: — Arlene, may I say something.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Yes, Don.

Mr. Toth: — I've been listening here very closely both to Donna and to Norris and I think one of the problems that we face is in some cases a lack of trust and in other cases, a lack of fear of other people.

I'll be very honest with you. There's a lot of First Nations people that I'm good friends with, and yet I still inwardly have struggle with a fear of walking down the street, especially where you tend to see a lot of the First Nations people. I do have a struggle with that and it's a fear, and because of a stereotype that's probably been created. But there's a lot of honest, hard-working people just as there are a lot of honest, hard-working white people, and there are real scoundrels in the white community as well.

So I appreciate your comments but I want to throw something out as well. And I know we're going . . . it's going a little broader than this. You talked about Jesus talking about knocking and the door will be open — ask and you shall find. And I want to say this to you, and coming from an individual who believes that there's a God and a Creator who created us, Donna said she feels like dirt at times. And no doubt about it. But you know, there's an almighty being who loves you. I just want to share that with you and everyone in this room, every one of those little kids on the street we're trying to reach out to. We've got to find a way to reach out to them.

And the comment that I really appreciated, coming from both you and Norris, Donna, the fact that I think you've hit the nail on the head. I do not understand the street world. I will be very honest; I do not understand it, but I want to do something about it but I don't understand how to get there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I think you and people like you when you come to that real change . . .

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — Well if you'd let us teach a class, we could implement it in SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) now.

Mr. Toth: — What I'm saying is people like yourselves too, who have had a change and a hard change, and have, I feel, a burning heart for what's happening to others, that you've gone through — I believe you have some of the tools, a lot of the tools, to reach out to those kids with some help. It would be a lot easier for you to do it. You can train me but it still comes a lot easier.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — I need to say two more things. I'm sorry; I'm aggressive. Like you hadn't heard that one before.

Okay, number one, you are a brave, brave, brave man and my heart goes out to you. And you know what, I'm afraid. I'm just as afraid of white people too. Sometimes I'm just as afraid because I think, what if they don't like me? What if I'm not good enough? But there again if you don't . . . no pain, no gain. If you don't face your fear, you never know. If you don't read the book, you'll never learn it.

And the other thing I wanted to say, I didn't know they were all going to show up. I'm sorry; I lied. My mother lied to me actually. The beauty of all of this, when you talk about this, for me is, I have my brother. I have my other brother. I have my mother, who knew the street way before we did and had nothing — nothing. She didn't even have a table to sit around like this with. And all of us — all of us — has something.

We have each other and we have an aim, you know. And me and my brother, you know, the aim is we're going to beat it, one person at a time and take the whole family, you know. We're taking the whole family and that's what we do; as a family, we work with the family. You've got to have that, you know.

My family was taken away from me a very a long time ago for whatever fricking reason. I had to lose a brother in order to understand that all I want is to love my mom, and love my brothers and my sister. My brother hung himself because of the grief. I don't want that happening to any kid in any room. Any time a kid walks up to you and says, God, I want to die, and I know, I understand that.

But we're going to do it, you know. Remember us as old people; the old people they used to fight. Geronimo — it's not just a legend, it's not just a story; they were real people. Women, women stood in front and died to protect their children, and that's what we're going to do, you know.

So it's not me against you. I want to help. But please let me help, okay.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Okay, I think, you know, we are really behind time and I just ask everybody for their patience. Okay, Carolyn has something she wants to say and then after that, before we have the other presenters, I think we should all just get up and stretch for two minutes and have a cup of coffee, or whatever. And we won't prolong the break just too long because there's so many interesting people with so much to tell that we want to have that happen.

Ms. Jones: — I'll try not to be very lengthy with this, but several times today I have heard presenters say that it's a criminal act to take a child out of a home, no matter what is happening to that child in the home.

And I'm sure that you understand from a legal and a responsible point of view that . . . I mean at what point do you not leave that child in the home? I mean, do you allow a child to be physically abused, sexually abused, mentally and emotionally abused? Is there no limit that you see where the system is justified in removing a child from a home?

So I guess it was kind of to Donna, because she was the latest presenter and talked about being taken from her home. But, I mean, I'd welcome a comment from I guess anybody, except that I know we're in a little tight thing and maybe it can go into the group discussion later.

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — That's what I mean is there's so many of us who want to take them but aren't allowed, you know. Like, I'll take them. I know sweat lodge keepers on reserves in One Arrow who would take a kid, you know. But of course they don't have the qualifications; they don't have the education, you know. And this is where either, you know, either you want help or you don't. Bottom line. There are people who take kids in. They're not afraid.

Ms. Jones: — I'm not understanding that. It's okay to take a child out of a home as long as it goes into an Aboriginal home?

Donna Gamble-Whitehead: — No, if it goes into a home that is safe. You know, I'm not just saying . . . I don't want to get into the White-Indian thing, okay, because I'm a Metis and frankly for a lot of years I didn't fit nowhere. I'm not saying that.

What I'm saying is, if the people are willing to keep the kid until the parents get their crap together — intervention. Anybody know about the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) program? Anybody know about the NA (Narcotics Anonymous) program? It's one addict helping another. It's what addicts do. We help each other.

I got myself . . . I had a relapse in 1996. My kids did not go to Social Services. My friends from the program took the children, and the Social Services fought nails to try and get my kids. But my friends were there to take my kids and hold on to them and then I dealt with the drug abuse that I had. And they were white people, by the way. And they were my best friends. They were program people. And there's people like that all over.

When I talk about peer support, street patrol, I'm talking about . . . And like, not all street people are Indian. Excuse me. I've stood beside Vietnamese; I've stood beside white people. So like, let's not get into colour here, okay. Yes, there is a lot of Aboriginal people out there. But like, don't point fingers at us because I'll point right back. A lot of my sisters were white, you know, and that's why I like the street is because there was no colour barrier.

And the thing is, is when we talk about a street patrol, if you go for a street patrol where they have a home placement until the kid can go home when it's safe, when the parents will be intervented, you know what I mean? Then there's something that could be worked out. But just to take the kid out and stuff him wherever, ain't going to help nobody, you know.

Ms. Jones: — Well I don't want to belabour it because I think it's a good topic for when we get into a group discussion. But it's my understanding and belief that there's quite a bit of work that goes into trying to keep children in their home, no matter whose home it is, and that removing children is pretty much a last-ditch effort and meant for their protection and safety. So I won't belabour it, Peter. Thank you for allowing me to ask that and hopefully we can talk more about it after.

So now a break?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — We're just concerned. We're hoping, because there's such good spirit in the room that you will stay for the other presentations, those of you that are here, and then maybe add to them. We still want to have a group discussion after.

But we will take a couple of minutes for coffee or a bathroom break.

The committee recessed for a period of time.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Ivy and Renée, are they here right now? If you'd like to come forward that would be great.

And then we're going to have a general discussion on all the things that we've talked about during the day and invite other comments from either people who've already been making comments or people who haven't been heard yet and would like to make a comment. And I'm sure the committee members will have questions of a variety of people in the room.

But we want to focus first on the presentation from Ivy Bell and — is it Renée? — Renée Jackson. So welcome to you both. We're very much looking forward to hearing from you.

Ms. Bell: — Thank you. It's good to be here. I don't know how much you know about us. We work for Prince Albert Associated Counselling and Mediation, and we're involved quite a bit with working with men and women in the correction centres.

When we were asked to speak here today we knew it was to do with the child sex trade, and Carol filled us in. My mind is up there some place — I forgot where I put it, my memory. Like how did . . . I guess the questions that I started thinking is, where did it all begin? Why are they there or why are they here? Who are these children? How did our children become involved in the sex trade and what can we do about it?

From what I understand, you have gotten a lot of the history about how dysfunctionalism came to the Native community, the Metis as well as the First Nations people. And so I'm kind of . . . I'm not going to reiterate what you guys have heard, have already heard this afternoon.

We know that the federal government was responsible for the treaty people, but you as the provincial government is responsible for the non-status and we thank you for coming here to listen to us.

I guess what I kind of just wanted to share was we see a lot of . . . I think what we've heard here tonight was the impact of the residential schools, later the foster care, the adoption, and more recently, Renée and I were discussing, was the rate of abortions now. The physical, the mental abuse, spiritual abuse, verbal, that happened within the residential school and how it's intergenerational. I think you guys have already heard that many times.

As counsellors at P.A. mediation counselling we see a lot of rage, a lot of anger, especially. And I think when we look at the men that we work with, a lot of them, there's a lot of rage there. And when you have to . . . and to understand them I think we have to look back in the past, where they come from — the

generational impact of the residential schools, the orphanages, foster care. There's also domestic violence.

This is what we see our clients suffering from: educational deficiencies; running; substance abuse; eating disorders; sleeping disorders; flashbacks; sexual dysfunctions; fears; phobias; post-traumatic stress symptomatology; physical scars; incarceration; moral beliefs, values eroded; we see a lot of FAS/FAE (fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects); prostitution; lack of parenting skills; family breakdown; cultural breakdown. And those are just some of the things. Like, that's not all. We deal with the whole thing.

So who are these children in the sex trade? They are descendants of a culturally oppressed people. Descendants of a people that had adopted a different way of seeing and treating their women and children. They are children who, like their parents, have not been given a chance to heal. And today, we heal for those six generations before us.

They are children, like I said. They'll come from dysfunctional families and whether they are likely to have been witnesses or have been victims of the alcohol, drug abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, cultural confusion, cultural shame, family breakdown, and communities in crisis — those are just a few again. These are children that run from their home and seek refuge in the streets. And I think that we have come to a sad place in our society when our children run to the streets for safety.

And I guess . . . Who are these children? And I think Donna demonstrated that really well tonight, that they are our sons, our daughters. They're our young mothers and our young fathers.

And I'll leave it open to Renée, if she wants to add anything.

Ms. Jackson: — Thank you, Ivy. I think Ivy summed up the question of who are these children, where did it all begin, why are they there, what can we do about it.

I'd like to talk about what can we do about it. Talking to Arlene outside for a minute, I commented that the answer is not to grab the children from the home. There's some things we need to take . . . we need to do. And I mentioned to Arlene that supporting the families, help the parents, help the communities — that's one thing we need to do. Locking up the children for 72 hours is not the answer to get them off the street.

And I just wanted to mention that, why is it we focus on the children? It's not the children that are bad. There's nothing wrong with the children. It's the parents. It's society.

What do we do? We need to understand each other. Where do the white social workers come from? We need to work together. We don't need divisions. I want to work with white social workers. I'm not saying I can do a better job, but I can help. So I need the white system to allow me to help.

We need those people in jails. They have the experience.

And one thing I may add is we need some laws for the johns. We do. Let's not make laws for children; let's make laws for the johns. Without the johns there'd be no sex trade. Thank you.

Ms. Bell: — Just to add to what Renée was saying here about treating . . . about helping the communities. I think a lot of times we tend to treat the child, and I think there was a question asked here earlier about what do you do. Do you leave them in there?

And one of the things that I think through history has proven to us is that we have taken the children away, put them in residential schools, and adopted them out into foster care where they have totally lost who they are. They've lost their culture; they've lost everything. And you're starting another generation of dysfunctionalism within that individual's life.

And I think that goes back to what Renée was saying, was we need to work with the communities; we need to work with the people. And I think Donna even said it. We need grassroots information.

I think it happens all too often where outsiders come from outside the communities and come in thinking they have the answer. And I think that's totally wrong. I think the answer's already within the community. If it's a Native community, you can't have white people coming from the outside and saying, this is the answer to your problem, because we are different.

And I think if you want to find the answers, look within that community and you'll find it. Simply like as an individual, it's the same thing. They do have the answers from within. But I think that's really important, is keeping the grassroots people involved.

And money. It's a sad thing. When I was in a northern community once and there was called, there was a meeting called, and it was to do with the sniffing that was going on in the community. But nothing was done that night because there was no money. That night a 12-year-old died — not because his parents were negligent but he had snuck out after grandma had went to bed. But nothing was done in the community because there was no money. Like how many people do we have to lose before, you know, it's taken serious?

But there's crisis in every community. But yet when it comes down to dealing with them, the government is really great for crying, there's no money for it. And I think it's a tragedy when you see waste all over the place but nothing's being done to address these problems.

These are little people that we're dealing with here — human beings. And I'd just like to see more money being directed to address these kind of things here that I was talking about — the domestic violence, suicide, that's happening within our Native communities.

And I think Carol's here to answer any questions. Thanks for listening to us.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Thank you very much. We had talked about some discussion and I'm looking forward to that. I'm sure all committee members are. But I met this guy named Sam and had a coffee with him and his wife, I believe, in the

restaurant or whatever — I don't know if it's his wife but . . . his friend. His friend.

Sam, could you offer us some of your thoughts.

Mr. Badger: — Okay. I guess without going into my history, I'm pretty well the same line as my chum here, and I was on the street also and grew up in a dysfunctional home . . . (inaudible) . . . But I guess what I want to do is I guess maybe offer some, I guess, direction on what my belief is and how to make it a functional community, so to speak.

Because all through the course of history we've been oppressed — the media, political system past and present, the legal system, the education system. The education system has taken out the savages and all this sort of thing, but they haven't really done anything else to create understanding between cultures, because that's where the problem exists is the misunderstandings. And I think if they could put into the curriculum stuff like the legislative oppression, the banning of our ceremonies, needing a permit to get on and off the reserve, being incarcerated on reserves, needing a permit to sell our own cattle, to kill our own cattle if we are starving.

I don't know if you're familiar with Almighty Voice but he killed a cow because his family was starving, and the RCMP hunted him down and killed him. Like these things . . . they took away our language. And when I was going to school I got strapped if I spoke Cree, but that's all I knew when I started school.

These things are, they're not, I guess, common knowledge. The spirit and intent of the treaties, the transfer agreement and royal proclamation — all these things, I don't know if they're taught in schools. I'm a teacher but they weren't taught in schools when I was teaching. I'd like to see something in the Saskatchewan curriculum to address these issues because our people have been taught that we're bad through the education system and everything else.

Now if they could teach the true history, our people would get that self-esteem back because they know what happened in our history, they know what led us up to where we are now. And the non-Aboriginal society, I guess, wouldn't be so arrogant sort of thing, because they were taught that they were A1 sort of thing and are the heroes, and all this sort of thing.

So these things, like if they look back at their history, if we look back at the history and understand exactly what happened there's going to be a balancing out of things and people are going to start coming together to work together.

Like you shouldn't be sitting on that side of the table and us on this side of the table, we should be working together. And I think that's the whole issue because we need to role model for our kids, our young people. If we're going to stay segregated that's what the young people will see, and they'll be just carrying on. And if they can see us working together, going to dinner together, walking down the street together, then that would become normal and they'd have a lot better chance than us.

Because if nothing's done . . . like in Prince Albert pretty soon half of the population will be Aboriginal, and if nothing's done to create understanding between the cultures . . . if nothing's done to ease the tensions or to educate people on the issues, I can see my kids battling with non-Aboriginal kids. And I love my kids enough to try and do something about it now, and I wish the non-Aboriginal people would also get on that same road because I think they love their kids too.

So if we can all do that for our children and for our grandchildren, for those not yet born, like it's going to be a long haul. And because our legal system was taken away, our education system was taken away, our spiritual practices were taken away, our language was taken away, our freedom was taken away, our land was taken away, and you could go on and on.

And like these things have to be given back to us. Like slowly like we're going to make mistakes sort of thing, but we need to get that control back that we had of our own people a long time ago. Because it doesn't matter how well-meaning people are, they can't come . . . like she said, they can't come into an Aboriginal community and give programs to people they know nothing about. Like I couldn't develop a program for your children because I don't understand the culture that well, and you couldn't do the same thing for my kids.

So it's got to be a sharing. We have to get together. And I think it's important that we have . . . that we get together in order to keep these . . . like we got an overrepresentation of people in the penitentiary and the correctional system. We represent 8 per cent or something of the province and we got about 89 per cent of the people doing time of Aboriginal ancestry. So there's something wrong with this legal system. There's something wrong with the education system. There's something wrong with the media sensationalizing a lot of the negative things that happen in Aboriginal countries.

And the politics past and present have really done a number on us; the way the politicians have treated us. Like one elder was talking about . . . Like we were to get together at a meeting, and some people from Ottawa come along and they're talking and the elder overheard them talking about Indian time because some people were late. And he got kind of heated up and he said, you know, we've been sitting back for the last hundred-and-some-odd years waiting for you to honour the treaties. Don't talk to me about Indian time.

So these like . . . People have to be educated on their history. Like for myself personally, I had to go back in my history to work through the good, the bad, and the ugly. I did a lot of crying to realize who I am, and that's the same thing we have to do with history. We have to go back in history, learn exactly what happened in history to bring us to the situation we're in today.

And once that's understood, we have a heck of a lot better chance of working together to create a better world for our kids, our grandchildren, and those not yet born sort of thing. And I don't expect a heck of a lot of change in my lifetime, but I'd like to see something start.

And in saying that, like I can't work with hookers or anything on a street because I've never been one myself. But people like Norris, Donna, and part of what they did today, and they're the ones that should be the front-line workers, they're the ones that should be employed in these areas because they know — they've been there, did that.

Like for an AA, like, you can't get somebody that's never had a drinking problem to go and counsel an alcoholic. So the person that's gone through it is best able to help the people that are going through it and to help them get out.

And with meetings like this I think all the members of society should be involved, like people from the penitentiary, people from the correctional centre, people from Pine Grove young offenders and everything — the whole works. They should all be at this meeting because they know what the problems are; they know the issues. I don't know them. You don't know them.

So we have to work together, and I think that's the only way we can do it is if we work together and try to understand each other, and let the young people see us working together, walking together, talking together, that sort of thing. And when that becomes normal, it can only change for the better. I think that's kind of where I want things to go. Thank you.

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

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Sam, that was a very powerful statement. Thank you.

And Ivy and Renée, I don't know if the members of the committee have questions they'd like to ask you, but I thought your comments were extremely important. And I'm just wondering if there are questions on those comments before we open it up for a general discussion. We'll take a couple of questions and then a general discussion.

Is there anybody that has a question on the presentations?

Mr. Harper: — Ivy, you indicated . . . Maybe I should start this way. I think there's one message that we certainly — and when I say we, I mean the committee — has certainly got loud and clear here today is that the proposal or the legislation that has been put forward in Alberta of the 72-hour retaining of the girls off the street is not something that will fly. It is certainly, every group that has made a presentation to us has indicated that that is certainly not the direction that we should be looking at.

You mentioned the need — and I agree with you personally — the need to work with the families. Now I'm going to propose to you a hypothetical situation where a young man, boy, or girl is viewed as an at-risk person and it is believed that they come from a dysfunctional family. What mechanism should be in place to be able to work with that family? I mean I don't know, if the family didn't want to let you in the house, how could you go in and talk to them? What mechanism would be fruitful to be able to go in, to be able to start lines of communications with that family of the young person at risk?

Ms. Petit: — I think another . . . if it's a Native family and if you got another, an elder or something to go and speak to them, then you would be able to get in. And no, we do not agree our children should be abused. We will intervene when we see that. But a white person will go in, walk in the house — I'm sorry for saying that — but . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . my voice is loud enough.

Mr. Harper: — You might want to start again, for the record.

Ms. Petit: — Okay, I thought my voice was loud enough. I guess it wasn't. Usually it's loud.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Could you please say your name, please.

Ms. Petit: — I'm Sylvia Petit. I'm Donna's mother. And what I was saying to your question, what do we do, and my belief is if you think . . . let's say you want to come to my house, I'm beating up my baby and you know that but I won't let you in my house. You find an elder. There's a lot of elders in town that will come and work with me. Then I will let you in. And then from there work with the family. Just don't walk in. I've seen that so many times all these years, like you know, a person . . . I don't like saying white men, that's not nice . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, okay then . . . to come in, walk in the house and just take, we're going to take this.

What I heard here so far is what would happen to us, to my ancestors. Like you know, I was one of the kids that was taken away from my home, put in this residential school. Because my mom and dad could have taken care of me like you know, but no, because they believed my mom and dad must have been dumb. That's why they took me and put me in this residential school so I could learn your way; I could be this white person. And when I started school I couldn't talk my language. Every time I did, I'd get a licking. And you know, this is what we have to stop.

You don't just go in there and take them away. Find someone. I'll even give you my phone number to help because my kids have been in foster homes. I was a drunk because that's all I know, that's all I knew. And they were in and out of foster homes. And the foster homes they were in, they weren't treated very nice. Like, you know, me and my children, we have . . . like, you know, we get to talk once in a while. We have circles to work on our healing and they tell me stories how they used to be treated.

Like, you know, the one social worker would come; like, you know, they would eat on the table with them. As soon as the social worker was gone, my kids were eating off the floor. And you know, this one social worker told my daughters Donna and Gail, you're going to end up like a whore like your mother. Your mother's no good and not that nice.

And this is why I . . . Like, you know, it would be better to have these Native children in a Native home. My feelings towards that is to have them in a Native home but make sure the Native home, like, what you go through, make sure it's a stable home. Like, don't just throw them anywhere, but I believe they should stay in our own communities.

And again, I'll answer your question. If you want to go in, get someone, an elder or someone, to go in for you and you work together — like we were talking about here, to work together. I've been praying for that since I sobered up and cleaned my act, that we come together. Because I cut your arm, I cut mine, our blood is the same. Like, you know, this is the thing, there's so much garbage out there, so much conflict amongst people, you know.

And these kids are out on the street. They don't want to be there. I didn't want to be on the street. I didn't want to be out there. I wanted to be with someone. I wanted someone to love me as a little girl but I never got that. All I got was these old men on the street like, you know, loving me for a little bit. And you give me a little bit of money. I didn't know what I was doing at first. After a while I realized what was happening.

Mr. Harper: — So if there was some kind of a community-driven response committee, let's put it that way, that would be able to respond to the situations where a child at risk is identified as a child at risk because of a dysfunctional family, that would probably go a long way to being able to stabilize the family and cause a child to continue to remain part of that family?

Ms. Petit: — Yes.

Ms. Bell: — I think the subject really has already been practised but we're still restricted. Like we are, as Native people, given our own programs. But then again we're restricted by following provincial policy. So like the standards that would work well here in the city in mainstream society doesn't always work for what's out there in the Native communities.

So, like, we're seeing still a lot of children coming into care, but then again I think what has to happen is we have to start looking at more preventative kind of stuff. And I think what Sylvia is saying is that all too often that they're too quick to come in there and remove the children and take them into, you know, a totally different culture, a totally different community, everything different, when again . . . like we go back to the community again, when the answer is within the community already.

But then again you're going back to the money problem again — we have our programs, you have to run it our way; here's your money but here's your program, you do it our way or you're not going to get any money. So then our hands are tied. Even when we're given a little bit of freedom, it doesn't work.

The programs have to be designed by the community, by the people for the people. It can't come from governments that have never experienced life the way we have in the Native community. And that's where we fail.

Mr. Harper: — So what you're saying now, there is a program out there that could, if adapted to meet the needs of the community, could work.

Ms. Bell: — Yes. I think most of the communities . . . I don't know how many now in the province now, like Indian Child and Family Services, like that's what I'm saying is we're given these programs . . .

Mr. Harper: — And it's an intervention program and they have the . . . or could be made into an intervention program so that they could have the ability to intervene into a family situation that is recognized as abusive or . . .

Ms. Bell: — I think what has happened is that everybody has kind of designed their own program based on how they want to work their budget, sort of thing. But that's all it goes back to. Some of them, like, you know, are doing their programs different from each other but it's not all, from what I understand, it's not all the same. Everyone is doing their own thing. But again, like I say, it goes back to the budget again. We're really falling short when it comes to that. Yes, and that's just for treaty people. That's nothing to do with Metis or non-status.

Mr. Harper: — What do you mean just treaty people? A federal government program only, okay.

Ms. Hansen: — A band-based program.

Mr. Harper: — Okay, just a band-based program. It's not a community-based program. It's a band-based . . .

Ms. Hansen: — Same. It's within the individual communities. But a lot of what we're seeing and what we've experienced is within the non-status and Metis or when it gets lost between the governments.

Mr. Harper: — Okay, okay.

Ms. Hansen: — The kids . . . when it gets lost between the governments and nobody knows whose responsibility this child is and there's no money, then the kid gets lost and falls between the cracks and they're on the streets and they land up in P.A.

So it's . . . I mean the children are our responsibility — the responsibility of our whole community, our global community. You know it's not just . . .

Mr. Harper: — Right, right. So this program is a federally funded program, therefore just applies to treaty, First Nations people.

Ms. Hansen: — On reserves. Well sometimes it'll reach . . . if somebody triggers it, it will reach into P.A.

Mr. Harper: — So there is nothing for the rest of society, whether they be First Nations, whether they be Metis, whether they be white, whether they be Oriental?

Ms. Hansen: — Except for Social Services.

Mr. Harper: — Okay.

Ms. Kingfisher: — I sort of feel like maybe I've got the luckiest job because I'm . . . (inaudible) . . . integrated services coordinator on the west flat and I get into people's houses. But I get into people's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry, I'm

Jocelynn Kingfisher.

I get into people's houses, and schools refer me to families with at-risk kids. And that's what I do, is I refer them to wherever they feel they need to go after we meet.

Mr. Harper: — Okay, can I interrupt you here?

Ms. Kingfisher: — Yes.

Mr. Harper: — You refer the family to wherever they feel they may need to go.

Ms. Kingfisher: — We talk about it, we do kids' conferencing.

Mr. Harper: — Do you have any mechanism to have people come to their house in case they don't want to go?

Ms. Kingfisher: — Yes. But the thing is, I don't have to dress up to go to work; I wear my jeans. I phone them. I'm not scared to tell them that I've had problems. I had a daughter die; she was a prostitute in Edmonton.

I've been there, I know some of these problems. So I can say to them, okay, yes, I'm having the same kind of problems with my kids, you know, as you are. Haven't gone this far maybe yet, but let's look at it. What do you think you need to do?

These people know what they need to do. They just need somebody to go with them. They need somebody to say yes, okay, you're not alone, we've all got problems.

And I'm what is known as the fake Indian because I got my status and my name from my husband — ex-husband now. But I don't think it's my name that's just getting me in there. I think it's justified.

But my children, I guess my children are considered Metis. My children are treaty. So, I mean, confusing, hey? But for my children, I have to understand what my children might experience. I understand some of that by giving my name on the phone to some certain places.

But I didn't want to interrupt these people totally. But sitting back there, I'm thinking I'm very lucky I've got a good job because I can get into these families. The only problem is, when asked for funding down there, they asked for four people, not one. And now we're getting cut back again. By next year I'll be half time.

So think about it. I can only cover so many families. I work out of two schools.

Mr. Harper: — Funding from?

Ms. Kingfisher: — It's intersectorial. So I think it's a little bit from everybody.

Ms. Bell: — I think that's what's missing in these other agencies we're talking about is the integrated services. You have Department of Social Services over here apprehending children, and you've got, you know, ICFS (Indian child and family services) over here. And there's a lot of kids — I know this because I worked in this area — where the kids were falling through the cracks. And small people don't listen too, and that's a sad thing.

Like I say, we've got to go back to the grassroots people again. And yes, that's what we need is integrated services.

Mr. Badger: — Again if you go back into the history you'll see that we've been divided into status, non-status, treaty, Metis, all these sorts of things — power and control sort of thing. And they give us just enough money for programs not to be successful.

Mr. Harper: — Divide and rule.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — There are quite a few questions. Arlene's got a question; I've got a question; Kevin's got a question; June's got a question; Carolyn's got a question. And hopefully in the course of these questions we can have a good discussion.

And I hope, just like you did, Jocelyn — you set a great example — I hope other people will feel free to come forward and comment on the question, other than just the person that it's directed to.

So if somebody else has a . . . that way I think we can open it up a little bit more to all of your comments . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I didn't hear that. You'll have to say it again; I missed it. But it sounded very good.

Mr. Badger: — I said I'll answer that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We'll turn to Arlene.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — Earlier today, I think it was Julie that was making a comment at the table that she said in looking at the history of what has happened with your people, she said we didn't ask for the reserves; we didn't want to.

So my question today to I guess whoever feels they can and would like to comment on this, how do you feel about the reserves right now? Do you feel that there is sort of something that perpetuates that segregation, or do you think that reserves are of benefit to you as a community of people?

What advice would you give to the federal government about reserves if you could do that, or to the provincial government, or to anybody. How do you feel about reserves, like maintaining reserves right now?

Mr. Badger: — Well I'm not a political person, but I think most of our reserves have the TLE (treaty land entitlement) issues. And like a lot of our land was taken away during the . . . (inaudible) . . . settlement board sort of thing. And most of the fertile land in our community . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Do you want to step forward just so you're a little closer to the mike?

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — A round-table discussion, but

anybody that speaks, it's really necessary to come up to the mikes if you can.

Mr. Badger: — Because when you have the TLEs and land claims and comprehensive claims and all this, like the government is still dragging its feet on honouring these things. Like, if you would have honoured them back when they were supposed to be honoured, there wouldn't be an issue today.

But now they're dragging their feet on giving us our land back, the land that we're entitled to. And so it's kind of a . . . if the government would honour the treaties, honour what they said in the treaties, and honour the promises that they made us as fiduciary caretakers of our people sort of thing, there would be no issues. Like there would be no issue of anything like land claims and all this. And we'd have a land base. We'd have the money in order to run our programming the way we want, and I think that would be more progressive than having programs drawn up for our people and pushed onto to us, sort of thing.

So in dealing with these things, like, I think it would be good because a lot of people . . . a lot of my people don't consider themselves Canadians because of the treaties, the treaties are made between nations. And Coon Come I think is one that said that finally in the paper, but I've been saying it all along. But the thing is in order for us to be functional together, like . . . the governments are the ones that are really messing things up from the beginning to now. And I think that they have to start honouring everything that they promised us.

For me it's simple, and just an issue of land sort of thing and the land base, so that we can get an economic development and all this sort of thing, because most of our prize land was taken away.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — So what astounds me, and I must say that we learn a little bit as we go along in life, and I never realized that even expanded reserves or urban reserves that are now formed remain the property of the federal government. I really did believe that that was property that the band had in their name.

Mr. Badger: — We can't, like, we can't own our land. Like, we have right to use and all that sort of thing. And during the war too, like our people were not conscripted, they volunteered to go to war. And then when they came back, they were given land that was on their own reserve, which was theirs already. You know, that sort of thing. And so there's still . . . there's still that issue and a whole lot of issues that the federal government has reneged or neglected and that sort of thing.

Mr. Napope: — I'd just like to say on what Sam is saying that in terms of when . . . I've been in jail most of my life and I've also experienced my time on the reserve and that. I don't see too much difference, all right. On a piece of land, whatever, how large it is, you still don't really own yourself. You're on this piece of land and that, and I come from One Arrow and that, and I'm still finding myself at a loss as to which one's my reserve, Sask Pen or One Arrow, right. And they're both federal, right. One just doesn't have a fence on it, right — different location.

And like Sam was saying about the development of the people and that, I've seen my people since I was young and that, grow from what they are today and that. There hasn't been very much development in terms of self-sufficiency, all right. They have been provided with monies that have to be scrutinized or else it's being put in other people's pockets, all right. And it's kind of like the abusing . . . the abuser also abuses, all right. And it turns off people.

We want to do something with ourselves. There's people in there that want to do something with themselves. All right? But not being able to be a part of that pie, all right . . . the only pie you get is . . . The $195 — especially if you're a single person — is not enough to try to get yourself above anything, all right. All right.

And to me, if there's going to be something that's going to happen on reserve, the people have to do it themselves in terms, okay, let's go for that now. All right. Because we don't have to worry about the federal government interfering, using our people as puppets. All right? And it's kind of sad, but it's there. You see it. All right. We call them sometimes apples or else potatoes. Not to their faces, but that's what it is.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — I wanted to ask a question to Glen just before he has to leave. And, Ivy and Renée, I'd also be grateful if you might comment on this. But one of the topics that we touched on briefly this afternoon was the idea of alternative sources of money for people who are on the street and trying to get off the street. This has come up two or three times. Obviously, a lot of people are on the street because they're trying to survive and that includes financial survival, and therefore, there has to be some sort of alternative source of employment or a source of revenue for people, for children, teens, and adults who are trying to get off the street. And I'd be interested in your comments on how you think the province could play some role in helping to create those alternative sources of revenue. That's sort of one question that I have.

The other relates, I guess, more specifically to street outreach and that is in terms of — but anybody else who has a comment on it — in terms of the numbers of johns on the street in Prince Albert specifically who are picking up kids, who are involved in child sexual abuse, and whether you have any specific suggestions about the kind of changes in the laws that you'd like to see to deter johns.

So those are my two questions in two quite different areas: one is related to alternative employment for children, teens, and adults who are on the street right now, alternative sources of money, making money; and the other relates to the numbers of johns on the street in P.A. and changes in the law that you'd like to see to try to deter johns.

Mr. McMaster: — I'm not sure on . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Glen, I know you've got to go so maybe we can start with you and then move on to Renée and Ivy and yourselves and . . . Ivy, yourselves and anybody else who'd like to make a comment on that.

Mr. McMaster: — Okay. I'm not sure on how to find the

money or anything like that. If I had a magic wand, I'd be the first one to wave it so we wouldn't have sexual-exploited youth out there, but we do have them. Whether they are Aboriginal, whether they are White, whether they are Oriental — a youth is a youth, the way I see it.

When I look in the eyes of the youth and they look at me and say I've been doing it since I was 13 years old, I don't know anything else. I don't see anything else but the hurt, but the defeat and the rage that's in them.

I think if we had more outreach facilities or youth activity centres — such as the one we have here in P.A. and the one in Saskatoon like Egadz where there is a literacy program — to possibly find funding for these girls to go and get some tools, some upgrading, some life skills, some coping skills, some addiction services, and pay them so they can go to the schools to where they don't have to go out on the streets and get the money.

And then with some skills and some self-esteem under their belts, who knows where it could lead them. You know it could lead them into managerial skills. It could lead them sitting up there. You know it could take them places. So I think with just some funding to get them to come to the schools or even to a literacy program, slowly.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And you would pay them to attend. This is what you're saying, Glen?

Mr. McMaster: — Yes, so they wouldn't have to go out on the street to earn the money. And have also available addiction services there so if a crisis comes up at the time, or you know, the help is right there at the same time. Or if they come into the school that morning and there's a crisis on their hand, it could be dealt with. Not so they're trying to do the work and trying to figure out, okay I might have to go out on the streets tonight, what do I do? The problem can be solved before it turns into a bigger problem.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — If I could make a comment on that. I think that suggestion is a good one. However from what we've heard here today and at other hearings, there's a necessity to also help young people who feel like they're displaced from their cultural identity, if it's First Nations or Metis people or whatever. That component is equally as important.

Mr. McMaster: — It is.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — And the basis . . . All of this is based on their spirituality. It's what gives them life. They need to know they belong. So when — is her name Ivy? — mentioned sort of an integrated system so that we're trying to make sure that all components of what is humanly necessary are there, I think, you know, your suggestion is a part of it. But it seems to me there is a bigger need here, a greater need, and it's to have . . . to be in touch with your spirituality from what I'm hearing; to, you know, understand the belonging, the family. I mean family, the word has come up so much.

So I appreciate what you've brought forward here. And I think that anybody that has an opportunity for an education and some development naturally feels a better sense about themselves. But I know there's a lot of people, even if they haven't been on the streets, that do have that opportunity in their life and they're still into problems of addiction and they're still into problems of, you know, all kinds of abuse and so on.

So I think there seems to be a need for sort of a spiritual understanding of what people need, what people need spiritually, first of all — a sense of belonging, an identity, family, the connection, the connectedness.

Mr. McMaster: — I believe in the spirituality aspect. For me, personally, spirituality is my own thing. Like I am white, obviously. I have first cousins that are full treaty. I believe in the Creator. I go to sweats. My spirituality is what I believe in. like it's not some great being or a bolt of lightning or anything like that. Now spirituality is different for each and everybody. I think it's maybe one's spirituality may not be suited for somebody else's.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Does anybody have a comment on the number of johns in Prince Albert that are picking up kids? Does anybody have any idea about how many men are involved in picking up children here in the city?

Ms. Ducharme: — It's not only men that are out there. It's the young kids themselves. Right now I'm struggling with an 11-year-old trying to get him off the street, and I have gone to the parents. He goes to school whenever he feels like it. But there's a young guy out there that's 14 years old, and he's got about six girls and three boys working for him. And these aren't . . .

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Is he pimping?

Ms. Ducharme: — Yes, he is.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — He's pimping at 14.

Ms. Ducharme: — Yes. But the trust level with me is there, but they . . . I cannot report them and I will not report them because I will, with that trust level with them and, I work directly with them. I sit on the street with them. The johns have tried to pick me up. I know all these people are prominent citizens of P.A., you know. What are they doing out there trying to pick up an old lady like me sitting with young kids? If I never had of shown my face, I could have got him and took his money for clothes. I got a big mouth too, and that's what got me into trouble and he just about ran over my feet.

Ms. Bell: — I think that's what goes back to what Renée was talking about and is that that something has to be done about the johns, not the children — it's the johns. We wouldn't have children out there if it weren't for johns.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — And what changes would you like to see?

Ms. Bell: — Well I think we've got to quit protecting them. If they're being charged for child abuse or sexual exploitation of our children and he's a prominent person in the city of Prince

Albert, let's not take him to Saskatoon and protect his identity.

What's being done to protect the child? It seems like society is more caught up on protecting the elite, you know, as opposed to these little people who have no one to protect them — they often come from dysfunctional families — who have no one capable of coming to bat for them in these situations. And these people know that.

I mean the people that are down there trying to pick up these kids know very well that there's no one out there looking for them, like at that time of the night. Or like, you know, oh there's something wrong here when there's a child out on the street. So he knows what he's doing.

So why is he getting slapped on the wrist? Why are we considering locking up children because there's men out there that's going to exploit them? You know, I think our system is backwards here somewhere.

Ms. Jackson: — Do we protect them by taking them from the home? I don't think so. We put them in more danger because they'll run from the foster home. They grow up hating the foster home, the foster parents. They don't see Social Services as being helpful. They don't see the police as being helpful. As they grow up they see them as enemies.

I talk to the people in jails, the men and the women. That's what they tell me. They hate this effing system. They hate all the effing white people in it because it's because of them that they're in there. This is what I hear every week. And it's sad, it's sad. How do you tell somebody, you know, that has so much anger. They don't want to be in there, but that's all they know. And they got so much hate. How do you tell them?

It's hard for me to say it's not all white people. You know, it's not, it's not easy for me. But it isn't all white people.

I don't know. I don't think that we should apprehend the children. I don't think we should be placing them in foster homes. There's alternatives. Seek elders. Seek other homes. Create monies for other homes. Help the communities. They're dying; the children are dying.

My nephew, two weeks ago, shocked . . . killed another youth. A week after that, another person from my community killed somebody in La Ronge. These children are angry. These are just the people that are with me that I know, but you hear about them every day.

And what do I hear from these inmates, both the men and the women? They're angry. They've got a lot of rage. And what's being done to help them? Nothing, except lock them up. You turn them loose for a while to go and do more harm or damage, not only to the community but to themselves, and they're right back there because they don't know how to function out there. They don't.

And many of them have told me, can't you ask the government for a home so I can come and live with you? If I had the money I would run such a home because I don't fear these inmates. All they need is love, trust. They've never trusted anyone. They need support. Give me some money. I'll go start a home. That's one answer.

Mr. McMaster: — You know I work in the outreach van three times a week and it averages out we go out 12 times a month, if not more. And it's very difficult to do a head count on the johns because they can range from two that we see down there one night on a Tuesday night, and on a Thursday night we can see 30, and on a Friday night we can see five.

And a lot of them are the same people coming down there, in the same vehicle. And I do have a lot of trust and rapport built up with these girls. I can talk to them straightforward and they give it right back to me. And what they tell me is they keep looking for somebody younger most of the time because they think there is no diseases, there is no venereal diseases or anything with these younger ones yet. So they keep — just like a predator — right around the block until they find somebody young enough to take out.

So like I said, it is very difficult for us to do a head count on actually how many johns are down there or how many sightseers are down there, you know. I think maybe if the city police worked more in conjunction with us it would eliminate some of the problems. If we confiscated their car and sold it the next day, that would eliminate a lot of the problems. They wouldn't be down there for a while.

Mr. McMaster: — They'd have to sell . . . they'd have to raise money to get another car.

Ms. Jackson: — Put their names in the newspaper. It would stop that john for a couple of months maybe.

Ms. Hansen: — They're looking for younger and younger girls too. That would suggest that maybe there's a need for some psychiatric assessment . . .

Ms. Jackson: — I don't know why we're protecting them, the johns. I mean it's always been that way.

Ms. Jones: — Again I'd ask, based on what? Based on the fact that they drive around the block downtown?

Ms. Jackson: — No, based on the fact that they are exploiting the children.

Ms. Jones: — But how . . . I mean we're back to the same afternoon question. How do you catch them, you know? How do you . . . how do you say that?

Ms. Jackson: — Well give us some money, I'll go stand on the streets. I'll give you names. I'll give you . . .

Ms. Jones: — But you're not going to look like an 8-year-old, or an 11 or a 13-year-old girl.

Ms. Ducharme: — . . . being honest with these young kids . . . (inaudible) . . . and they think that they got a free meal. I mean it doesn't make any difference. I get them at the courthouse . . . (inaudible) . . . but nothing is changed.

I find that there are at least three evenings per week, I'm sitting on a street, on a sidewalk with the young people, these johns come along. And I usually wear a cap so they wouldn't know who I am because a lot of people know me. I do a lot of work with youths in town and I get up and I talk with them. And I could give names out left and right but my trust level with the youth would be gone. And I can't do that.

Some of these kids need food in the house because their parents have addictions. And I walk up to the . . . I go in the casino and the parents are sitting there while their kids are out making money. And these are things I cannot, I cannot report because the kids would hate me for it. And this is my small family.

You know, we have a lot of, we need more people out on the streets to, one, do the work, go and do the work for us.

Mr. Napope: — Well, going back to what you're saying that you want some people to catch some individual doing it to some young person and that, right. Well to me, if I'm going to catch somebody doing that to my young sister that's on the street and that, that's it for him, all right. That's just me, all right.

Now you want affirmative action in terms of how to catch johns. Now, there's been documentaries made where the focus is on juvenile young people on the street, all right. And their pictures have been blacked out and . . . (inaudible) . . . and these documentaries were made in Saskatoon, Edmonton, right. Now I don't see why an individual, such as I, or somebody else maybe a little bit more shorter or inconspicuous, all right, can't use a camera, all right. Can't use a camera.

If you want affirmative action, there's individuals that I know that will step out and say, okay, let's go, this is what we're going to do, all right. We're not going to get into a beef with anybody. Even if the action is going, you catch that and say, hey, what are you doing? You catch them on film. Now how is that going to look and how is that person going to feel? All right.

I don't know about the young people, all right. I don't really like to exploit them in that fashion myself, but there's got to be some sort of safeguard for them. If there's going to be some kind of affirmative action in terms of helping youth and preventing johns from, all right, getting into this line, well for me it's like what is going to make it better, all right, in turn.

If I go out spreading on the street and that and I got a camera in my hand, and if I catch somebody doing something in this fashion to a younger person and that, right? And maybe like John, he's better experienced at outreach work than I am, all right, being more calmer than I am, all right, like that. Unless I get a little bit of training myself I could maybe do something like that and catching somebody. And that's affirmative action. If that's going to stop an individual — one individual — okay. Maybe. One predator? Okay.

And there is another something about police not doing something, all right, like the name in the paper and things like that, and the issue dies away. That's got to stop. If we're going to catch predators in action and if they're going to stop, all right, there is a thing called . . . I think they entered a Bill just recently regarding individuals that are DSO (dangerous sex offender), DSO, DSO, or else those that are being released from prison, all right, who are predators, who are known predators, and that's all they've known to be. And their names are put in a community computer. What's wrong with that? There's something there. Definitely that's going to safeguard these individuals in the long-run . . . young individuals in the long-run.

And if there's a possibility that there's a real bad pedophile, all right, which I personally had the experience of meeting, all right, which is John. He killed my cousin, all right. Now this individual, I met him before. Now this individual killed a woman before that. Now he's doing 25, all right.

Individuals like that that are being released from prison . . . I heard it on the news that this guy's face and his picture and his name and that was described to him, right. Now if these guys are considered predators of youth, why not do it to them? Not just a name on a piece of paper in a newspaper, all right. I want to see that guy's face. They do it to me when I'm going to jail. If I did something wrong, okay, they're going to take my picture; they're going to take my fingerprints.

If society thinks that this individual is of less . . . if you're trying to put him under the rug, well, that's not going to happen. You got to put that guy's face up there because otherwise it's not going to work. He's just going to put it under the table. Thank you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Thank you. I know Kevin had a question, June had a question, Carolyn had a question. Kevin, let's go to yours.

Mr. Yates: — My question has to do with interjurisdictional funding and the types of problems that may or may not be created by having problems like youth involved in the sex trade, sexually exploited children, falling under a number of jurisdictional issues. Social Services, for some components, Health, Education; if they're status Aboriginal or youth from the reserve, they come under some federal jurisdictional issues; if they're non-status, they come under others — sorting the labelling; if you're Metis you come under other sets of rules. And all these rules and interjurisdictional issues are often complicated or make it much more difficult to deal with a problem like this.

And I'd like some, I guess, comment if you could on the issue of the interjurisdictional problems, even within the provincial government, and then from a broader concept — both federal and provincial and municipal governments being involved as well.

When you're looking at tackling a problem like this and you're looking at all the components of it, it's a very difficult issue. And I'd like some comments from people who are dealing with this issue as to whether they believe that's a problem and how to solve it.

Mr. Badger: — Like I said, I'm not a politician or anything, and these things are just how I understand politics and everything. But most of our political leaders are talking about

our youth, our future leaders, but they're not doing nothing for them. Like they're not pouring . . . That's where the money should be being funnelled — to the youth — so you wouldn't have the issue of we need funding for this and we need funding for that sort of thing.

The politicians should put their money where their mouth is and just start delivering for the youth, because that is our future. That's my future, that's your future. And I don't want my youth leading me from inside the pen or something like that. We need to get these politicians to live up to their words — walk the talk. That way there will be no issues of funding at all. There'd be money there for them any time; doesn't matter what government it is.

Mr. Toth: — The question I have is what is being done to actually get the First Nations leadership on board to really address this. Every time I talk with leadership at, say, FSIN, I don't get the same response as I do get talking to people, just on-reserves people — just the average, ordinary First Nations person, the grandmothers and the mothers. And I seem to get two separate answers.

And I think we've heard a bit today from some of the presentations. And I'm just wondering if there have been some ways of trying to address this to get the leadership that governments tend to look to in the First Nations community to begin to acknowledge this as well.

Coming back to the comment that Donna's mom made about working together, and while we seem to have a lot of willingness on the part of the average First Nations person and the concerns they have, we don't seem to be getting that from your leadership.

Mr. Badger: — Like again that's another form of alien government sort of thing. It's not our form of government. Like we have a form of government that we had in our own culture that the elders tell me about where it was more or less a — what do you call it, everybody? — tribal . . . consensus government sort of thing.

And now, like they imposed this government on our people and so now that's dysfunctional too, as much as I hate to say it. Our own leaders are dysfunctional and they're . . . like the money's going to them but there's nothing much filtering down, you know what I mean? And that's the form of government that's been forced on us.

And like I said, we have to take our own stuff back — our governments, our penal system, our justice system, our education, everything. That has to be slowly given back to us because we know what the problems are, but we haven't got that opportunity to deal with it because all that responsibility has been taken away from us and a foreign government has been imposed on us, a foreign legislation, everything.

I don't know if our leaders will hear it, but I hope they do.

Mr. Yates: — I have to apologize, I have to run. I have another commitment on a call here that I have to run to, but it's not out of disrespect I'm leaving. If you would just excuse me.

Ms. Hansen: — I'd kind of like to underline before I leave the fact that we do . . . a lot of us here do our own form of informal integrated services. It's ad hoc. We know one another; we know who's good. Sylvia, numerous other elders, we'll call them because we're therapists, counsellors. They'll call us. And we start pulling things together and we try our best to not let people fall through the cracks in many different ways. And I don't . . . you know, you can well imagine.

But to encourage that type of thing and start working together, like we're all saying . . . but to encourage the integrated services and to promote it in a way that encourages the average person to get involved. To hell with politics, you know, and just start pushing the services and getting people involved. Who gives a damn if they've got a criminal record. I mean, everybody has . . .

A Member: — Skeletons in their closet.

Ms. Hansen: — Yeah. That's what I'm looking for.

But to start pushing the services and to put the money there at the grassroots. Get the people involved that are already doing it, willing to do it, you know, and start pulling people in.

Like, Darryl and I were talking a little bit before about the fact that maybe some of us that are so busy slamming, you know, and saying well, this is what's wrong, this is what's wrong. Maybe some of us kind of need to get together and try and put something on paper as to how it could look. Mind you, most of us that are already doing any of this work in this field are getting so close to burnout half the time that we don't have the energy, but we would sure be willing to help if this is what you want of us.

Ms. Julé: — What you're saying implies or is an obvious result of your focus being on assisting and helping children, helping people and . . .

Ms. Hansen: — And families.

Ms. Julé: — Yes. And so there was a willingness and you focused properly. Like, that's what you did. You were willing to work together. You put everything else aside, obviously, and said the most important thing are the kids.

And so, that's . . . what you've done is gotten rid of turf protection, it seems, which is really very commendable because there's a lot of that going on.

There's a lot of territorial stuff going on where, you know, who's getting the money and so on. And again the focus, it seems, is not on the children and those who need help but maintaining territories. And I think, just as human beings we have to really get over that.

We have to become more genuine in our intent and I really commend you for being able to do that in your own way and just saying we're not going to look at all the rest of this. We know what we want and our intent is right here and we're going to work together. So a big congratulations to you.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — Carolyn, you had a question and . . . I mean June, and then I think we should close.

Ms. Jones: — I did, but in the interest of everybody's health and peace of mind, I think I can save it for perhaps another group.

It had to do with children not in school and it may be something that you'd like to talk about and address when you're just discussing what possible solutions there are to that.

But beyond that question, I'd like to thank so many of you for your input and suggestions and for hanging in for some pretty long hours today, some of you. So it was good to meet many of you. Thank you for coming.

The Co-Chair (Ms. Julé): — June Draude has one more comment.

Ms. Draude: — I'll just do the same thing. I have questions as well. I'm sure we could keep going all evening long.

I too would like to thank you very much. I know we've underlined the fact that we have a system that's failing us and I believe everyone in this room wants to address that problem. So I'm sure that this is just the first of many dialogues, which is a good thing. Thank you for your input.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Prebble): — We're very, very grateful to you for all the advice you've given us. And you'll all be getting copies of our final report and we hope that you'll see in that some move in the right direction in terms of the recommendations that we put forward . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You bet. We're in La Ronge tomorrow.

And actually we're holding . . . Just so you know, we're here in the morning. So if any of you would like to come back in the morning, I'll just let you know who we're hearing from in the morning: Helen Johnson, the Minister of Social Services for the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan; Staff Sergeant Gary Doetzel of the Prince Albert Police Service; and then a further opportunity for kind of general discussion and comments. So you're all very welcome to return if you have the time and the energy. Thank you.

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

The committee adjourned at 10:12 p.m.