



National Justice Network Update



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Welcome to the **APRIL** issue of the *National Justice Network e-Update*, a publication of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. PLEASE SHARE THIS **FREE** NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES OR HAVE THEM SIGN UP TO RECEIVE IT DIRECTLY AT: <http://crcvc.ca/en/newsletter/>.

The CRCVC would like to thank Canadore College Community and Justice Services student Brittany Riel for her help preparing this issue of the NJN.

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LINKS OF INTEREST:

[Policy Centre for Victim Issues](#)

[Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime](#)

[National Office for Victims](#)

[Victim Services, Correctional Service Canada](#)

[Information for Victims, National Parole Board](#)

PM LAUNCHES FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was joined by Justice Minister Rob Nicholson at the National Victims of Crime Awareness symposium, held on Monday, April 18, 2010. In his remarks, the Prime Minister reaffirmed the federal government's support for victims of crime.

"Our Government has always made the protection of law-abiding Canadians one of our very top priorities. We have always put the safety of law-abiding Canadians first. And we have always believed that every victim matters," Prime Minister Harper said in addressing delegates, "I call on Parliament to recognize that every victim matters,

SNAPSHOTS

FAMILY OF MURDERED BC TEEN FACING ANOTHER TRIAL

In 2005 Katherine Quinn and Robert Forslund were convicted of killing 16-year-old Matthew Martins at Surrey Central SkyTrain Station. Now the family of the teen is being victimized all over again; Quinn won a new trial on appeal and will be back in court this month. Matthew Martin's stepfather, David Toner, said that going to these trials keeps re-opening the wounds; that the system never lets their family move on. Mr. Toner said his family is hopeful that justice will be served.

WALK TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On May 8th, members of the public in Winnipeg are urged to follow leading Canadian anti-trafficking activists to take stand against modern-day slave trade in Canada. Among those walking include Member of Parliament Joy Smith and Grand Chief Rom Evans. The walk begins at the Manitoba Legislature at 12:00pm. Members will do a 30 minute walk through downtown Manitoba. "Walk to stop human trafficking" shows that Canadians will not tolerate the horrendous crime that occurs in Canada. Their goal is to prevent the sale of women and children into the world of sexual slavery. For more information, please contact Joy Smith's office at 204-984-6322.

VICTIM ROUNDTABLE

As part of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, the CRCVC hosted a roundtable to review "A Victim's Guide to the



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to get tough on criminals and protect law-abiding Canadians and to pass our vital law and order legislation.”

Prime Minister Harper and Minister Nicholson were among victims, victim advocates, victim service providers, non-government organizations and policy makers. The symposium marked the launch of Victim's Week, which featured events held across the country.

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week provides an opportunity to provide education and awareness about victim issues, programs, services and laws that can assist victims and their families.

MP, PRIME MINISTER SEEK REFORM TO PARDON PROCESS

Alberta MP Blake Richards has created a petition to disallow sex offenders the right of a pardon. Richard's constituents are gathering as many signatures as possible with the intent of tabling it in the House of Commons.

The petition was initiated when it was revealed that a pardon was granted to Graham James, a hockey coach who sexually molested some of his players. Mr. Richards was outraged that James was granted a pardon in 2007. He was convicted and served 3½ years for the sexual abuse, but had met the criteria for a pardon.

The requirement for signatures on a petition is 25 signatures, however Mr. Richards believes they will gather many more than that. He hopes other MPs will step up and do the same. The petition is available at <http://www.blakerichards.ca/>.

Canada's Public Safety Minister, Vic Toews, is in support of this petition, and has vowed that to address the issue of pardons. Minister Toews believes the National Parole Board needs more discretion to refuse pardons.

The Prime Minister has also indicated that the federal government will examine changes to the Criminal Records Act, which governs pardons. Prime Minister Harper referred to both the news of the James pardon, as well as eligibility of Karla Homolka to apply for a pardon when speaking of legislative change to make pardons more difficult to obtain.

Under the current law, offenders, including violent and repeat offenders, can apply to the National Parole Board for pardons three or five years after completing their

Canadian Criminal Justice System: Questions and Answers”. The project, funded by the Department of Justice, allowed the CRCVC to bring together seven victims of crime from across Canada. At the meeting they were asked to voice their concerns and share their input about what positive changes could be made to the guide, as well as identifying questions that were not previously covered in the document. It was hosted on Sunday, April 18, and was very successful. We thank all victims for taking the time to participate in this review of our guide.

GOVERNMENT WILL SPEND TO KEEP CRIMINALS LOCKED UP

The federal government will do whatever it takes to keep dangerous criminals off the streets, Public Safety Minister Vic Toews said on Monday, April 18th. The Minister was speaking at the Canadian Police Association's AGM, where he indicated that there will be more funding for the Correctional Service of Canada. “We understand there is a cost to keeping dangerous criminals behind bars — and we're willing to pay it,” stated Minister Toews.

Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, Steve Sullivan, said that the government is short-changing victims by not providing sufficient funding for victim services and spending more on corrections. The CRCVC supports this position, and feels that there needs to be a balance between the funds allocated to corrections, and those directed to supporting victims of crime and to preventing crime and victimization from happening in the first place in Canada.

BILL TO END HOUSE ARREST



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sentences, depending on the gravity of the crime. In their application, they must demonstrate that they have lived crime-free after the completion of their sentence. Individuals sentenced to life, or who receive an indeterminate sentence are ineligible for a pardon.

Any legislative change introduced this year would have no effect on the James Pardon, and would not prevent Holomka from applying.

KOEPKE CASE HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO ADDRESS MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS

In July 1977, Frederick Koepke killed 21 year old Ottawa police constable, David Kirkwood. His wife, Dawna, was pregnant at the time with their daughter, Patricia. Koepke was found not guilty by reason of insanity.

In the last 32 years, the Kirkwoods have known little of the whereabouts of Koepke. Dawna Kirkwood was not given any information regarding the rehabilitation or treatment of the offender. She was not given any advance warning when Koepke returned to Ottawa, or the assurance that he was mentally stable, did not pose a threat to the community or was routinely taking his medication.

Since the murder of David Kirkwood, Koepke has demonstrated that he is not stable. He has assaulted his wife and his own mother, had several drug charges and now faces charges of criminal harassment. His criminal history exhibits that significant changes are needed in our mental health and justice systems.

Koepke, now 55, was remanded to the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. It is obvious he needs help, and what has been offered thus far is not working. Koepke suffers from paranoid schizophrenia, was off his medication when he killed David Kirkwood, and has stopped taking his medication on several occasions since that time .

"It is astonishing," wrote Patricia in a statement regarding reports of her father's killer harming others in the Ottawa community, "that a repeat offender with a known mental illness has been in and out of the mental health and justice systems on so many occasions — each time being released into the community only to repeatedly inflict harm onto others." The full statement can be found at www.crcvc.ca.

FOR VIOLENT CRIMES

The Federal government is trying to remove house arrest as a sentencing option for serious and violent crimes. Justice Minister Rob Nicholson announced on April 23rd that the government wants to add offenders convicted of aggravated assault, human trafficking, luring a child, street racing causing death, arson, fraud, counterfeiting and extortion to the list of those ineligible for a conditional sentence.

The CRCVC has expressed support for this proposed legislation. "Victims feel distress when they see offenders, not only those responsible for their own victimization, but also those who commit other serious crimes, sentenced to 'house arrest'," said Heidi Illingworth, "This proposed change will address concerns that some victims and survivors of violent crime have expressed to our organization."

FAMILY OF SLAIN OFFICER DEMANDS PAROLE CHANGES

Officer Michael Sweet was shot and left to bleed to death by Craig Munro in 1980. Now, Michael's widow, Karen Fraser and their daughters are outraged with the National Parole Board; who recently granted Munro four Unescorted Temporary Absences. The family is now demanding changes to the parole system that will make the process more open and accessible for victims. Several police officials appeared and supported Mr. Sweet's family and their urge to change the parole system.





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FAMILY HOPES TO KEEP MURDERER IN JAIL

On June 29, 2005, Shawn Palmer took the life of 23-month-old Donny Clubb. He suffocated the baby because he was crying, then put his body in a duffel bag, brought it into the woods and tried to burn his body to hide his crime. Palmer eventually led police to the body. He was charged with second degree murder, but pled guilty to manslaughter.

Donny's family continues to suffer from the trauma of this horrific crime. They are now facing the first parole hearing for this offender, due to be held on July 25, 2010. The family believes that Palmer should not be released at this time, that he has not served a long enough sentence for the crimes that he committed. The family will be embarking on a letter writing campaign to the National Parole Board, urging that Palmer be denied any form of release at his upcoming hearing.

OMBUDSMAN URGES GOVERNMENT TO REFOCUS SPENDING ON MOST VULNERABLE

During the National Victims of Crime Awareness week, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, Steve Sullivan, urged the government to consider the balance of funding for victims programs and services with other government priorities.

Sullivan said, "Though we've made some significant progress in this area, victims are still being short-changed. When you compare the amount we spend on offenders and victims, the difference is staggering. Obviously, expenditures for offenders will always be higher, but the proportions to me speak volumes to what victims have been telling us for years – that they feel marginalized by the current Canadian justice system."

Mr. Sullivan agrees with keeping communities safe and that the government is doing more to help victims and acting on his recommendations, he feels there needs to be more services and programs to assist victims of crime.

Since the creation of the office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, it has pushed the government to amend legislation to better help the needs of victim's rights. From their recent report, *Toward a Greater Respect for Victims in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, 13 recommendations were made regarding the amendment of current laws to strengthen the rights of victims.

VATICAN, CANADIAN OFFICIALS TRIED TO KEEP SEX SCANDAL SECRET

In 1993 correspondence was exchanged between the Vatican and Canadian Church officials as to how to prevent the public from knowing of the abuse of altar boys by Bernard Prince.

In the letter, Canadian Bishop Joseph Windle wrote "the consequences of such an action would be disastrous, not only for the Canadian church but for the Holy See as well." The letter was filed in a civil suit; it is the first court document to support the belief by victims of Mr. Prince that the church was aware of the problem for years but tried to cover it up.

In the letter, it appeared many Bishops in Ontario were aware of the allegations. Bishop Windle wrote in the letter, "All of the Bishops of Ontario who are aware of this situation (and there are several) would most certainly agree with my assessment in this regard".



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Bishop Windle also wrote that the allegations becoming public could “easily trigger a reaction among the victim(s) or others who are aware of this previous conduct and this would prove extremely embarrassing both for the Holy See and the archdiocese of Pembroke, not to mention the possibility of criminal charges being laid and a civil suit ensuing.”

In May, 2005, a victim of Bernard Prince, contacted the OPP. Mr. Prince is now defrocked; he was convicted in 2008 and serving four years for sexually molesting 13 boys between 1964 and 1984.

The revelations contradict the Catholic Church’s claims of responsibility concerning allegations of abuse by priests, and have caused many to question what role the Vatican has played in many cases of historical abuse.

KNIFE-RELATED HOMICIDES RISE

Since 1974 there has been an increase in homicides committed with knives in Canada and the number now equals the number of homicides committed with guns.

Statistics Canada reports that, in 2008, 611 homicides were reported by police using knives, a 7 percent increase since 1999. Homicides involving guns have dropped significantly from 48 percent in 1974 to 34 percent in 2008.

Calgary and Edmonton had the highest knife-related homicides at 40 percent. Toronto at 26.8 percent, Ottawa at 26 percent and Vancouver at 23.4 percent had the lowest percentages.

Despite the increases, the use of knives in a homicide has remained steady for a decade; violent crimes using knives accounted for 6.2 percent of 23,500 incidents reported in 2008. Youth and young adults are more likely to use knives in violent crimes. Those between 12 and 24 accounted for 50 percent of those accused of a violent crime with a knife.

In Western Canada, with Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton, the level of violent crime committed with a knife was high, reporting levels of 10 percent.

THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SUPPORT SERVICES

StatCan has recently released many publications using Geographic Information System (GIS) to examine characteristics of neighbourhoods and crime distribution. The availability of resources for victims of crime and survivors is concentrated in some geographic regions, which correlate to the distribution of crime and level of crime and violence in those areas.

Research presented in the 2010 edition of the Department of Justice’s Victims of Crime Research Digest focused on violence against women support services, which showed that depending on where they live, some victims of crime/survivors have adequate access to services while others have little to no services at all. Front line workers who work in this field are aware of the imbalance of distribution of resources.

Studies from the UK show that one-third of the jurisdiction in the UK had no support services for women who experienced violence. They also found that these women had no access to rape crisis centres, and less than one in 10 jurisdictions had services for women of visual minority.

The UK research concluded that few areas had sufficient programs and services for women who endured violence, and several areas were underserved.



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When a follow-up study was conducted in 2008, some improvements were made. Still, one in four jurisdictions still provided no services to women of visual minority and most of the new services primarily related to the criminal justice system.



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