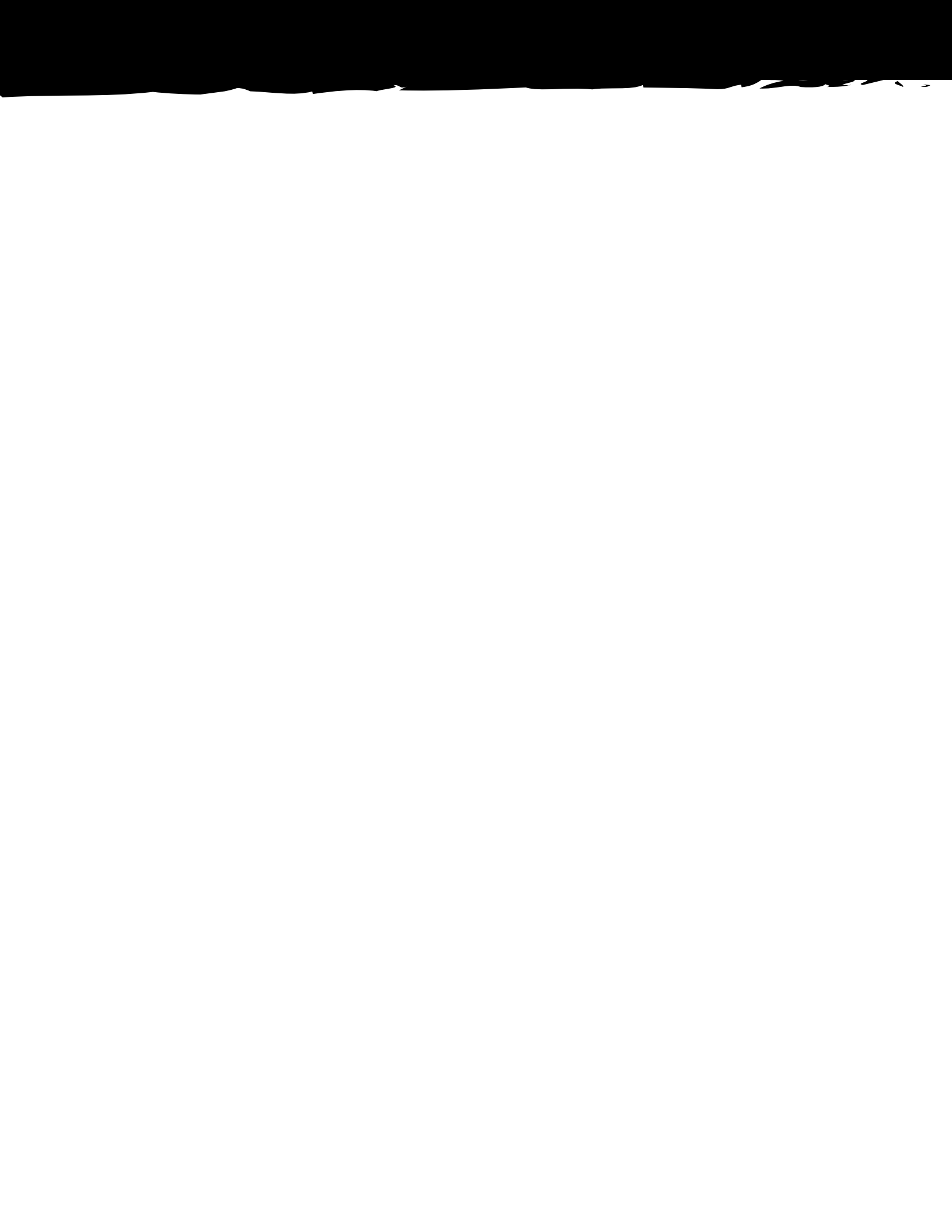




TRACIA'S  
TRUST

# FRONT LINE VOICES:

**MANITOBANS WORKING TOGETHER  
TO END CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**



# Tracia's Trust

**Front Line Voices:  
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Manitoba Family Services and Housing  
2008



TRACIA'S  
TRUST

## Dedication to Tracia Owen

To be remembered. Something many human beings begin to think about once they reach a certain stage of their life. Sadly, Tracia Owen's life journey ended before this time came. However, by working to ensure that children are cared for, protected and safe, the legacy of Tracia will be the ideal of helping others. The tragedies that happened to Tracia should never be repeated and learning from the experiences of her life will help make this so. A mural is painted on the side of a building in Winnipeg's inner city. It is bright, vibrant, colourful, filled with people, children, animals and life. Tracia helped paint and create these pictures, an expression of a world that does not exist for all children yet, a world where children are happy, content and carefree, as they should be. It is hoped that is the way Tracia will be remembered.

# Tracia's Trust

## Front Line Voices:

### Manitobans Working Together To End Child Sexual Exploitation

## Child Sexual Exploitation

The sexual exploitation of children and youth is a serious concern in Manitoba, Canada and around the world. Many children and youth are victimized on the streets of Winnipeg, and in private homes and drug houses located throughout the province. Most adults involved in the sex trade report that their victimization began at a young age, some as young as nine years old. The average age that adults involved in the sex trade were sexually exploited for the first time is 13 to 14 years.

The majority of children and youth who are victimized by sexual exploitation are female; however, there is a growing awareness of the sexual exploitation of boys and transgender youth. We know that:

- a disproportionate number of sexually exploited children are Aboriginal children, involved in the child welfare system, and have experienced childhood abuse such as sexual abuse and physical abuse
- most have experienced homelessness for short or extended periods of time

Research and shared experience show that once children and youth are homeless, they are immediately at a high risk of becoming sexually exploited, exchanging sexual favours for the basic necessities of life such as food and shelter.

Research points to the complexity of the underlying issues that contribute to children and youth's vulnerability to sexual exploitation, including poverty; racism; colonization; the legacy of residential school experiences; social and cultural isolation; marginalization; peer pressure; past abuse or trauma; sex-based discrimination; medical problems such as mental health, neurological or developmental disorders; system gaps or inaccessible services; and other social and financial inequalities.

These factors in turn make children and youth vulnerable to other outcomes including violence; sexual assault; homicide; sexually transmitted diseases; gang involvement; early pregnancy; mental health difficulties; academic difficulties; involvement with the child welfare system; involvement with the criminal justice system; long-term dependence on social services and government assistance; and raising children who are at risk of repeating the same cycle.

In 2002, the Province established a team to implement Phase One of a strategy to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth in Manitoba. The Multi-jurisdictional Implementation Team (MIT) has representation from across government and community organizations that serve sexually exploited youth. The strategy is comprised of several initiatives in the areas of prevention, intervention, legislation, coordination and research/evaluation that have been implemented over the past six years. The Province is now preparing to launch Phase Two of Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy.

## Front Line Voices Summit

The Minister of Family Services and Housing, Gord Mackintosh, hosted a two-day summit, *Front Line Voices: Manitobans Working Together to End Child Sexual Exploitation* on March 17 and March 18, 2008. The summit workshops were attended by 195 people—65 in Thompson and 130 in Winnipeg. The summit brought together youth service workers, police and justice officials, community groups, educators, Aboriginal groups and government agencies to develop strategies to support sexually exploited children who are making positive changes in their lives and help prevent others from being exploited. Four Elders/Grandmothers presided over the summit.

An advisory committee composed of government and community representation from a number of sectors that work with sexually exploited children and youth organized the summit workshops. Sergeant Michele Benoit of the Winnipeg Police Service and Sonia Prevost-Derbecker, executive director of the All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR), served as the summit co-chairs.

The *Front Line Voices* summit followed on the provincial government's commitment to the recommendations of Judge John Guy's inquest report released in January 2008 into the death of 14-year-old Tracia Owen. The first of the 28 recommendations was to hold a summit involving all stakeholders "to examine all possible law enforcement, legislative and legal means to create a strategy for the attack on sexual exploitation and drug abuse of children on our streets."

The two-day summit workshops in Thompson and Winnipeg resulted in recommendations related to the four key themes of the summit: 1) legislation and law enforcement; 2) continuum of services; 3) breaking the silence; and 4) child, youth, family and community empowerment. Following the opening program and presentation from Elders and speakers in Thompson and Winnipeg, participants divided into work groups to identify issues, opportunities and gaps in the four thematic areas and priority recommendations. This report provides an overview of the recommendations resulting from the workshops and a plan of action.

## Theme 1: Legislation and Law Enforcement

### a) Focusing on Offenders

The discussion about offenders elicited strong emotions and reactions from participants. There was consensus that more should be done to deal with the various types of offenders involved in exploiting children and youth. Discussions ranged from how to hold adult offenders who exploit children through the visible street level sex trade more accountable to suggestions of harsher penalties, sentencing provisions and increasing the length of the Prostitution Offender Program ("John School"). Given that federal *Criminal Code* provisions deal with the issue and the complexity of applying provisions to lay charges against offenders, participants emphasized the importance of working with federal officials.

#### Action

In 2009, the cost of the Prostitution Offender Program will increase from \$600 to \$800 per participant. The Salvation Army changed the program name from "John School" to Prostitution Offender Program to reflect the fact that those in attendance have admitted to committing an offence, primarily against disadvantaged women. Offenders who are charged with sexually exploiting a child are ineligible to attend the Prostitution Offender Program and are dealt with through the criminal justice system.

The Province has appointed a sexual exploitation case coordinator in the Prosecutions Division of Manitoba Justice to work with cases involving child sexual exploitation. The Sexual Exploitation Sub-Committee of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse (PACCA) has begun to examine ways to utilize *The Child and Family Services Act* (CFS Act) to its fullest extent. Coordinated efforts and focus by law enforcement, child welfare and PACCA have led to recent increased efforts to use Manitoba's CFS Act to caution or lay charges against those who may be committing child protection offences, including those involving sexual exploitation, such as causing a child to be in need of protection (section 17), failing to report a child in need of protection (section 18) and interference with a child in care (section 52). Currently, offenders with convictions related to children are put on the Child Abuse Registry.

Manitoba has been a leading jurisdiction in Canada in introducing initiatives to address the harm posed by child pornography and will be the first province in Canada to require its citizens to report child pornography to a designated reporting entity. The new Child Pornography Reporting Bill will be in force in early 2009. It will work to protect Manitoba children by facilitating the identification and rescue of children who are depicted in child pornography, as well as identify consumers

of child pornography who may pose a threat to children. In partnership with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc., the Province will launch a public awareness campaign on mandatory child pornography reporting. Training will be provided to Child and Family Services (CFS) workers in designated intake agencies around the province in preparation for the Bill's proclamation. The penalty for failing to report child pornography is a fine of up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to 24 months, or both.

Manitoba introduced pioneering provincial labour legislation that will protect child performers and temporary foreign workers from exploitation. These two groups of individuals are particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous recruitment practices that can result in both financial and sexual exploitation. *The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act (WRAPA)* is expected to come into force on April 1, 2009. The first legislation of its kind in Canada, the new act will improve control, enforcement and monitoring of domestic and foreign worker activities, and the recruitment and exportation of children by talent and modeling agencies. WRAPA was developed in response to the rise in modeling agencies recruiting women and girls, the significant increase in temporary foreign worker recruitment and the growth of the human trafficking industry.

## **b) The Alberta Model**

Alberta has child protection legislation specific to children who are sexually exploited. For children in extreme danger due to sexual exploitation who are not willing to engage in voluntary services, Alberta's legislation provides for non-voluntary confinement of sexually exploited children as does Manitoba's *The Child and Family Services Act* with intensive programming for a limited and defined period of time.

The reactions around the Alberta model at the summit workshops were mixed, with comments both pointing to its potential usefulness for a small number of youth in Manitoba and cautioning on how Manitoba might develop and adapt elements of the Alberta model in its legislation. Key comments and recommendations include:

- research Alberta's model; create a made-in-Manitoba solution that takes into consideration our demographics and needs
- if the Alberta model is pursued, it should be with 'extreme caution' and encompass detailed guidelines and a skilled assessment
- take into account the need for both voluntary and involuntary options

## **Action**

Currently, Manitoba's *The Youth Drug Stabilization Act* contains provisions that permit the involuntary confinement of youth who are causing serious self-harm through severe, persistent substance abuse, at the Youth Drug Stabilization Unit. Youth who are in immediate crisis and at risk of hurting themselves and/or others are placed at the two Crisis Stabilization Units operated by Marymount and Neecheewam in Winnipeg. In addition to the provisions in *The Child and Family Services Act*, Knowles Centre and Marymount provide longer term secure care placements for children. The Province plans to link more closely with existing secure care facilities, and as recommended by summit participants, establish a rural Aboriginal healing lodge that will provide safe confinement for sexually exploited children. High Risk Victims Training will provide guidance to StreetReach efforts in responding to at-risk youth using a multidisciplinary approach.

## **c) Involvement of and Partnership with Law Enforcement**

Comments from summit participants highlighted the importance of developing closer relationships with law enforcement and other stakeholders. Discussions underlined the need for a long-term commitment to the issue of child sexual exploitation, with specific actions such as having dedicated resources to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth within police services. Stakeholders also pointed to the need for closer working relationships between the Province and RCMP and having more youth activities and positive contact with police, in addition to greater police presence in schools.

## Action

Manitoba Justice, Manitoba Family Services and Housing and the RCMP, both at the provincial and national levels, have begun to discuss opportunities for closer collaboration. Staff from the Child Protection Branch, CFS agencies and Manitoba Justice participated in a two-week, joint Manitoba RCMP child abuse investigation training course in April 2008. Further collaboration between the Province, RCMP and other law enforcement agencies regarding training opportunities will continue to be explored.

The RCMP is an active member of the Sexually Exploited Youth Northern Regional Team and will continue to be involved with other regional stakeholders throughout Manitoba. Two child sexual exploitation investigation specialists will be hired by child protection services in 2009 to work with police and in partnership with community stakeholders.

Minister Mackintosh met with Chief Keith McCaskill of the Winnipeg Police Service in October 2008 to discuss collaborative efforts to deal with issues related to child sexual exploitation. It was determined that a working protocol will be developed that focuses on collaboration between the Winnipeg Police Service and Child and Family Services Authorities.

The Salvation Army, Winnipeg Police Service, Labour and Immigration border services and RCMP North West Region—Immigration and Passport Section are leading a Trafficked Person Response Team. The team's current mandate is to address incidents of international human trafficking and strive to seamlessly meet the immediate and longer term needs of trafficked persons in Manitoba. Manitoba Justice is bringing stakeholders together to talk about a mechanism to deal with domestic human trafficking issues.

## d) Outreach Workers and Police

Summit participants agreed that there is a shortage of outreach programs and workers to identify and work with youth who demonstrate running or risky behaviours. Stakeholders emphasized the need for police to better connect with outreach workers. It was suggested that a stronger network of service providers and outreach be developed, including having more outreach workers that would link with police. Participants suggested that the Province provide 24-hour services and outreach specifically for sexually exploited youth, as well as expand healthy alternatives such as child and youth centres that are accessible in neighbourhoods and utilize experiential workers.

## Action

The Province will be hiring a community-based coordinator to work closely with police and outreach services and to coordinate a new multi-sector response team, called StreetReach. The mandate of StreetReach is to help youth escape exploitation by working to establish supportive relationships, employ motivational techniques and access the full range of available interventions including community supports and protective options such as the drug stabilization unit, crisis stabilization units, CFS Act and a new rural healing lodge. StreetReach will also help prevent youth from becoming sexually exploited by initiating a focus on high-risk runaways. It will work to better identify predators, prostitution and drug houses, and other places where sexual exploitation occurs by pursuing stronger evidence through information sharing for charges and orders for no contact with children, and for enforcement of *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, through liaising with police, prosecutions, probation services and the public safety investigations unit. In addition to the two new child sexual exploitation investigation specialists, there will be two community outreach workers in Winnipeg and one in Thompson who will work with police and CFS to reduce the number of runaway youth at risk of being sexually exploited by locating and returning children and youth who are missing from residential child care facilities, otherwise known as group homes.

The Province will fund the Little Sisters Outreach Program, which will provide support and assistance to young women from Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre's Honouring the Spirit of Our Little Sisters program, who are transitioning into adulthood and independent living, as well as for the girls presently residing in the home. Manitoba recognizes that outreach workers serve an important role in helping at-risk youth make positive changes in their lives and the need for coordination with all current outreach workers to maximize resources and services.

## Theme 2 – Continuum of Services

On the theme, continuum of services, several overarching recommendations were repeated during the work group discussions. They included:

- the provision of non-judgmental supports and services by service providers in all sectors; that education and training be provided to all those who work with children and youth to ensure that they provide appropriate, non-judgmental supports
- raising the age of eligibility for services and programs to age 21 in certain cases
- ensuring that consultation, public awareness and service development draw upon the expertise and insights of experiential youth and adults

### Action

One of the guiding principles of Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy is to ensure the participation and involvement of experiential youth and adults. Support continues in 2008/09 for the one-year child and youth care certificate training program, which is delivered in partnership with Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. and Red River College for experiential persons who wish to enter the field. The Province will also support the Ndinawe Youth Transition Program, which provides 12 self-contained housing suites and supportive programming for youth ages 16 and 17, who are living independently in Winnipeg and are at risk of sexual exploitation.

In addition, funding will be enhanced for intensive specialized training on sexual exploitation to multi-sector front line workers throughout the province.

### a) Healing Lodge

There was strong support voiced at the summit workshops for a rural Aboriginal healing lodge for sexually exploited children that is holistic, creates a sense of belonging and utilizes a non-judgmental approach. It was suggested that a healing lodge be available to children, families and communities, so that families can visit and whole family healing would be encouraged. Participants voiced that the healing lodge should be available to all cultures, and include alternative spiritual offerings and on-site Elders. Summit participants recommended that various small lodges for different age groups be developed, and that a healing lodge offer a range of supports and services, including in the areas of addictions, mental health, life skills, recreational opportunities, art as healing, and cultural and mobile components.

### Action

The Province is supporting a specialized six-bed safe house for sexually exploited children in rural Manitoba. This action, also recommended by the Winnipeg Stakeholder Coalition, responds to a recommendation of the Tracia Owen inquest report that stated the "need for increased resources for the creation of more residential beds in facilities for youth at high risk for sexual exploitation and drug addictions." A six-bed rural healing lodge that blends traditional Aboriginal healing approaches with clinical and therapeutic resources to stabilize and heal the most entrenched youth will be established.

### b) Addressing Gaps in Service

Summit participants recommended that prevention efforts be enhanced to include more education for children and youth on sexual exploitation, with age-appropriate programming that begins early on and programming that focuses both on parent education and family empowerment.

There was consensus at the workshops that access to mental health services should be increased and community-based mentoring programs enhanced. Funding is needed for full-time positions in programs to ensure that worker turnover is reduced, enabling the development of trust and continuity for the children and youth accessing services.

As well, stakeholders recommended that existing and new programming have secure and sustainable funding, rather than project-based funding. They pointed to the need to address gaps in the areas of reporting and investigations, to provide a way for children to report exploitation that elicits a formal response, as well as a multi-disciplinary resource that provides or coordinates supports to children during the reporting and investigation process. It was further recommended that to the greatest extent possible, children's stability and safety need to be addressed in the event of reporting sexual exploitation.

### **Action**

Manitoba will provide some secure and sustainable funding to organizations. The Restoring the Sacred Program—Student Buddy Support Service operated on a pilot basis by Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. will now receive ongoing program support. Restoring the Sacred is a peer mentorship training program that offers support for at-risk youth between the ages of 14 to 21, who are coming from remote communities to reside in Winnipeg to attend high school and who are considered vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The Province will also fund the Transition, Education and Resources for Females (TERF) Mentor Program for youth. The TERF Mentor program provides intensive and specialized mentoring services for approximately 30 children and youth in Winnipeg each year who are victims of sexual exploitation.

In May 2008, Manitoba announced a \$2.8 million boost for mental health and addictions services. The funding will allow for 20 additional mental health care and spiritual care providers to work in regional health authorities across the province, as well as the creation and expansion of community-based addictions treatment and support programs.

## **c) Rural and Northern Services**

A strong message was delivered by summit participants about the need for initiatives, assistance, strategies, and services in rural and First Nations communities that would allow youth to remain in their communities, rather than having to move to Winnipeg to access services. Services most commonly identified, in addition to the healing lodge, were outreach services; 24-hour drop-ins with a cultural component to provide for a range of needs; a northern Honouring the Spirits of Our Little Sisters program; drop-in recreational programming; and safe houses for crisis intervention. It was voiced that services should involve foster parents who are trained with respect to the needs of youth who have been sexually exploited and be available in all parts of the province. Provincial and federal funding is needed to create and enhance programs for youth in rural Manitoba.

### **Action**

Manitoba recognizes the importance of providing services for sexually exploited children and youth across the province and the unique challenges faced by rural and northern communities—this in turn will inform Tracia's Trust, the Province's Sexual Exploitation Strategy. Manitoba will be hiring a new full-time outreach worker in Thompson in 2009 to link with stakeholders and the RCMP, with a focus on reducing the number of runaway and exploited youth. There will be increased access to specialized training in rural and northern Manitoba for all front line workers, including foster parents and the RCMP. A community coordinator will be hired by the Province to assist with the development and ongoing operations of northern team initiatives, as well as provide guidance and expertise on the issue of sexual exploitation. Additionally, a Northern Forum in 2009 will help mobilize communities on the issue of sexual exploitation and focus on preventing harm to youth in northern Manitoba.

## **d) Enhancing Service Coordination**

Participants prioritized the need to coordinate both existing services and any new initiatives in order to maximize their effectiveness and ensure that programs are connecting with children and youth. At the Thompson workshop, the gap in coordinated services following disclosure from a child or youth was raised. It was recommended that there be coordination from the time of reporting when an incident occurs and that the coordination involves doctors, child care workers, Child and Family Services, police and schools. Summit participants voiced that child welfare and the RCMP need to act more quickly to process and follow up on incidents. It was suggested that there be community coordinator positions in both northern and southern Manitoba. Consideration should be given to centralization as a mechanism for coordinating outreach. Stakeholders emphasized that the 23 First Nations agencies must work together, and enhanced supports need to be provided to the community coalitions on child sexual exploitation.

### **Action**

Manitoba will be hiring a provincial community coordinator to assist and support the development and ongoing initiatives of multi-sector sexual exploitation regional teams throughout Manitoba, focusing on engagement with local at-risk youth, Elders, experiential persons, service providers and other stakeholders.

In collaboration with the Winnipeg Police Service, the Province will be hosting a joint training initiative on High Risk Victims Training for law enforcement, child welfare, outreach workers and other multi-sectoral stakeholders in early 2009. The training, to be delivered by Sergeant Fassett and Detective De La Paz of the Dallas Police Department's Child Exploitation Squad, will develop a protocol that focuses on identifying and intervening with runaway youth at risk of sexual exploitation. It will demonstrate and reinforce the need to understand the roles and responsibilities of each team member from victim recovery and the successful completion of the investigation and prosecution of any identified offenders, to placement of the child.

The Manitoba Child Victim Centre is expected to provide coordinated, centralized services to victims of child abuse across Manitoba. The Centre will bring together justice officials, police and community-based organizations that deal with child abuse, family violence and victim advocacy, as well as health professionals. It will provide forensic interviews, medical evaluations, therapeutic intervention, victim support and advocacy, case review and case tracking at one location. The Province is funding a coordinator position for the developmental child victim centre model in Manitoba.

In response to a recommendation of the Tracia Owen inquest report, the Child and Family Services Applications computer system is being redeveloped to provide a flagging mechanism that triggers a review of a specific file due to the attainment of established criteria linked to level of risk. The Province will be improving the capacity of its Child and Family Services computer system for relevant data collection with respect to families served by child welfare.

## **e) Research and Evaluation**

Comments and recommendations related to research and evaluation emphasized basing initiatives on best practices from a multi-disciplinary approach, finding out more about offenders, collaborating, following up to review successes and gaps, and focusing on the outcomes of treatment interventions.

### **Action**

To inform and educate stakeholders with respect to the sexual exploitation of males in Winnipeg, a research project entitled, "Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men—Manitoba Edition" has been undertaken by Alberta researcher Dr. Sue McIntyre with the assistance of Manitoba-based Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY), the host support agency for the study. The report is now finalized and accessible to all interested stakeholders on Dr. McIntyre's website at <http://www.hindsightgroup.com>. Manitoba will respond to the recommendations in this report through *Project: Under the Radar* which will coordinate and enhance resources for sexually exploited males.

## Theme 3 – Breaking the Silence

Recorded priorities highlighted the need to rework various types of services in order to better meet the needs of those affected by sexual exploitation and enhance safety. It was recognized that child sexual abuse is often perpetrated by family members and that we need to break the silence in terms of the impact of incest on families and communities. Participants voiced the need to support schools, implement a public awareness campaign and use a broad approach to education and awareness.

### a) Services that Ensure Safety

Comments and recommendations pointed to the need for children and youth to have safe places to go. Specific suggestions included having 24-hour outreach programs across the province; places for children and youth to go when they are expelled from school or home; and a colocation of a range of services, including medical, skills development and other relevant services, similar to the way ACCESS centres are structured. Participants also recommended that intervention begin as soon as youth are detained by police, rather than criminalizing them; and helping families, not just individuals, so that children can grow up in a safe environment.

#### Action

The Province will fund two dedicated child sexual exploitation investigation specialists to work with police and in partnership with community stakeholders in 2009. The positions respond to a staffing need and were recommended at the summit workshops in the context of providing more coordinated services to investigate alleged perpetrators and ensure safety for sexually exploited children and youth.

In conjunction with the increased access to specialized training by major stakeholders around the province, a network of dedicated workers will be identified and trained to develop and share expertise on sexual exploitation within their organizations and sectors.

Manitoba's multi-year Sexual Exploitation Strategy will be called Tracia's Trust, in commemoration of the life of Tracia Owen. The strategy will encompass the coordination of services for all ages, including children, youth and adults, as well as all forms of sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography, sex trafficking, sex tourism and Internet luring.

### b) More Support for Education in Schools

Participants prioritized the need to better support schools so that children and youth receive individualized teachings and do not fall through the cracks or turn to other coping strategies. It was voiced that education on sexual exploitation should be mandated in schools so that children and youth have an opportunity to learn and discuss the topic. Teachers and/or outside agencies could deliver the education.

#### Action

The Province continues to facilitate the use of personal safety learning materials called, "Kids in the Know" in schools throughout Manitoba. Manitoba will fund and facilitate the use of the Kapaapako Miikiwaap Lodge teachings, which are prevention-focused learning materials based on traditional Aboriginal teachings of the tipi. These teachings were piloted in schools and community settings.

Manitoba continues to support its Sexual Exploitation Strategy through provincial education and awareness initiatives such as tele-video conferences and a special collection of educational resources at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Library. The PACCA Education Subcommittee has also produced information packages for educators on child sexual exploitation.

### **c) Public Awareness Campaign**

Participants recommended that a broad public awareness campaign involving advertisements and visual public media be developed with a strong message about sexual exploitation being unacceptable. It was voiced that the campaign should address all forms of sexual exploitation including incest, luring, trafficking and child abuse images, using a community development approach with individuals involved delivering the messages. The campaign should be reflective of and responsive to regional realities. It was also suggested that the public awareness campaign include a component on educating communities about resources available on child sexual abuse and exploitation.

#### **Action**

The Province has built on phase one of the public awareness campaign, “Stop Sex with Kids” by developing awareness materials that are useful to regions outside of Winnipeg for phase two of the campaign. On November 13, 2008, over 400 volunteers were mobilized from around the province by Child Find Manitoba to participate in the launch of phase two of Stop Sex with Kids.

Funding will be provided in 2009 to develop and conduct awareness training on sexual exploitation for communities around the province. The introductory workshop will highlight the issue of sexually exploited youth, available resources and prevention strategies in Manitoba communities.

The Province has funded the translation and production of Sex Trade Reality Check Booklets to be available in nine languages: English, French, Swahili, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tagalog, Russian, Spanish and Arabic. The booklet is currently in the production stage and will provide information to suspected or known sex trade consumers and sexual exploitation perpetrators about the risks, harms and consequences associated with sex trade involvement.

### **d) Commitment from Community and Aboriginal Leadership**

Obtaining a strong long-term commitment from leadership was identified as an important priority. Comments were made about how the Chief and Council or Mayor and Councils need to talk about the issue of child sexual exploitation and take more of a leadership role. As well, community leaders should examine what they can do to protect children. It is necessary to address the root causes of child sexual exploitation, using a broad approach, to elevate Aboriginal and women’s issues, tackle poverty and racism, as well as provide education and awareness of children’s rights.

#### **Action**

The Province will appoint a new Task Force to provide advice regarding the implementation of Tracia’s Trust—Manitoba’s Sexual Exploitation Strategy. Discussions will be initiated with Aboriginal leaders to determine appropriate actions to further community leadership on the issue of sexual exploitation. Manitoba and Aboriginal leaders will be hosting a sharing session with other jurisdictions that have teachings in the area of breaking the cycle. The Province will also examine the practices of other jurisdictions in the area of breaking the silence and addressing the root causes and incidents of familial child sexual abuse.

# Theme 4 – Child, Youth, Family and Community Empowerment

## a) Empowering Children and Youth

Summit participants prioritized the need to get children and youth involved in addressing the issue of sexual exploitation. The message was conveyed that, “children are the messengers—we need to listen.” Suggested ways include encouraging youth to be involved with initiatives specifically oriented to gather their input, such as serving on boards and committees, bringing them together using various media forms like film to discuss issues, holding joint conferences, and a summit for children and youth. Stakeholders also recommended identifying or developing a tool on youth engagement to obtain youth input regarding forums and policy making.

### Action

Regional teams will be asked to develop a youth engagement plan as part of team activities. A Northern Forum will focus on mobilizing communities on the issue of sexual exploitation and preventing harm to high-risk youth in northern Manitoba. A planning group has been established and the Northern Forum is expected to occur in spring 2009.

## b) Grassroots Empowerment

Comments were made about the need for grassroots empowerment at the community level for fathers, boys and men, so that men can take a stand against sexual exploitation, and for women to claim their space and place and pass that onto their children. Participants voiced that communities should be given the power and resources to deal with their own issues. It was recommended that “Grandmother Councils” be accessed as a resource for communities.

### Action

As a means to mobilize community action and regional teams around the issue of child sexual exploitation, Manitoba will declare an annual Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Week in March that coincides with the “Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Awareness Week” in British Columbia. Regional teams will be tasked to engage “Grandmother Councils” and experiential persons as a resource for their committees.

## Moving Forward

At the *Front Line Voices* summit, approximately 195 Manitoba stakeholders gathered together in Thompson and Winnipeg to examine ways to improve on the provincial Sexual Exploitation Strategy, focusing on the four themes of legislation and law enforcement; continuum of services; breaking the silence; and child, youth, family and community empowerment. The two summit workshops resulted in numerous constructive recommendations for Manitoba to consider for implementation. While the action plan in this report addresses some of the prioritized recommendations of the summit, it is recognized that additional valuable recommendations were made by workshop participants. As well, government consultations with a variety of stakeholder groups across community and Aboriginal sectors have been occurring that echo many of the summit recommendations. Further efforts to increase awareness of the various forms of child sexual exploitation will be explored.

Based on participant feedback from the summit, a Task Force composed of government officials, First Nations leadership, law enforcement, community-based organizations and other stakeholders will provide future advice regarding the direction for continued work in the area of sexual exploitation, and further review all of the workshop recommendations. Provincial departments responsible for business and tourism will be invited to the table to begin tackling issues of corporate social responsibility and child sex tourism with respect to child sexual exploitation in Manitoba. Together, Manitobans are working together to end child sexual exploitation.

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