

**BC ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BCASW Speaks to the Responsibility to Secure Safety for All Children

VANCOUVER, BC - The British Columbia Association of Social Workers remains deeply concerned that children suffer as a result of multi-system failure to protect them. The report, Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded, released by the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth on May 14 describes one such story in bleak detail.

We all must accept responsibility for the well-being of children. We must also accept responsibility for the impact of our judgments of parents who struggle with addictions and of the front line social workers involved in the lives of families. Indifference is not a word that can describe what the vast majority of social workers feel. Frustration, anger, exhaustion, sadness, and helplessness are far more common states of mind.

Social workers, teachers, and health professionals cannot prevent child abuse without the involvement and commitment of all citizens. Government policy and practice that demonstrates full parenting responsibility for children in care requires adequate staff levels; adequate resources; commitment to addressing poverty, addictions, and discrimination; and a commitment to finding secure, loving homes and connections for children well beyond the age of 19 years. We all want people in our lives who will be there for the long haul.

Child protection workers need adequate supports to do their jobs. Their positions must be designed to sustain high morale in order to attract and retain social workers who choose to do the difficult work of safeguarding children. Only with a healthy system can success for children in need be achieved.

BCASW calls for services to be extended to children in care beyond the age of 19 years. Paige's need for help did not end the day she turned nineteen.

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For further information:

Dianne Heath MSW RSW, Executive Director
Carol Ross MSW, BCASW Lead on Child Protection

BC ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

402 - 1755 West Broadway
Vancouver BC V6J 4S5
T 604 730.9111
Toll free in BC 1 800 665.4747

bcasw@bcasw.org