

Check Against Delivery

CEASE Benefit and Men of Honour Awards

May 2, 2014, Edmonton

**Honourable Sandra Jansen, Associate Minister of Family and
Community Safety, Human Services**

Good evening and thank you.

Mayor Iveson, Councillor Sohi, it's a pleasure to be here with you tonight.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Kate Quinn (Executive Director of CEASE) and her team for their dedicated commitment and stellar work throughout the year.

I also want to recognize the many other organizations here tonight that work so hard and on such difficult issues day after day. Thank you.

And my sincere congratulations to the men we are here to recognize.

You are wonderful examples of what it means to be great men and role models for others.

It is such a privilege for me to be here tonight among people who care so much about making a better, safer and healthier community.

I love that these awards recognize character beyond achievement.

Your acts of heroism make the difference in the lives of many and should be celebrated and shared with the greater community so everyone can be inspired.

I want you to know that the Government of Alberta shares your commitment to building a better, stronger and healthier community.

This is why in Budget 2014 we increased the prevention of family violence and bullying budget by \$29 million.

Alberta has already made great strides in taking action to address family violence, bullying and sexual violence - moving these often hidden social issues from a private to a public concern.

This increased investment will help us focus on services that inspire real and lasting social change, now and in the future.

\$20 million will fund the new Family and Community Safety program to address the root causes of abuse and violence...

...because the only thing worse than family violence happening once, is family violence happening again;

\$4 million will go to implementing the new Family Violence Strategy, which includes \$1 million to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying;

we will continue to support the important work being done by women's emergency shelters with increased funding; and

this year we are able to fund an additional 70 beds across the province and 16 more outreach workers, as well as funding support for the recruitment and retention of staff.

We also committed \$1 million to further address sexual violence.

I know that with this kind of commitment, we can make great strides forward in ending abuse.

The work that I lead, aligns closely with CEASE, as well as the efforts of many of you here tonight.

As Associate Minister, my mandate is to focus specifically on the prevention of family violence, bullying and sexual exploitation in Alberta.

So, in honour of tonight's Men of Honour, I am proud to also announce that CEASE and ACT Alberta (the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking) were recently awarded a grant of \$60,000 from Human Services.

The funding will be used for research and information sharing about the prevalence of prostitution and trafficking, as well as recommendations for next steps.

Staff from my ministry will work closely with CEASE and ACT and help guide this work and we hope to collectively report back our findings to the community this fall.

Another area I am proud of is the work that began last fall to develop a provincial sexual violence framework.

The framework will help guide us as we work to prevent sexual violence and protect our most marginalized and vulnerable citizens.

We have already identified several priorities for action.

For example, we know we need to increase our public awareness and education efforts, including the ways technology is used to perpetuate sexual violence.

We also need to look at enhancing our justice system response to victims of sexual violence.

Studies have told us that only one victim in 20 reports an assault to the police.

We need to know why this happens and what we as a community can do so that victims feel they will be safe, heard and cared for when they do report.

My staff and I are also hard at work addressing women's issues.

This work will provide the link between gender inequality and the sexual exploitation of girls and women.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly to you who are here tonight, we are going to increase our efforts to engage men and boys, as allies, mentors and as partners in promoting healthy relationships and ending violence against women and girls.

I am grateful to know we have so many committed men here in this room who already are leading the way.

You are influencing others around you and in your communities.

You exemplify what it means to be a role model, a man of honour.

There is a long road ahead and still many challenges to overcome.

The Alberta government stands with you and is committed to moving these often hidden social issues out into the open, where all community members have the opportunity to be a part of the discussion as well as the solution.

I want you to know that I will take inspiration from this gathering tonight and use it as I work with my government colleagues and our community partners to build a safer, more respectful Alberta.

Thank you and again, congratulations on your awards.