

Sample Media Kit

Media Advisory

Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton celebrates 35 years of female empowerment

May 7, 2014 – Media are invited to join the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton as the organization commemorates its 35th anniversary in style.

DATE: Thursday, May 8, 2014

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

LOCATION: The Royal Glenora Club, 11160 River Valley Road Northwest

Speakers:

- Toni Sinclair, Executive Director, Elizabeth Fry Society
- Dallas Cardinal, Aboriginal Women's Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Fry Society
- Jonathan Denis, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta Justice
- Dr. Jana Grekul, Director (BA) Criminology Program, University of Alberta
- Organization staff and clients will be available for photographers and videographers

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton is hosting a purple tie event to honour the organization's success in the community over the past 35 years. The event will be emceed by Mars, co-host of 102.3 NOW radio's breakfast show. Special guest speakers will share their unique perspective about the impact of programs offered by the charity and clients are invited to share their stories. The event features a silent auction.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton began in 1977 as a volunteer core working out of the old Provincial Courthouse. Elizabeth Fry is the only agency in Edmonton working with women who are, or may be at risk of becoming, criminalized. Over the decades, the organization has diversified and expanded its offerings to assist with employment, financial literacy, life skills, and programs targeted to Aboriginal women. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton is an affiliate of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

For more information, contact:

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News Release

Elizabeth Fry Society marks 35 years advocating female empowerment in Edmonton

May 9, 2014 – Edmonton, Alberta – The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton commemorated its 35th anniversary on May 8 at the Royal Glenora Club.

The purple tie event – which featured a silent auction – honoured the organization’s success in the community over the past 35 years. The event was emceed by local radio personality Mars, co-host of 102.3 NOW radio’s breakfast show. Special guest speakers included Jonathan Denis, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, and Dr. Jana Grekul, Director of the BA Criminology Program for the University of Alberta.

“Elizabeth Fry is thrilled at the support shown by the community and our core founders,” says Toni Sinclair, Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton. “Our agency has come a long way in 35 years, and our capacity to help clients would not be possible without the ongoing support of our friends in the Edmonton community.”

Alberta Solicitor General is a core founder of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton.

“The provincial government relies on agencies like Elizabeth Fry to provide essential services,” says Jonathan Denis, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. “E-Fry is well-known for working with women and girls in the community, and taking a holistic, cooperative approach to prevent and reduce criminalization.”

The Elizabeth Fry Society is the only agency in Greater Edmonton working with women who are, or may be at risk of becoming, criminalized.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton began in 1977 as a volunteer core working out of the old Provincial Courthouse. Over the decades, the organization has diversified and expanded its offerings to assist with employment, financial literacy, life skills, and programs targeted to Aboriginal women. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton is an affiliate of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

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Fact Sheet

Criminalized Women in Canada

A snapshot¹:

- high ratio of aboriginals
 - most are criminalized and/or in prison for the first time
 - most have histories of sexual and/or physical abuse
 - many use legal and/or illegal substances as coping mechanisms
 - most are under age 35
 - most are mothers
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- Aboriginal women are over-represented in federal prisons. While they represent only 3 per cent of women in Canada, they make up 32 per cent of women in federal prisons. Between 1997 and 2007, the number of federally incarcerated aboriginal women increased by 151 per cent²
 - Between 1997 and 2006, the number of women in federal prisons increased 22 per cent³
 - Women are often criminalized for activities they see as vital for their economic Survival – 80 per cent of women are imprisoned for economic related crimes, mostly property crimes (fraud or theft under \$5,000.)⁴
 - 80 per cent of all federally sentenced women report histories of physical and/or sexual

¹ Canadian Human Rights Commission. "A Profile of Federally Sentenced Women: Who Are They?" in *Protecting Their Rights: A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Human Rights Commission, 2004.

² Sapers, Howard. *Annual report of the Correctional Investigator, 2006-2007*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services of Canada, 2007.

³ Pollack, Shoshana. *You Can't Have it Both ways: Punishment and Treatment of Imprisoned Women*. Waterloo: Journal of Progressive Human Services, 2009.

⁴ Pollock, Shoshana. *Locked In, Locked Out: Imprisoning Women in the Shrinking and Punitive Welfare State*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University, 2008.

abuse – this percentage rises to 90 per cent for aboriginal women.⁵

- Federally incarcerated women typically have lower educational attainment than the general Canadian adult population. More than 80 per cent of women in Canada have surpassed grade nine; for women prisoners, the number is closer to 50 per cent.⁶

⁵ Canadian Human Rights Commission. *Protecting Their Rights: A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2003.

⁶

Ibid.

Backgrounder

May 7, 2014

Elizabeth Fry Society Offers Diverse Programs

From the start, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton has been linked with the court system. Starting out as a volunteer-based agency in 1977, the Society was housed out of the old provincial courthouse. Elizabeth Fry Society is still most well-known for its court programs, which serve both adults and youth, male and female. Here is a snapshot of some of the agency's other key programs:

Aboriginal Women's Program

The Aboriginal Women's Program was created because aboriginals represent a large number of the women who are involved with the legal system. This program recognizes the unique cultural needs of aboriginal clients and the barriers aboriginal women face. The program takes a holistic approach to healing and is founded in medicine wheel teachings. The Society encourages all women of aboriginal descent to connect with their culture; traditional practices such as sweat lodge ceremonies are part of the program's offerings. The Aboriginal Women's Program is rooted in spirituality, culture, and tradition.

Girls Empowered and Strong Program

The Girls Empowered and Strong Program recognizes that teenage girls experience constant stress and pressures, particularly in today's technological society. The GES program provides resources for teen girls to make positive decisions for their future. The GES program openly addresses topics that teen girls face on a daily basis: drug use, cyber bullying, dating violence, and body image. The GES program provides a safe space to openly share information, experiences, and concerns. The program is mobile and runs workshops in schools, child care facilities, residences, and more. Workshop topics are flexible to the needs of the participants, and the program encourages collaboration of ideas.

Employment Services Program

The "Work 4 Women" employment program offers a variety of academic and career-related services to help women achieve individual goals. Women accessing the program often face major barriers to meaningful employment including lack of education/training, addictions, criminal involvement, and child care concerns. The employment program provides a variety of services from resume development and academic upgrading to training opportunities (First Aid, WHMIS, Flag Person) and employment standards assistance. The support offered by the Work 4 Women program is individualized and comprehensive.

Prison Liaison Program

The Prison Liaison Program provides incarcerated women with many resources. The program staff act as advocates for women in various institutions including the Remand Centre, Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre, and the Edmonton Institution for Women. Clients can receive assistance with any

number of things such as pre-release planning, prisoners' rights, academic upgrading, and recreational programming. The Prison Liaison Program gives women in prison a solid support system that can continue to be accessed after release. Elizabeth Fry offers support to women at all stages in the criminal justice process.

Financial Literacy Program

The Financial Literacy Program was created to empower women to manage their money. Financial management is so important, but it can also be complex and intimidating. The program offers a variety of workshops that cover basics like opening a bank account, to more advanced topics like credit repair. This program provides women with practical life skills and gives them knowledge to make smarter financial decisions.

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