

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

60% OF STAFF LAID OFF AT NANAIMO MEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

As of March 15th, the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre has had to lay off 60% of its paid staff due to a lack of funding. "This will significantly reduce our ability to provide services and programs to the community", says the Centre's Executive Director Theo Boere.

A news release by the British Columbia Ministry of Community Services on March 16, 2007 announced that "a total of \$1.2 million to launch violence prevention projects that engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls" was granted to community organizations. Most of this money was essentially given to women's organizations to re-educate men and boys about their roles as the perpetrators of violence in our communities.

We now have a multitude of information and studies, including the last Statistics Canada report on domestic violence, which tells us that domestic violence is perpetrated relatively equally by both men and women. In the last fiscal year, women's organizations received over \$48 million from the Ministry of Community Services to support their programming. Men's organizations received nothing. The Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre unequivocally and strongly supports funding for services for women, however we are questioning why women's organizations were chosen to receive project money to "engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls". If we as a society believe that men need to be helped, then why aren't men's organizations being given the ability to help men? There is an alarming gender bias in funding for community resources from the Ministry of Community Services.

We have met with the Minister of Community Services and every previous Minister in charge of that Ministry for the last 5 years. They are certainly aware of our presence and they are clearly aware of the issues. The Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre has evolved over 5 years into the voice of reason for men's issues in the Province of BC and the premier provider of services aimed specifically at men. We are a gender inclusive organization having female employees, female volunteers, female board members, and female clients. It is no longer acceptable in today's society for this Ministry to grant this kind of discriminatory funding.

We are calling on the media and the public to help us with this issue.

Please contact Theo J. Boere, Executive Director at the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre, 250-716-1551 or if you are not local to Nanaimo, 887-716-1551 for more information. We have also set up an email for you to contact us if you would like at supportmen@nanaimomen.com. What else can you do? You can contact your local MLA and speak with them. You can find their contact information in the blue pages of your telephone book or by visiting the online directory at <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-2.htm>.