

Violence against women on rise

Resource Centre's budget cut

Editor:

I feel, as an employee of the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre, that it is important to let the people of Quesnel know what we have been experiencing at our agency over the past year.

Violence against women in our community is on the increase.

Many of us who work in the anti-violence field knew this would happen.

There is ample research and evidence showing that violence against women and children increases during economic downturns.

Violence against women in their intimate relationships is more likely to occur when couples are experiencing financial strain.

Our agency has seen a steady increase in women accessing our services since last October.

In fact, one of our Stopping the Violence programs has had a tripling in the number of women accessing services.

We see women every day

"This government needs to get its priorities clear and ensure that all women and children are protected."

who are experiencing violence in their relationships, sexual assault and abuse; as well as women who are living in poverty.

Women come here in need of not only emotional support but also for food and toiletries, legal information, housing issues, assistance with finances, and advocacy.

Even though Stopping the Violence Programs across the province are seeing record numbers of women, in late August we received notification that our programs were getting a two per cent budget cut effective immediately.

We were told to be "happy", that this was modest compared to "big cuts" that other core social programs

were going to see.

It now appears that the only core social programs being cut are the ones that help women and children.

Now, I realize that our province is in economic distress.

I see every day what people are experiencing. I have to tell you though, how disheartening it is to do this type of work, to see the trauma that we see on a daily basis, and be told to "be happy".

The two per cent budget cut anti-violence programs have received came about because of a \$1.2 million "administrative mistake by government".

It is women in your community who will pay the price for this mistake.

This government needs to get its priorities clear and ensure that all women and children are protected.

Melanie MacDonald,
Administrative Coordinator
Quesnel Women's Resource
Centre