

Media Release

November 23, 2004

Four New Brunswick youth are participating in a campaign to prevent violence against women which was launched today by the men's group MensWork, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The groups unveiled a poster showing the young men, including blues musician JP LeBlanc of Bathurst and rap artist Red Suga of Pabineau First Nation, with the message, "*When we see violence, we say that's not right. Take a stand.*" The other men participating in the campaign are UNB law student Adam Neal, and Ryan Donaghy, treasurer of the Advisory Council on Youth.

"Women alone cannot end violence against women," said Advisory Council Chairperson Mary Lou Stirling. "What men including young men can do is to talk to other men. We were heartened by the enthusiastic response from the young men we approached for this campaign, including the ones who participated in focus groups to help us get the message right."

"It's a question of social justice: young men, and men in general for that matter, need to find the courage to speak out against all forms of violence," according to Miguel LeBlanc of the Advisory Council on Youth.

Terrance Trites of Moncton, the president of MensWork, a New Brunswick group of men working with men to end violence against women, said, "I'm encouraged when young men speak out against violence between men and women. I sense a growing commitment, as men, to both personal and social relationships where equality and mutual respect are glorified. When youth and young adults refuse to glorify violence and power in their relationships, they are contributing to the momentum of the building of a better world for men and women."

The posters, magnets and decals will be distributed during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence celebrated internationally from November 25 to December 10, which include December 6, Canada's *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women* and December 10, the *United Nations Human Rights Day*. The campaign materials are free and will be distributed throughout the province.

Ryan Donaghy, a student at the University of New Brunswick, said "Taking a stand on the issue of violence against women is important to me. The young men involved with this campaign have all shown a commitment to take real action. It is my hope that this poster it will make an impact on other young men throughout this province, and that it will encourage them to make their voices heard. Youth need to be aware of this issue and must get involved in stopping violence against women. Now. We are simply doing our part."

Adam Neal worked for *MensWork* one summer and says what he learned was that “men are less likely to be violent when their friends, family and peer group members speak out against the use of violence. We have to realize that our one voice has the power to influence a number of our peer group members, and we must use this realization to speak out against violence that is occurring, whether hidden or visible.”

Red Suga, rap artist from Pabineau First Nation, has been nominated for the Canadian Aboriginal Music Award (winners to be announced Nov. 26). He says he was inspired to write one of his songs, "Too Much to Bear", based on an experience involving a friend affected by violence in a relationship. Excerpt from the lyrics to "Too Much to Bear", by Red Suga:

"...Instead of appreciating the fine woman you are,
he left you beat down with lots of scars,
but forget about him, you're better off without him,
you'll see there's a brighter day,
the first step was to no longer stay,
sure can't get no worse, dry your eyes on my sweater,
put yourself first..."

Singer-songwriter and guitarist, JP LeBlanc of Bathurst released his first CD before he turned 16. Now also a student at Université de Moncton, and despite a busy schedule, he has given his enthusiastic support to the provincial campaign.

For information, contact:

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Or

Terrance Trites, president of MensWork at 506 866-2661;

Or

Miguel LeBlanc at 506 453-3271.

BACKGROUND STATISTICS

In 1999, 9% of N.B. women 18 years and older said they had experienced violence at the hands of a spouse or common-law partner in the 5 years prior to the Statistics Canada survey interview.

Between 1990 and 2003, at least 24 New Brunswick women were killed by their current or ex-partner. 10 women were killed after separating, 4 within hours or weeks of ending the relationship. Source: Silent Witness Project fact sheet, 2003.

There were 744 sexual assaults reported in NB in 2002 (male and female, child and adult victims). Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting.

82% of sexual assault victims are women or girls. Source: Statistics Canada. (1999) Sex Offenders. Juristat, 19(3). Ottawa, Ontario.

78% of sexual attackers were men the victim knew prior to the attack. Source: Statistics Canada. (2000). Women in Canada: A gender-based statistical report. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.