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MARGARET NORRIE McCAIN  
Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

**MEDIA: Please check against delivery**

Family violence is not a singular problem that stands alone, impacting only the family unit directly involved. Family violence is a complex issue; like a spider's web it spins outwardly, engulfing every sector of our society, indiscriminately snaring victims.

We—you and I—are victims. But we can also be part of the solution. The first step is confronting the truth, the reality that **Family Violence Is Everyone's Business.**

Today, I will use this precious time with you to demonstrate and, hopefully, convince you of this truth. I will share with you some of the research and family violence initiatives in various jurisdictions across Canada. And I will tell you what the frontline workers and experts in the field of family violence say YOU can do to help.

First, though, I will take a moment to thank you for your invitation to address the Canadian Club of Toronto.

I had been fundraising and speaking to audiences about family violence for 10 years when I was invited to serve as Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. I was reluctant to accept because the protocol of the office would prohibit my fundraising activities.

But then I realized my public speaking on the issue could continue, and the office would provide an appropriate and highly visible platform for advancing public awareness about family violence.

This is how I found myself with you today. Your president, Libby Burnham, approached me a few months ago after I spoke on family violence to the congregation of St. John's United Church in Agincourt.

Like me, Libby hails from Florenceville, New Brunswick. Today, she has both feet firmly planted in metropolitan Toronto where she has earned the Women of Distinction Award.

Libby, on behalf of your many friends in New Brunswick, I offer heartfelt congratulations on your award. And, thank-you for your initiative in bringing me before this respected and influential audience today.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Honourable Hal Jackman, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. I am here in an unofficial capacity today as your speaker, but I'm certain His Honour, Mr. Jackman, will concur when I tell you that the aura of Lieutenant-Governor is not something you can leave behind at will.

Even my own six-year-old niece now sees me differently than simply her "auntie" from New Brunswick. She tells her school friends that I live in the castle and when the Queen is away, I do her work for her.

Children! They are a source of joy, a constant challenge, and a responsibility for their parents, their communities and society as a whole. They are also the beginning, the starting point of the cycle of family violence and abuse.

Healthy children—and I speak of emotional and psychological health—grow up to be healthy adults who contribute to making healthy communities and a healthy society.

All of this works in reverse, with serious consequences, when a child lives in an abusive, violent family environment.

Some children are the direct victims, suffering sexual, physical or emotional abuse at the hands of a parent.

What becomes of them?

Statistics from Corrections Canada tell us many of the women who were abused as children, by their father or another male relation, turn to crime.

A remarkable 80 per cent of women in prison were victims of physical or sexual abuse, either as children or later as adults. The prognosis for male child victims is equally disturbing. 60 per cent of men in prison were physically or sexually abused, usually as children.

The violence and abuse erased their self-esteem, robbed them of their positive potential, mutilated their values and, ultimately, twisted their lives.

In the past decade, research has also uncovered the phenomenon of “indirect” victimization of children. These are cases in which the child is a constant witness to the battering and abuse of their mother.

In the vast majority of cases, family violence and abuse is perpetrated by the father, step-father or live-in boyfriend.

Women and children are the victims of abuse in 99% of family violence cases. And three in 10 Canadian women are victims of some form of spousal abuse.

Let me share with you some of the startling affects researchers are seeing in the children of battered women, as illustrated by Dr. Peter Jaffe, a renowned Canadian expert on family violence.

**Mary and Nicole**, ages 8 and 9, were taken out of a violent home situation and placed in a shelter. Although they had witnessed violence in two families since they were born, both girls were high achievers in school, popular with their peers.

While in the shelter, they often spoke of returning to their home and indicated they missed their father.

When asked about how they came to leave home, they both said that if their mother kept the house more tidy and had supper ready on time, their father wouldn't have to hit her so often.

In some cases, like this example, children learn to believe that the victim of the violence has somehow brought it on herself by her own behaviour.

Or they believe she deserves the abuse by virtue of the fact that she is devalued simply because she is a woman. Mary and Nicole blamed their mother for their father's violence.

This view by the children could be the early seed for their own future victimization in marriage. This is exactly the cycle being seen today at transition houses where abused women go for emergency shelter when they leave home.

I am certain the experience of New Brunswick shelters is not uncommon. Shelter workers are now seeing the grown children of women who'd turned to the shelter for help years earlier. The grown daughters did, indeed, learn to be victims by witnessing their mother's abuse and they, to, are now trying to escape abusive mates.

The other awful cyclical result of children witnessing abuse is that they learn to be abusers. New Brunswick shelters are now finding that some male children grew up to copy their father's abuse—women are turning to the shelters after being beaten and abused by both their husband and their sons.

Children learn what they live, and they live what they learn. For children who are direct victims, the lessons are brutal and perpetuating, feeding the cycle of violence and abuse.

Of those husbands who have been found by the justice system to be abusive, an astonishing 80% grew up in violent, abusive families.

The cyclical nature of family abuse was demonstrated last year in the heartwrenching trial of Lorelei Turner.

Lorelei and her husband, Stephen, of Miramichi, New Brunswick, were found guilty of manslaughter in the death of their four-year-old son, John Ryan. As the case unfolded in court, it became clear that Lorelei was primarily responsible for the direct

abuse and starvation of her son while Stephen, for the most part, let it happen.

As a young child, Lorelei Turner had been sexually molested by her father and an uncle. Years later, she was further shattered by her father's suicide.

Experts at the trial said Lorelei had never received the help she needed to recover from her own abuse. She was a time bomb that went off with horrifying results. Recently, an investigation was ordered to determine how and why the community failed to respond to Lorelei's and John Ryan's cries for help.

Many children from abusive homes don't even make it to adulthood before exploding, turning to crime and violence.

Paul Vasey, a veteran journalist from Windsor, Ontario, explores this aspect of the cycle in his book "Kids In The Jail."

Paul visited a maximum security jail for young offenders. There were 14 inmates at the time—teenagers, both boys and girls.

Almost all of them had suffered violence and abuse in their own homes while growing up. Thirteen of the children no longer had contact with their families.

Paul learned that by the age of 12, children from abusive family environments are already lost to society. Sometimes they are also a danger to society. Any preventative action must reach them at an early age; experts say, by the age of three.

In the past decade, researchers have begun to trace and uncover the complex web of family violence. They have discovered family violence is a strong causal factor in many of our social problems such as crime, drug abuse, suicide, school drop-outs, alcoholism and illiteracy.

The ripple effect of violence and abuse in the family has been felt in our school system, our justice system, our health system, the workplace, religious and cultural communities, the sports world—just about every aspect of our society.

Economists have also been measuring the economic impact. We have been pouring billions into treating the symptoms and consequences of family violence and abuse.

The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children based in London, Ontario, just released a report titled The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women. It states that Canadians are spending almost \$4.3 billion annually.

We know that violent crime costs taxpayers \$14 billion per year, and violence against women and children is the single biggest factor in the creation of those we label “criminals.”

There is a prevailing opinion today that the changing structure of the traditional family unit is to blame for all our troubles. But, research demonstrates that a traditional family can be the scene of extreme abuse while a non-traditional family can be brimming with love, as well as the reverse.

One of the important lessons we have learned in our exploration of the root causes of family violence is that we must not pre-judge any single economic, social, religious, cultural or age group as being more, or less prone to violent and abusive behaviour in the home and outside.

The problem is systemic, a fact which was driven home to me recently as I looked through a New Brunswick newspaper to find no less than four stories related to abuse of some form: one involving a former provincial politician, another a dentist, still another a police chief and the fourth, a former premier.

Ladies and gentlemen, this, I submit, is the truth, the reality:  
**Family Violence Is Everyone's Business.**

But what of the solutions?

In recent months, there has been a surge of outrage, frustration and blame following the deaths of several women in Canada at the hands of their estranged husbands. The massacre in Vernon, BC, and several spousal murders in Ontario are grim

reminders that on average, three women die each week in Canada at the hands of their mate.

The recent rash of spousal murders has led to demands for tougher legislation to deal with abusers to ensure that women who DO leave violent relationships can be safe in their new lives. The tragic irony is that women who try to escape by leaving are 75% more at risk of being killed by their mate than if they'd stayed and suffered the abuse at home.

Frontline workers and researchers tell us that, for the most part, the women and children they encounter do **not** want the husband and father to go to jail; they just want the abuse to **stop!**

In fact, we know from mounting research that we cannot look only to the judicial system in our quest for answers, for solutions.

We must be careful not to compound the problem. For instance, some jurisdictions believed the right thing to do was to take the responsibility for pressing charges out of the hands of the victim. The police would lay the charge against the woman's spouse.

On the surface, this appears a reasonable solution to the woman's fear of retribution for charging her mate. It is appropriate in some cases. But in others, this approach constitutes re-victimization of the woman. It replaces her abusive mate's control with control of her life by the courts. Her mate gets angrier and after spending time in jail, he doesn't take it out on the system, he takes it out on her.

Furthermore, in cases of spousal abuse, there is no evidence to show that punishment or prison will act as a deterrent to further abuse.

Such important insight comes from those on the front line, working in the field of family violence and abuse.

There is a position that rehabilitation is the answer, especially when you consider that the abuser most likely was also a victim of abuse at one time and never got help. Victims of spousal abuse

generally don't want their relationship to end, they want the abuse to end.

Experts suggest the rehabilitation process would have to be mandatory. And in some situations, it would be necessary to restrict the movement of the abuser to protect the victim for the interim of rehabilitation.

Without doubt, legislation is an essential element to putting teeth into provincial government protocols in dealing with family violence. But consistently, the frontline workers tell us two other elements are essential: research and training.

New Brunswick has been deeply involved in the national research initiative into family violence. More than 10 years ago, a foundation was formed in New Brunswick which led, in 1992, to the establishment of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research.

Based in Fredericton, the centre was one of five established across the country to work in concert on family violence research. As well as the London centre I mentioned earlier, the others are in Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia.

The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre has 14 research teams made up of 150 professionals, frontline workers and community members. In ~~five~~<sup>4</sup> short years, these teams have been busy, researching such issues as family violence and immigrant women, the impact of family violence on the workplace, family violence in rural communities, family violence and religion, and how to restore our schools to peaceful places of learning for children.

Last month, the New Brunswick based centre stretched into Prince Edward Island with a new research project and plans are progressing to get research teams up and running in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

New Brunswick was also the first province to establish a government portfolio dedicated to the family. The Minister of State

for the Family, Marilyn Trenholme, has produced an extensive report based on public consultation across the province, introduced innovative community projects, and, most recently, instituted a major media blitz to alert New Brunswickers to the need for everyone to work together in recognizing and dealing with family violence.

At the same time, law makers in the Maritime Provinces have responded to public pressure for legislation to better protect the victims of family violence. In all three provinces, legislation has been developed to speed up the court process in family violence cases and to treat such cases with greater sensitivity to the dynamics of the relationship between the victim and abuser.

In Manitoba, a court project dedicated to family violence and abuse cases was instituted. The court works to handle cases of family violence expeditiously and to place emphasis on rehabilitation as opposed to punishment of abusers.

Frontline workers tell us **training** is the single most important need in dealing effectively with family violence and its impact throughout society.

In New Brunswick, an intergovernmental committee recognizing this need approached the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre to do training sessions across the province. Police officers, social workers, nurses, doctors and hospital emergency room staff were among those taking the training.

As the director of the Centre explains it:

“Each person who comes into contact with the family members -- the victims and the abuser -- needs to understand how these people are thinking. None of the traditional rules apply when you’re talking about violence or abuse among people who are related to one another.

“Every frontline person must know their role and they must know the role of the frontline worker who goes before and after

them in this situation, how the support systems must work together.”

Time is running short, I know, and there is so much more I wish I could share with you. But, I cannot close without addressing two more points that relate to public awareness and your role.

I am pleased to say the media is on board. The Private Broadcasters Association of Canada is currently running a television campaign on spousal abuse, the CBC recently did an extensive documentary, and the Toronto Star series caught the attention of thousands of readers, including Justice Minister Alan Rock. I commend them for their contributions to public awareness.

And I must add that if Canadian media outlets are looking for more stories on family violence and abuse, there are many excellent resources and initiatives here in Canada, starting with the five research centres I mentioned.

Now to you, my gracious and influential audience. I expect the avalanche of information I have provided has left you questioning:

“If this is such an enormous problem, what can I do, as an individual, to help?”

I suggest you can do a great deal.

Begin by learning as much as you can about family violence and share your knowledge with others. Information is easily available today in so many public locations, including the National Clearing House on Family Violence in Ottawa, the five regional research centres including the one in nearby London, as well as on the Internet.

Once armed with knowledge, push for change, remembering that change comes from the grass roots, from the bottom up. **People** move governments and policy makers.

And finally, add your voice to the growing numbers who want zero tolerance of family violence. In this area, women like

writers June Callwood, Michele Landsberg and Judy Steed raised their voices long ago.

In fact, women have been talking loud and long, and acting on their talk for years. Some have been talking since the 1960s.

A small number of courageous and special men have been by our sides since the beginning.

But we need more help. Men, especially non-violent, respected men in positions of power and influence, must join the effort to promote and enforce zero tolerance of family violence.

Family violence affects everyone—and it is everyone's business.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for this priceless opportunity to share the messages of family violence with members of the Canadian Club. Thank-you.