



June 22, 2009

**High-risk youth receive support to reduce crime and involvement with gangs
New programs aim to make positive life choices**

Calgary... Children and youth in the Calgary area who are at risk of becoming involved in crime and gangs are receiving additional support to overcome challenges associated with poverty, addictions, family violence, mental health problems and homelessness.

More than \$2 million will be provided to Calgary organizations through the government's Safe Communities Innovation Fund (SCIF) and Children and Youth Services. The Safe Communities Initiative is a partnership of nine government ministries working closely with police, community groups, municipalities, businesses and social agencies to find meaningful and long-term solutions to address the impact crime is having on communities.

"Combining these initiatives with the wide range of supports and services already provided to at-risk children and youth will enhance opportunities for young people to make positive choices in their lives that will ultimately benefit the whole community," said Janis Tarchuk, Minister of Children and Youth Services. "It also supports our ministry mandate to improve access to programs for at-risk youth and to enhance services for Albertans affected by family violence."

The Burns Memorial Fund is receiving more than \$1.12 million to launch RADAR: Re-engaging Academically Disconnected Adolescents Respectfully, a project that will provide homeless youth aged 13-15 access to flexible educational programming, physical and mental health services, role models, shelter, food and clothing. The goals of this initiative are to provide these youth with a sense of belonging and support their positive behaviour and development.

Hull Child and Family Services is being given \$492,000 to pilot the New Road project, a community-police partnership designed to prevent at-risk children aged 7-11 from entering the criminal justice or child welfare systems by working with them and their families to promote positive social behaviour and develop their coping skills.

The Poverty Reduction Coalition will receive \$300,000 to provide intensive support to mothers in an effort to break the cycle of poverty, violence, addictions, isolation and enhance their parenting skills so they and their children are at less risk of engaging in crime or delinquency.

In addition to the SCIF funding, Children and Youth Services is providing \$45,000 to the Stardale Women's Group to provide culturally based supports to high-risk Aboriginal girls; \$35,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary for an Aboriginal mentoring program; and \$20,000 to the Youth Recovery Coalition of Alberta to expand support to high-risk youth through outreach and education.

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