



The Board of Directors of the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre is thrilled at how the centre has evolved over the past two years. November of 2015, it was just a dream to build a CAC, and with the tireless efforts from Sheldon Kennedy and Community Leaders, the doors opened for business in mid December of 2017.

Sheldon Kennedy is best known for coming forward and pressing charges on his former junior hockey coach Graham James after years of sexual abuse. Since his disclosure, Sheldon has become a world leader in Child Advocacy. He has spoken in the Parliament of Canada, US Congress and British Parliament, educating lawmakers on the impact of childhood trauma. His efforts have allowed for open conversation on the topic of abuse on children... a topic many people were hesitant to discuss.

The CACAC was established because of a large number of teen and young adolescent suicides in the City of Red Deer and surrounding area. It was very much an epidemic and remains so in Central Alberta. After talks with Sheldon Kennedy, the group of concerned citizens, later known as the Red Deer Coalition, decided that building a CAC was the best approach dealing with this crisis. It was also decided that the Red Deer centre would be modeled after the model of the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary. Sheldon presented the statistics pertaining to the impact of childhood trauma becoming a majority reason for depression, suicide, self harm, homelessness, school drop out, sexual ideology and violence. It was apparent the CAC would put us on the right path to prevention of suicide and many other social issues.

The CACAC is building relationships between RCMP, Alberta Health Services, Family Services, Crown Prosecutors, Alberta Education and Indigenous Bands. It is imperative to the integrated and collaborative practice that all these relationships remain strong and transparent for this model to have the greatest effect on these children's lives.

In February of 2018, the CACAC and the Red Deer College signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore and work toward building a permanent center on the campus of the RDC and develop education programs that pertain to childhood trauma and mental illness. There will be on site practicum requirements for some of the mainstream workers that involve working with children.

In looking toward the future, we hope to continue serving the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community... our children. We could not be where we are today without the support of the people around us.

On behalf of the children of Central Alberta,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Loewen", is written over a horizontal line.

Terry Loewen

CACAC Board Chair

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