

**SERVANTS ANONYMOUS SOCIETY OF CALGARY (SAS): CITY OF CALGARY
PROSTITUTION RESPONSE FRAMEWORK**

SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

JUNE 04, 9:30 AM

THE ENGINEERING TRADITIONS COMMITTEE ROOM



My name is Marina Giacomani, Executive Director of Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary. Thank you for inviting me to speak today on the very important issue of prostitution, and how it impacts our city, our communities, and the people of Calgary. First, I would like to commend His Worship Mayor Nenshi and City Council, and especially Councillor Colley-Urquhart and this committee for taking a proactive approach in fostering collaboration between the City, Calgarians, and community social service agencies. The work being done through the City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework is vital because regardless of what legislation comes down at a federal level, our experience tells us again and again that this is an issue about violence against women. That means we need action at the municipal level to ensure *local* programs are there to help survivors of sex trafficking recover and start new lives.

SAS – Who We Are, What We Do

SAS has the most comprehensive system of services designed to help female survivors , aged 16+ (with or without children) of sex trafficking recover from physical and psychological trauma in Calgary, and arguably in Canada. SAS includes:

- A safe house for women providing an immediate exit from sexually exploitive and violent environments
- Recovery-based life skills training in the SAS classroom
- Employment training, including through our Social Enterprise Business which helps support our social services
- Onsite child care
- Counselling & services to improve parenting & healthy child development
- Supportive transitional housing
- Supportive permanent housing
- Independent permanent housing – including through our collaboration with the Calgary Housing Company

We work closely with CPS, RCMP, local street outreach programs, homeless shelters, detox & treatment centres, Calgary Corrections, and Remand. We are also a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness agency.

88% of women who completed the SAS program in the past two years:

- remained free from sexual exploitation
- went on to pursue further education, employment, or full time parenting.

74% of women who exit the long term program prior to graduation:

- go to positive destinations which support them in maintaining their recovery

25 years:

- SAS has been helping women for 25 years.

Children:

- SAS is the only local organization that provides this comprehensive, long term recovery-based program (including employment training and child care) that allows children to remain with their mother as she learns the skills she needs start a new life.
- Additionally we have an extremely high success rate of children being returned to their mothers from provincial care, etc., because of their success in our program.

SAFE & the SAS Exit Model

Whether our legislation is modelled after the **Nordic Model**, or becomes a version of a **regulatory model**, we at SAS are very excited to see from the response to the City of Calgary's *Federal Legislation on Prostitution Survey* that many Calgarians see what we see – a great need for exit programs for women who want to leave violent and sexually exploitive situations.

The Servants Anonymous Facilitated Exit, or **SAFE program**, provides sex trafficking survivors with:

- Immediate, secure, housing
- A stabilization period that allows regular sleep, food, and the stability trafficked women are often lacking
- Access to medical care
- Access to legal services
- Access to addiction services

These are the services sex trafficking survivors need to begin the long process of healing, recovery, and the development of skills needed to change their lives, and the lives of their children.

Municipal planning that includes services such as the SAS exit program:

- **Aligns with City Council's commitment** to ensure "...every Calgarian lives in a safe community and has the opportunity to succeed (Fiscal Plan for Calgary, 2012-2014)
- Makes **sound fiscal sense**.

Social Return on Investment

The SAS SAFE program has been demonstrated to show a highly impactful social return on investment (ROI). When we consider the costs of:

- Justice related expenses
 - Homicide (costs of police investigation)
 - Prostitution charges (costs of police and court expenses)
- Health
 - Violence (cost of Emergency Response, ambulance, hospital costs)
 - High risk behavior (costs of STI treatment, overdose)
- Children
 - High risk pregnancy (costs of treating STI, FASD, drug use)
 - State involvement (costs of PGO, TGO, group home, etc.)
 - Care of child (cost of income support, child care)
- Addiction (costs associated/ addicted person)
- Homelessness (cost /homeless person)

With these and other costs factored in, the overall social value of investment in the SAFE program, averaged over three years is \$8.57 for every dollar invested.

Major importance for the City to support the continuation and expansion/enhancement of these existing services (SAS and HIV Community Link). SAS Federal funding is at risk & without these services, a coordinated response won't be successful.

I hope I have provided some insight into the very significant ways in which our city, our communities, our businesses and our families are affected by prostitution. Sexual exploitation is about filling a demand, and it often involves manipulation or coercion. The fact that the **average age of entry into the sex trade is 13 years old**,¹ tells us that we have to protect the most vulnerable in our society. It is important to note that while SAS is extremely proud of the services we offer and the women we have helped, the response provided by SAS and other agencies *does not fill the gap in demand for services* in response to prostitution in Calgary.

We would be pleased to discuss the SAS model and the success we have had in helping sex traffic survivors recover and change their lives, to become productive, contributing, and healthy citizens.

I am happy to respond to any questions or further expand on what I've said.

Thank you

¹ McIntyre, S. (2002). Strolling Away. Department of Justice.