



July 20, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural gender-based advocates and representatives attend Toronto City Council Meeting in support and solidarity Council considers Resolution CC8.2 (Declaring Gender-Based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence an Epidemic in the City of Toronto)

Representatives from EVA Renfrew County, which had standing at the June 2022 Inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam (CKW Inquest) made the 400km trip to Toronto today in solidarity and support of Mayor Chow's motion to adopt Recommendation #1 from the CKW Inquest Jury: to declare Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic.

- Lanark County was the first municipality to act on Recommendation #1 and made the declaration in Ontario on December 14, 2022. Other rural regions followed, including of Renfrew County. And as of today, more than 35 municipalities representing 40% of Ontario's population have made this declaration.
- The Nation's Capital – Ottawa - made their declaration on International Women's Day (March 8) and today, EVA representatives and members of the movement to end gender-based violence in Toronto, hope to witness Canada's largest city take the same step.
- Adoption of Resolution CC8.2 by Toronto City Council would mean that more than 50% of the Ontario population live in jurisdictions that have acknowledged the pervasive and pernicious impact of IPV and GBV on the health and wellbeing of their communities.
- Earlier this month, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) released a report confirming that Ontario has seen 30 femicides in the last 30 weeks. Every week this year, a woman has been killed because she is a woman, and so many more are living with IPV and GBV.

EVA continues to carry the voice of survivors, and those who have been stolen from their loved ones by femicide. Survivors, families, advocates and service providers from Toronto, and Renfrew and across Ontario, are fully engaged in moving forward to implement the recommendations of the CKW Inquest and end IPV and GBV. We are so grateful that Toronto City Council has joined us in this incredibly important work.

JoAnne Brooks, a member of the EVA delegation, stated: "Today, the wave of change in the battle to end IPV is growing and we know that the tides are turning. We will honour the lives of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Natalie Warmerdam and their families and all who have been victims of intimate partner violence by continuing to advocate for meaningful implementation of the recommendations of the CKW Inquest."

Erin Lee, Executive Director of Lanark County Interval House, stated: "Communities across this Province are leading with municipality after municipality joining the call to declare IPV an epidemic. It is only when we are able to see and name what is happening all around us every day that we can begin to create the change that survivors need and deserve."

Kirsten Mercer, a lawyer at Goldblatt Partners LLP, who represented EVA at the CKW Inquest stated: "Gender-based violence is a social problem rooted in misogyny- it is not a character flaw on the part of those who live with that violence. When we call it what it is: an epidemic and a public health emergency, we are telling women and all those who live with gender-based violence, that what is happening to them is not their fault. It is a collective concern, and the solutions require engagement and leadership at a community level."

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