

Media Release - For Immediate Release

Moncton, NB – Moncton is currently the fastest growing city in Atlantic Canada and with this growth and prosperity comes more complex social issues. Youth at-risk are struggling with issues of homelessness, break downs in areas of education and family, substance abuse, prostitution, mental illness and self-identity. There is a growing concern that at-risk youth will make unhealthy choices in getting their needs met that will lead them into conflict with the Criminal Justice System. One of the concerns is possible gang involvement. The emergence of gangs is well documented as extending beyond inner cities and larger communities.

Moncton Youth Residences has created the opportunity, through a conference entitled “**Youth Inclusiveness**,” to educate professionals on methods of youth inclusion that will minimize gang involvement and activity. Through the new information and dialogue created in the conference improved communication and possible new options will result. This conference will discuss the general issue of youth inclusiveness, as well as the specific threat of gang culture. It will also provide training on how communities, schools, and law enforcement agencies can be proactive in implementing preventative and collaborative intervention methods.

The two day conference, with nearly 100 attendees from the Moncton area, begins at noon on March 20th at the Delta Beauséjour Hotel. On the second day special guest speaker Ron Barrett, a Senior Gang Prevention Specialist in the City of Albany, NY will be presenting. "Cook", as he is known to the youth of Albany, has been involved with inner-city youth for over 18 years. He was hired by the City of Albany's Department of Youth and Family Services in 1999 and implemented the Gang Prevention Program. He is now the Capital Region Gang Prevention Specialist, overseeing prevention and intervention programs. Ron spends his days conducting awareness seminars along with speaking to kids at various schools and youth facilities and his nights reaching out to kids already involved in "at risk" activity.

Other speakers at this conference include Constable Bruno Arsenault (RCMP), Judge Michael McKee, Dr. Bill Morrison (UNB) and Dr. Susan Reid (STU).

This conference is being sponsored by Youth Justice Canada.

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