

Advocate for Children and Youth Tables 2019 Annual Report

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Lisa Broda, tabled her first annual report with the Legislative Assembly today.

The 2019 report highlights the office's ongoing commitment to elevate youth voice to inform and influence public policy initiatives and create meaningful improvements to services. In May, the Advocate's youth-led conference on mental health entitled, *Back Now in Our Day*, provided a forum where young people from all over Saskatchewan presented to an adult audience, providing their perspectives on what is needed to make the system better able to meet their needs. "This conference had a particular focus on strengthening youth voice in the area of mental health and supporting young people to be leaders," said Broda. "It's vital that we include the perspective of young people in all of our work, and in all matters that affect them," Broda added.

The report also reflects the office's efforts relating to the longstanding systemic issues that continue to compromise the rights of children and youth in this province, impacting their need for appropriate services. "We continue to work collaboratively to influence legislation, regulations and policy," said Broda. "It's imperative that we support entities to make the necessary changes that will result in better outcomes for children, while continuing to hold systems accountable," Broda added.

Highlights from this Annual Report:

- Collaboration with Advocates from across Canada to lead in the preparation of *A National Paper on Youth Suicide*, released in September 2019
- A year of interviews to gather lived experiences about Mental Health and Addictions Services in Saskatchewan
- Collaboration with Ministries to inform public policy
- Advocacy efforts to support a Bill for a National Commissioner for children and youth under federal jurisdiction
- Ongoing advocacy and monitoring of trends and statistics to promote more preventative measures

In 2019 the United Nations celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), serving as a reminder of the historic commitment made to protect and fulfil children's rights throughout the world. "This is a strong reminder of our collective responsibility to ensure children's rights are upheld in Saskatchewan. Looking forward to 2020, we hope the entities that serve children will prioritize their unique rights and embed these as foundational to their mandates. This requires investment, time, attention, and support for both children and their families," added Broda.

The staff at the Advocate office also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of those who are working hard in the fight against COVID-19, including everyone who continues to work to help those affected during this unprecedented time.

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. She leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, well-being and voice of children and youth are respected and valued.

For full details visit www.saskadvocate.ca to view the 2019 Annual Report.

-30-

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