

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Tuesday, April 9, 2013**

**Committee Room 1**

**Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia**

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**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Mr. Jim Morton (Chairman)  
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Mr. Sid Prest  
Mr. Gary Burrill  
Ms. Michele Raymond  
Hon. Karen Casey  
Ms. Kelly Regan  
Mr. Keith Bain  
Mr. Eddie Orrell

[Hon. Karen Casey was replaced by Mr. Zach Churchill.]

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille  
Legislative Committee Clerk

**WITNESSES**

**Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia**

Ms. Jeanette Milley  
Executive Director

Ms. Heather McKenzie  
Provincial and Community Resources Liaison Coordinator

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

9:00 A.M.

**CHAIRMAN**  
Mr. Jim Morton

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Good morning, folks. This is the Standing Committee on Community Services. My name is Jim Morton; I'm the chairman of the committee and the MLA for Kings North - I think we'll begin with introductions.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** I think just before I mention our agenda, I will welcome those people who aren't typically here and remind everybody in the room that first of all, if there were some emergency in the building, please don't use the elevators to leave but the stairwells. And the purpose, when we get to the bottom of the stairwell, is to congregate in the Grand Parade in front of City Hall. I mention that just in the interest of safety.

The other thing that's important to recognize in this room is that the committee structure is organized for the participation of committee members and there is not a facility for input from spectators, but we welcome you and we're always pleased to have guests here. I know that members of the committee would be very happy to be available for conversation or questions at the end of the meeting.

Our agenda today and the witnesses we're expecting are from the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia. They have not yet arrived but we're anticipating they will shortly. We had confirmation yesterday that they were planning to come, so whatever has happened has been of recent duration. We had a couple of other pieces of committee business that we can turn our attention to, perhaps, in the interest of time.

If you look under Committee Business, at Correspondence, you will see that first of all there is a letter from the Deputy Minister of the Department of Community Services, Robert Wood, providing some information that we had requested during our last meeting. That information had been circulated to you earlier, and I don't know if anyone has any questions about that, but I would see that as for your information.

The clerk reminds me that we also need approval from the committee to post that information, which we would typically do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hear agreement and I see no disagreement, so thank you very much for that. Are there any other questions about that correspondence?

The other piece of correspondence is one that we first entertained last Fall, we brought it forward at the last meeting, the letter from Mr. Bain regarding the procurement process for addiction services in Cape Breton. You have that letter in front of you as well. Mr. Bain, one of our reasons for postponing that the last time was because you weren't here to speak to it. Quite a bit of time has passed since you prepared that letter and submitted it to us, so I guess I'd just like to ask if you have any comments about the letter or your position with regard to the letter at this point.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The addiction services issue in Cape Breton has been straightened away, if we could say that, to everyone's satisfaction. But I guess because of the difficulties that were encountered in the process leading up to the resolution for Talbot House, I feel that even if we asked the department to provide us in writing about the procurement process - is there a standardized procurement agenda that they go through, or in the case of addiction services, what is the criterion to fall under?

It did pose a problem. I think everybody in this room knows the whole process with Talbot House - and I don't want to dwell on Talbot House, because right now it's a good-news story, but I think we should be familiar with the process in the event that this might happen again. They don't necessarily have to appear before a committee, but if we could get something in writing that would tell us what that process is, that would be appreciated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any further comment about that? I think the suggestion has been that as a committee we ask the Department of Community Services to provide us some documentation as to how they approach procurement for services of this kind. I'm seeing nods in agreement, it seems like.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, then I think we will proceed in that way; thank you, Mr. Bain, for that suggestion.

We'll just check to see if our witnesses are here, but the only other piece of business on the agenda that you have before you is the next meeting date, and maybe we'll just deal with that now. My understanding is that we will plan to meet again on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We have witnesses who are scheduled at this point, the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities.

Our plan has typically been, while the House is in session, to meet in the morning, so we will continue to aim in that direction and hope that the House hours and other demands of the Legislature will allow that to occur.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I guess I'll just propose that we recess momentarily to see if we have further items on our agenda.

[9:10 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[9:13 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning again, everyone. Our committee usually begins at 9:00 a.m., and we've had a brief opportunity to deal with some other business, but our guests and our witnesses have arrived. I think that just so everybody knows everybody else in the room, it would be helpful if we can, again, go around the room and introduce ourselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Our guests and witnesses this morning are from the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia. I think what we're going to do is turn the floor over to you. If you'll introduce yourselves, that would be helpful.

I know that you have a few things that you'd like to tell us, based on the presentation that you sent us before, if you'll do that. You'll have the floor for as long as you want to keep it, and then I know that we will have some questions for you once you're finished.

MS. JEANETTE MILLEY: My name is Jeanette Milley. I've been the executive director with the Elizabeth Fry Society for the past three years, but I've been with the society for 12 years. The Elizabeth Fry Society's mission and mandate is to provide services and supports to women and girls involved in the criminal justice system and those at risk of becoming involved, which opens up our services to all people because of the risk factor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you like to introduce your colleague as well?

MS. MILLEY: Okay. This is Heather McKenzie. Heather is our community liaison, but she works with the women imprisoned at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility.

MS. HEATHER MCKENZIE: Yes, I'm the provincial outreach coordinator and house coordinator - we wear several hats, actually, because we're a small organization.

MS. MILLEY: We do. I also provide addictions counselling at our house and I do the personal development programming as well. Our society was brought into being in 1982 and was incorporated in 1984. It came to fruition - a group of young women thought we needed more services to support women in our community.

We have Holly House, which is located at 1 Tulip Street in Dartmouth, and it provides safe, affordable housing for eight women and it's open to all women in the community. We have Our Thyme Café, which is a social enterprise that trains women to work in the hospitality industry; it runs twice a year and accommodates 12 women. And for all these services we have five full-time staff members, so we're always on the move.

Our Holly House came into being in 2007 - that's when it opened, I think - and the café opened in 2008, so we've been pretty busy. We're funded mainly through the Law Foundation and we get money from Correctional Services Canada and the Department of Justice - small amounts of money, but every bit helps. We get donations from the community, and the churches are very good to support our programs.

We have an ongoing client base because I still have contact with clients I met 12 years ago when I came into the organization and, unfortunately, large numbers of new clients. Heather will speak to that, about the work she does at the correctional centre and, unfortunately, the trend being with younger women becoming involved in the criminal justice system - the ages seem to be younger and younger.

Our other colleague, Nicole, who unfortunately was caught behind an accident and couldn't move, does the federal work. She works at Nova Institution - she visits there three times a month and she is also a community liaison for the women in Halifax, and she works with the women in the halfway house too.

Our services are open to all women in the community because of the at-risk factor and we've become more and more involved. We love this involvement because prevention - the younger the women come to us and through our programs, our personal development programs which are Anger Management, Healthy Relationships, Personal Boundaries, Assertiveness, they're open to all women in the community, we get a chance to - prevention is the piece that really is important now, so with our house and our programming we're really able to intervene with women.

As all of us know, if we didn't have a place to live, it would be pretty difficult to get to work in the morning, so the housing is a big piece. These were things that were identified by our clients, and that's what we respond to - our programs were developed to meet the needs of our clients. We don't make the program and say here it is. We ask the women: What do you need? What can we give to you? How can we be of service to you?

The housing and employment skills, of course, are the two biggest, and we're having great success. We have women who have not returned to the prison system once they went through our program, so that's our biggest success. But we have our smallest successes - if a woman is clean for a week and returns to us, and when they relapse, if they return to us. So we are in service to these women and we do a lot of referrals in the community - we want the women to get the best help they can.

We're seeing a very large increase in women with mental health problems and when these women become incarcerated it's really a drain on the prison system, as well as the women don't get the services they need.

MS. MCKENZIE: Well, it's because they're in prison and staff in the prison are guards and it's beyond their capacity. That's not their role, to be a mental health provider. And the thing is, women with mental health, they spend more time in segregation and they spend longer periods of time in prison, provincially and federally. Federally, women are punished, basically, because they have mental health and they act out because of that mental health, their behaviours. You know, they have mental health and they end up in maximum security, so it's terrible. They're criminalized because of their mental health. They are put in prison, and then they are further victimized while they're in prison. And that's not the place, it's not the environment; in fact, it just makes it worse.

You know, we can attest to that, to some of the things that have happened to women, you know, with Ashley Smith, a young woman who killed herself in prison, and that is something that continues to go on in this country. There are still women in prison who have extreme mental health and the staff do what they can. They do, I have to credit them for that. In the provincial system, I work very well with them. We try to do whatever we can do. They have Capital Health there, but if you don't have schizophrenia, that type of mental health, then you don't go to Forensics. If you have bipolar or borderline personality disorder, that kind of thing, you don't get to go to Forensics. They say that is behaviour, a mental health disorder and that behaviour can be changed. Well, it's just not that simple. It's not that simple to change it. Then the staff in the prison are left to try to manage someone with extreme mental health, in a general population, and you just can't do it.

What I try to do, as well - it's very difficult, when I'm trying to help them with a community release plan for someone with extreme mental health, it is very difficult. For example, we had a woman who had extreme mental health, and the staff did work with me. I managed to be able to have appointments with them, even on the days I don't go - I go on Wednesday afternoons every week, but I would make exceptional plans just so I could sit with them on different days.

Women would get out and we would, basically, talk somebody into - like a worker - seeing them the day they were released, because you can't do that either. You can't apply for social assistance until you're actually released, and somebody with mental health can't take that chance. They're going to be on the street. So we've had to talk a worker into seeing them the day they're released, putting them in the car - Jeanette came with me on

one occasion, and we went immediately to the welfare office in Middleton. She had nowhere to go; it was just on a wing and a prayer, really. And we managed to - actually they had to stay in a hotel for a very short period of time because there was nowhere else. They have no shelters there.

So these are the kinds of things you're dealing with and we couldn't just walk away and say, well, see you later, and leave her standing in the street. So those are the kinds of things that we contend with when we're dealing with women with mental health. In the house, for instance, we tried to manage women with mental health, in the house. We couldn't do it, not when they're extreme cases, we just couldn't.

MS. MILLEY: We deal with it, it all depends to the degree, but we don't have a mental health worker, which we've been trying to work toward putting on our staff for a while. Funding is always an issue. We're always - like many other not-for-profits, the budget is always the bottom line. Unfortunately, United Way has discontinued our funding this year. They say we don't meet their new criteria. Instead of hiring people, we might be in the unfortunate position of reducing people's hours and times. We run such a tight budget that the only place we can make up money is usually in salaries, because we have a place for every penny.

MS. MCKENZIE: We don't want to cut the services.

MS. MILLEY: Yes, and basically, we always do our best not to cut services, but the dollar is the bottom line. We're not unlike many not-for-profits. It's always about getting funding. There are many people looking for money from the pot, and the pot doesn't get increased at the rate of the services we give. If the not-for-profit services were taken out of the city for one day, it would have a huge impact on people looking for services elsewhere. We struggle because we cannot and we will not - only as a last, last resort - cut services to women.

MS. MCKENZIE: We get a lot of referrals. We get referrals from doctors - from mental health doctors, actually - and from police. We get them from parole officers, from other organizations. There's a network of supports that we try to create for the women we serve, so we work really closely with other community organizations. We all have a lot of the same clients, but we provide different services.

Basically what we do is, when a woman comes in to see us, she identifies to us what her needs are and we try to help her meet her needs. If we don't have the services to do that, we'll find the resources in the community somewhere for her to be able to go to meet those needs. That's basically what this is about in the community: meeting the needs of the women.

MS. MILLEY: We work with mental health teams. We work with the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre. We work with Coverdale. We work with Stepping Stone - actually,



that was a pilot project of the Elizabeth Fry Society many years ago, and then became an entity of its own.

Like I said, in one way, it's a very small community, and thank goodness for other not-for-profits because we all help each other out. When they have women who are in conflict with the law, they certainly send them to us, but like I said, we seem to be working a lot in the mental health sector, because women are committing crimes because of mental health, so it draws us into the picture.

MS. MCKENZIE: We've taken some training.

MS. MILLEY: We've taken training. We take all the training that is offered to us. We don't have a lot of funding for training.

MS. MCKENZIE: I can't go back to university and become a mental health professional, unfortunately.

MS. MILLEY: But like I said, our services are for women who are involved in the criminal justice system and those at risk. As Heather said, our whole being is to meet the needs of those women, and we do that. Our programs were all developed with the women at the table. Our services are all centred toward women. We have recently just had a change in our board of directors, so we're now working toward gaining more funding. I'm excited to be working with the new board; they're all busy people. That's another thing with not-for-profits - we have volunteer boards, and these people give selflessly, but people can only give so much.

MS. MCKENZIE: They're working, as well, they're working people.

MS. MILLEY: Yes, so that's another thing. Your support system is taxed, as well as your budget, but we've survived since 1982, and I can see us moving forward. We are having a fundraiser on May 1<sup>st</sup>. (Interruptions) Oh, excellent.

Like I said, thank goodness for the community and the churches - they provide a lot of the personal care items that Heather takes into the prison. And corporate is good, also, but when you're in a place where you have 40 people asking you for a donation, it's taxing on the whole community.

MS. MCKENZIE: We do have people in the community that - Siemens, for example, actually has adopted families from our women and their children. How many years now, in a row - three or four years in a row? Sometimes they've adopted up to five families and provided a Christmas for those families. We do the best we can in there too. Sometimes the banks do it and then they have other people they choose, but we do that as well. We try to provide that assistance for a woman, a single woman, say, for instance, say maybe she is going to school and she's really trying hard to make a difference in her own

life and making changes and has children and really just needs some really good support there to give her children a good Christmas, so we do those kinds of things.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know I've been watching the committee and there are a number of people who have questions. I'm wondering if we could move to questions at this point. I think we will start with Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for coming this morning. Just a few questions - you say you have five full-time staff and about 25 volunteers, is that correct?

MS. MILLEY: Relatively, yes.

MR. BAIN: If we look at the funding side of it, when you talk about Holly House, has there been funding from Community Services for the operation?

MS. MILLEY: No, we approached them but all they will do is they will pay the rent that a woman would normally get, but we don't get it - yes, so they do pay the rent.

MR. BAIN: Okay, so Our Thyme Café, what about Labour and Advanced Education, because it is programming?

MS. MILLEY: Yes, they provide a portion of the funding.

MR. BAIN: So the bulk of your funding comes from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

MS. MILLEY: Yes.

MR. BAIN: And also from, provincially, the Department of Justice and . . .

MS. MILLEY: And Correctional Services Canada.

MR. BAIN: If you looked at, percentage-wise, the provincial government in comparison to Corrections Canada, what percentage would come from Corrections Canada and what percentage would come from the province, towards your funding?

MS. MILLEY: Towards our funding - they're pretty balanced in what they give us.

MR. BAIN: I'm assuming that you're saying it's not enough from either.

MS. MILLEY: No, and the funding from them has not changed in 10 years. We get exactly the same funding that we got 10 years ago.

MR. BAIN: Our Thyme Café, you said - how many does that accommodate?

MS. MILLEY: Twelve women can be trained and the program runs twice a year, two 26-week programs.

MR. BAIN: Again Holly House - it's housing for how many?

MS. MILLEY: Eight.

MR. BAIN: Sorry, I should have written it down but that goes with the age, I think.

When we talk about Our Thyme Café and the skills training that takes place, do you keep track of the success that comes as a result of that skill?

MS. MILLEY: Yes, we have to have data.

MR. BAIN: So you report to the department on that?

MS. MILLEY: Yes.

MR. BAIN: Okay. And how successful would you say it is?

MS. MILLEY: It's very successful.

MS. MCKENZIE: It's like up in the 90s, isn't it?

MS. MILLEY: Yes, it's very successful. We have women - we now have employers calling the café and a couple of them weren't necessarily even in the hospitality industry, one was with a laundry service, and they called looking for our women.

The biggest reward for us is seeing the women getting a sense of self, like they've never been employed before. It's just wonderful. You see a woman come in there to start the program and she'll go, well, I don't want to do anything. I just want to clean, I just want to clean the café, and within a couple of weeks she's doing - she'll come in and I'll come in and she'll say, Jeanette, look at the banana loaf, I made this.

Our customers at the café are wonderful. The women will come in - and I mean I went in one day and one of the women, one of our participants, said they were social workers and they said I was so good - sometimes they don't have good experiences with social workers and people as they come through the system, and just to be seen and to realize that people are people and to me just watching them, so to speak, blossom and to be able to move on to other jobs, and we've employed a couple ourselves through the grants, we train them and then they do have a position at the café. We'd like to be able to hire more and, hopefully, someday we will, because it's a wonderful process to see the women come through.

I often say to the women - because it's a social enterprise - I'll say, well, when people ask you what you do, you can tell them that you own a café because this is what we do, so they'll laugh, because we own that café as a process that includes all our participants and all our customers, and us. It's a wonderful spot in the community. We're very open, people meet there, we have art hanging there from the Veith House Gallery - we try to incorporate all the communities and everybody is welcome.

MS. MCKENZIE: It's a real community involvement. It's taking things back to the community, that sense of community.

MS. MILLEY: And the food is excellent.

MR. BAIN: But is your training done by volunteers?

MS. MILLEY: No, we have Mary and Lynn, they are the program training coordinators. So they run the training program and the café in general; I oversee it and we have a floor supervisor and then the participants.

MS. MCKENZIE: Sometimes we have students there from the university . . .

MR. BAIN: Okay, they volunteer their time towards . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: We do a lot of that actually, yes.

MS. MILLEY: And it's volunteer, yes, and we've had volunteers go in and do a baking day with the women, and things like that.

MR. BAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Kent.

MS. BECKY KENT: Thank you very much for coming in. You know it's interesting as I sat here - Mr. Bain asked a few questions so that was really helpful to me - just seeing the dynamic of the change in the two of you just since you've been here. When you came in you wanted to deliver your information about what you do and even just your demeanour changed significantly when you started talking about the café. It seems to me that's the area that you have some great successes and great potential to really develop the resources that you're bringing to the women. You're already doing it, but I just wanted to give you that feedback because you could see the change in you as you talked about them, because the other is very - you know, when you first came in you talked about the challenges and the women you're serving and working with, et cetera.

So I just wanted you to have that feedback because you can see how it gave you energy and if that's giving you that energy, and you're not those that you're most trying to

tap into, I can just imagine the benefit that's offering to your women - so good for you and kudos to that.

We certainly, as a government, understand and value the importance and the services that you're offering; we really do. It's difficult, I know, to find the financial resources to support every program that's out there; I'm really pleased to hear that you are partnering - and the risk for our women and children out there, particularly those who are involved in some way or either the potential to go into that criminal justice system, which we want to not have that happen, or those that are incarcerated and you're looking to help them reintegrate back into the community.

There's a whole layer of partnering with women's shelters, the transition houses, the second stage housing and such. Am I hearing right that you are well tapped into those partners now, because it seems to me they are going to be key elements, particularly as I listen to you talk about those women that are incarcerated right now and have to come back out? Clearly those kinds of agencies would be a potential step for them if they are back in the community where they would normally reside - is that correct?

MS. MILLEY: Yes.

MS. KENT: You have those partnerships. One of the things that we want to do is invest strategically in areas where there are opportunities for the vulnerable sector, which are those you're talking about now, the women you're talking about now, and create opportunities for good jobs for them. Our Thyme Café really intrigues me - where exactly is that, is that in Dartmouth?

MS. MILLEY: It's at 98 Portland Street, across from the TD Bank.

MS. MCKENZIE: Right across from the TD.

MS. KENT: How long has that been there?

MS. MILLEY: We opened in December 2008.

MS. KENT: I understand you've had a few changes, and some of that's being resolved. I also understand there was a \$47,000 funding grant - was that from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education? A combination for training? Is that where that went?

MS. MILLEY: No, I don't know what monies you're referring to.

MS. KENT: You don't? Okay. For the café, you said there's Labour and Advanced Education funding, so what value of money would be coming there, and how is it being utilized in the café?

MS. MILLEY: It pays the salaries of the café workers and the stipends, and it pays a percentage of other things - the rent, the utilities.

MS. KENT: Is that each year?

MS. MILLEY: We have to apply every year, so it runs until the end of October of this year, and then we would reapply. Actually, we're in our second year. Before that it was the Department of Community Services that funded us at first.

MS. KENT: How long ago was that?

MS. MILLEY: When we first opened.

MS. KENT: Oh, the café, in 2008. How long was the United Way funding in place?

MS. MCKENZIE: Thirty years.

MS. KENT: That was actually one of my questions. How old is the Elizabeth Fry Society? Thirty years?

MS. MILLEY: It was in 1982 we came into being, and in 1984 we were incorporated.

MS. KENT: Did they give an understanding of how their framework changed, and why you suddenly don't fit?

MS. MILLEY: We applied under Opportunities, which is housing and employment skills, and I said, how don't we fit? Then they kind of alluded to having some concerns about stewardship.

At that point our board had changed; we had quite a turnover in our board, and we said that. For the governance of it we have one of the best people for governance in this city on our board, so we figured we had that - that we're moving forward with that. We've made a lot of changes even since, but they just . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: They also had a new way of . . .

MS. MILLEY: They had a new way of applying. There was a whole new way of applying this year, and people were struggling with it - other agencies, we met at tables. As I said, they also refused us a cessation grant, so that means they told us in February and we got our last cheque in March, so it was really traumatic for us. It was very traumatic.

But we've survived and we will survive. We're making all the changes that have to be made. Even though with what they said about if they did have concerns about

stewardship, we didn't lose any programs. Nothing changed. We are still providing all the services we were.

MS. MCKENZIE: We had an increase in clients.

MS. MILLEY: Yes. The staff were doing what they were supposed to do, and doing it well and doing it daily. There were no changes. That's their panel that decided that. The United Way has no appeal process, so you can't appeal, so we're without the funding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Regan.

MS. KELLY REGAN: I have a letter here that was sent out. I'll just pass it around and make sure that you folks each have a copy there. It is from Kim Pate to the head of the Parole Board of Canada.

One of the things I wanted to deal with, when I came to visit you, we discussed the problem of accessing - what's the word I'm looking for? I've just lost it - pardons. It's funny, because I heard about this again just the other day. I was watching, I think, News World, and the discussion was around accessing pardons after someone has been convicted of a crime. They come out and they want to reintegrate into society, and suddenly the cost of this has skyrocketed. It used to be, what, \$50?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, \$50, and I've helped a lot of people do the process, fill out the application. It's \$50 plus whatever it costs to get your fingerprints, that kind of thing, from the local police and also the RCMP. That also went up. Okay, so it's \$50 for the RCMP and another \$35 for the local police.

MS. REGAN: So we've gone to \$600 and something?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, \$631. First it went from \$50 to \$150, and then a year later it was suddenly - it has to be \$631 now.

MS. REGAN: And the explanation I heard from a Conservative Member of Parliament, on the television the other day, was that, well, this is what it costs to process that, and taxpayers shouldn't have to bear that cost . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: I don't believe that for five minutes.

MS. REGAN: . . . after having borne the cost, in theory, of incarcerating someone. So I'm just wondering, is that proving to be a barrier for women trying to get back?

MS. MCKENZIE: Totally, yes, it is, because the people that - and there are women right now who are getting an education at Nova Scotia Community College and they require a pardon. And so now they're going to have to come up against - who's paying for that?

MS. REGAN: And it seems to me that the point Kim makes in this letter, “As such, the proposed increase will effectively disproportionately impact, and therefore discriminate against, the poorest potential applicants.” If you’re rich, it’s easy to buy a pardon for \$600-and-some-odd; if you’re poor, that can be an insurmountable obstacle to getting on with your life and becoming a productive member of society.

MS. MCKENZIE: So, you know, you get out of prison, you’ve got to wait five to 10 years, depending on how much time you served, all kinds of things, and the charges. So you do that, well, you’re not going to have a lot of money, first of all. You’re going to try to get some training at something and then you’re going to come up against that barrier of coming up with the money. Who’s going to be doing that? It’s going to be people who are already in that position, and they don’t have any money.

MS. MILLEY: Well, you need a job for income and you need the pardon for a job.

MS. REGAN: Yes, it’s this vicious circle.

MS. MCKENZIE: So what do you do? It’s basically straighten up and fly right, as people are told, and people who are making changes in their lives and they’re trying to do that, they’re trying to make a difference in their life, turn their life around, walk a different road, well, they’re putting barricades up to that.

MS. REGAN: Do you know if Ms. Pate has heard back from the director of Corporate Services for the Parole Board of Canada, regarding this letter?

MS. MCKENZIE: I don’t know. Nicole might know that.

MS. MILLEY: She does the federal work.

MS. MCKENZIE: But I don’t know, I can’t answer that right now.

MS. REGAN: If I were to say to you, what’s the number-one thing that we could do that would make a big difference to women who are incarcerated, women who are at risk of incarceration, what would be the number-one thing that we could change about what we do that would make a big difference to women?

MS. MCKENZIE: Well, first of all, those changes have to take place in the community. They have to have access to services in the community, readily available access - for instance, with regard to mental health.

MS. REGAN: And what I’m hearing sort of woven throughout what you’ve said so far is that mental health is a massive issue for women who are in vulnerable populations.

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, it is, very much so. When you consider that 80-plus per cent of the women who are incarcerated have been sexually abused.



MS. MILLEY: And they have addictions.

MS. MCKENZIE: They have addictions because of these things. Some of these women have been sexually abused in their childhood by the people that were supposed to be giving them the love and the caring, like trusted people. They grow up, they never address those issues. They have all kinds of other things that happen as they go. There's sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional and mental abuse. You think about that. These are the reasons why women are developing mental health issues and addictions. Addictions are to try to deal with the internal pain. They're self-medicating.

MS. REGAN: I'm dealing with a lot of cases that have come my way, because I'm the Critic for Community Services, and in case after case, what I'm seeing is it's a young woman who has some mental health issues and she has a minor infraction with the law, and that just begins a downward spiral of dealings with the police and that kind of thing.

MS. MCKENZIE: A cycle.

MS. REGAN: I'm just wondering, because I have no knowledge, is there enough training for police in dealing with people with mental health issues? Is there enough training for prosecutors? Sometimes I think we're charging people who really should be getting mental health help and not going to prison.

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, I think that is true.

MS. MILLEY: There's never enough training, but they are making moves towards having police trained . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: The Mental Health Courts.

MS. MILLEY: . . . and the Mental Health Courts, but then again, the criteria for the Mental Health Courts keep people out.

MS. REGAN: In one case that I'm dealing with, some of the time she's in Mental Health Court, sometimes she's not, and that's confusing.

MS. MILLEY: Just by the luck of the draw, if you're accepted into - if your crime, at that time, fits . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: It's the criteria - it comes back to that again, and if it's not a psychological mental health disorder, you don't fit the criteria.

MS. REGAN: So you're saying that only the most serious - like schizophrenia or something, people are being diverted into the Mental Health Court for that, but for somebody who has a personality disorder, they're often not getting in?

MS. MCKENZIE: A borderline personality disorder is extreme mental health. I can't even begin to tell you how bad that is, but that is not a psychological mental health disorder, apparently. That's where you're going to get some really serious behaviour going on.

MS. REGAN: So with a drop in funding from the United Way, it looks like you're going to have to lay off staff. Is that what you're saying?

MS. MILLEY: We don't want to take anybody's position away, only as a last resort, but we'll probably reduce the hours so that we can all work and we can still provide the services.

MS. MCKENZIE: We can't cut back on these services. We have more and more clients every day, people that we've never seen before, ever, in the community.

MS. MILLEY: We had a location on Gottingen Street. The not-for-profit that we are renting from more than doubled our rent so we had to leave. That was a shame because we were very accessible to the women; it was a walk-in. They do come to Holly House, but it's in Dartmouth and that factors in transportation. We built up a lot of clientele when we were on Gottingen Street because we were accessible, and we pleaded with people - when we got the increase for the rent, we had already applied for funding so we couldn't even put the increase in there. Our rent was \$700, which was excellent for us, it made it affordable, but they were increasing it to \$1,500 per month and we just couldn't.

I'm glad we did because we weren't aware that we were going to get a decrease in United Way funding, so actually, I guess it was somewhat of a blessing in disguise because at least we had eliminated that expense. Like I said, we always try our best to keep our services intact. Sometimes that's to our own detriment, and thank goodness we have very passionate and committed staff who work well above and beyond, but you know that when you go into not-for-profit.

MS. REGAN: Were you one of the groups that were affected - the legal society had to cut a number of their grants, I know, for restorative justice - were you one of the organizations?

MS. MILLEY: No.

MS. REGAN: You weren't impacted by that, okay.

MS. MILLEY: No, our biggest impact was the United Way funding.

MS. REGAN: How much?

MS. MILLEY: It was \$55,000 so it's like a position and a half.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, I think we'll move to Mr. Orrell.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you for your presentation. I just have a few short questions, I guess. You talked about the change in the demographics of the women you are treating. From what age do you really start to see women in your society, and what age approximately do you . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: Oh, wow. From 18 to senior citizens in their 70s.

MR. ORRELL: So what happens to the people who are under 18, where do they - what services do they access?

MS. MCKENZIE: What happens if they're under 18?

MR. ORRELL: Yes.

MS. MCKENZIE: Phoenix Youth Society, Choices - there are a number, and we refer them.

MS. MILLEY: And we do some one-on-one. We have worked with some youth who were 16 to 18. We just can't open it up, because we don't have the resources or the money.

MR. ORRELL: So you say those demographics have gotten younger over the years that you've been around.

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, they have.

MS. MILLEY: Of the women incarcerated.

MR. ORRELL: Why do you see that? How do you see the changes, and what affects those changes? I guess that's the big question.

MS. MCKENZIE: Why do we think that's happening?

MR. ORRELL: Yes, why are they getting younger and younger?

MS. MCKENZIE: I think that the views of women are changing, and the ways that women - women are getting the message that they need to be stronger, they need to be self-empowered, and I think in some cases, in relationships where they have fought back, if they're standing, they were charged instead of the man. They were charged, and so I think women are just fighting back.

That's one reason. I'm not saying that's always the reason.

MS. MILLEY: No, and globally - people know things globally. Younger people learn things on the Internet. You can learn wonderful things on the Internet, but you can also learn how to commit crimes. It's that kind of thing that people see. Once it becomes popular on the Internet, if someone sees something on YouTube, then they - but like I said, I just think as Heather said, it's becoming more balanced in power in one way, but . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: But it is - and I agree with you that it is the violence. There's a lot of violence on television. I think that young people are desensitized because of that violence. You get the special effects and all those kinds of things in the movies; everybody's got a great big gun. It's all about that, and people think that's part of life or something.

MS. MILLEY: Yes, the desensitization.

MS. MCKENZIE: They accept that as normalized. They normalize it.

MS. MILLEY: A lot of women who are incarcerated at the provincial level don't even have new crimes. They just have - what do you . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: Conditional.

MS. MILLEY: When they're revoked.

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, and it's conditional. Maybe they violated a curfew, for instance.

MS. MILLEY: So they'll go back in, and there are no new charges. They might be in the system for three or four years just being picked up, because one of their conditions might be don't go near Gottingen Street. But if their family and friends are there, they're going to be there, right?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes. They violate a condition, and there could be conditions A, B, C, and D, right down through the whole alphabet on some of those conditions. If they're violated in any way, shape, or form - if they are supposed to be home, and there are circumstances sometimes that - I'm not saying the woman is always in the right, either. I'm not going to say that, we get that, but sometimes there are women who have children and they are tending to the children, so they stepped outside, where they shouldn't be. That has happened, and it gets corrected, but in the meantime the woman is in there away from the children, and it takes time. The justice system, the court system - it takes a while in the court system.

MS. MILLEY: But there are things like restorative justice, which is a benefit to our women, but then again that's the process of not all women - it just depends.

MS. MCKENZIE: We can't say don't do it, because we advocate for alternatives to imprisonment and least restrictive measures. If there is any - do every single thing first before you put somebody in prison and put them on that road, because that is not a road you want to be on.

MS. MILLEY: It just starts a cycle, and again we can refer to Ashley Smith, how somebody throwing a crab apple ended up being physically restrained in a prison cell with . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: And this is reality. You know, I've sat in a room with a young woman, 18 years old, who's crying because she wants her mother. That is very hard to deal with. I'm going to tell you, as a person who does this for a living, that is hard to do. It is hard to sit in a room and see that and to know that there were, maybe, so many other things that could have been done before you put this woman there.

I'm not saying that everybody just needs to get away with everything. We know that. We're not condemning or condoning here. We're just looking at this as the reality of the situation.

MS. MILLEY: The prevention at much younger ages - we're actually now applying for a grant through Crime Prevention and it addresses bullying in the schools and it starts with very young children, women, females, 4 years old to 11 years old, so upon looking at things, we were very interested in being able to start prevention and intervention at a very young age. If we are successful receiving this funding, it would address these children. As part of the process, each child - the classroom that they're in - the training would be taken into the whole classroom so it's a very exciting project.

MS. MCKENZIE: And working with the families as well.

MS. MILLEY: It's the SNAP program. I don't know if people have heard of it, so we're in the process of applying for it. We've got through a couple of stages but we still have a few more stages to go, so that would be a very exciting project for us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Orrell, do you have further questions?

MR. ORRELL: Yes, I do, if I could. Around the access to your programming, you say that there are people from the legal system and from Community Services, so if the police have a young female who is in trouble, in crime, and made the referral to you guys, is it part of their sentence or is it something that they refer to you to try to prevent it? Are they required to do the programming or required to see you, or do they have to make that judgment on their own?

MS. MILLEY: No, through the courts they mandate them to our programs, like Anger Management and Healthy Relationships.

MR. ORRELL: So on the prevention side, they're not quite there yet. Do they refer themselves or does the community . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: I've had the police call and refer women. They say, we have a woman here and . . .

MR. ORRELL: So they have to, on the prevention side, be willing to go on their own, I guess is a big thing. The courts mandate . . .

MS. MILLEY: None of our programs are mandatory. If they're mandated by the courts - and I will still say that, you're mandated by the courts, but everybody at our table is voluntary. The good thing is that a lot of times they'll mandate them for Anger Management and they'll be very - they come in, they're not happy, but when we work through the program, the next program which follows Anger Management is Healthy Relationships and about 90 per cent of them voluntarily sign up themselves.

MR. ORRELL: Okay, one more question. Now would you be able to use some of the clients, who went through the program already, as your volunteers to help other people through this system later?

MS. MILLEY: Yes, we do have speakers.

MR. ORRELL: So if I came through - not me, myself - but if you came through and you went through the program and you were successful and you straightened yourself out, you put yourself on the correct, proper road, would they come back later on and volunteer for you guys?

MS. MILLEY: Yes, and some have worked for us.

MS. MCKENZIE: And we hired them as employees.

MR. ORRELL: That's great, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Orrell. I think we'll go next to Ms. Raymond and then Mr. Burrill, who is the last person on my list at this moment. Ms. Raymond.

MS. MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you very much and I apologize for being late; I will be quick. A couple of questions - I have to say that your comments about the young women crying is certainly interesting because I lived for - well, close to 15 years my backyard was adjacent to a group home for adolescents. It was initially girls and then it was an interesting period of time where it was mixed, and then it went to boys. People would talk about the boys who were sort of throwing things and acting out in that way.

But I certainly found it far, far more difficult when the young women were there because you would just hear sobbing at two, three, four o'clock in the morning, and that was really . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: In prison they are that way as well.

MS. RAYMOND: Exactly. I've had, like Ms. Regan, a number of experiences with young women who have ended up either incarcerated or on the road to incarceration. I consider that my biggest victories have been those cases where eventually people, who have been kind of dancing on the margins of the law, have found themselves in the mental health system, the Mental Health Courts.

What I'm wondering is whether you have any ability to intervene or put your voices in for people, at the time when the decision is being made, as to whether somebody is going to be heard in the mental health system, in the Mental Health Courts, or not. These are really great victories because, particularly in the cases of severe behavioural disorders where people are constantly being rebuffed from the mental health system, it seems almost inevitable that they will end up in conflict with the law. But the Mental Health Courts seem to have some ability, so do you have a formal mechanism for advocating or intervening?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, we do.

MS. RAYMOND: Okay, how does that work?

MS. MCKENZIE: What we do is we get behind that, and Kim Pate has been involved in that as well and we . . .

MS. MILLEY: We can lend our voices but we don't . . .

MS. RAYMOND: So do you make representation at that stage? How does that work?

MS. MILLEY: Actually, we get more referrals from the Mental Health Court to our programs.

MS. RAYMOND: I'm sure you do, but I mean . . .

MS. MILLEY: We would advocate but we advocate with the mental health teams.

MS. RAYMOND: My understanding is that when the cases are going to the Mental Health Court system, it's often a case of representation being made by family members or almost anyone. I'm wondering if people are aware, or if you have been brought in to advocate at that stage, would you do so?

MS. MCKENZIE: We have done that. We're not saying that they're going to say, oh, Elizabeth Fry did this so we're doing this, but we have gone to court with women and sat in those courtrooms and we certainly advocate. We get there, we work with the lawyers. Kim Pate has been involved . . .

MS. MILLEY: But the Mental Health Court . . .

MS. RAYMOND: . . . the Mental Health Court system as opposed to the regular court system. Does anyone know to get in touch with Elizabeth Fry at that point?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, they do. We try . . .

MS. RAYMOND: You try to have them find you or you try . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: We try to support the woman to be actually heard in the Mental Health Court.

MS. RAYMOND: Right. I mean obviously there are times when it's not appropriate.

MS. MILLEY: They do know because they send people to us and several times we have been asked to . . .

MS. RAYMOND: Who sends people to you?

MS. MILLEY: The Mental Health Court, as part of their . . .

MS. RAYMOND: If they've been heard in the Mental Health Court system.

MS. MILLEY: If they've been there already, yes.

MS. RAYMOND: Okay.

[10:07 a.m. Ms. Becky Kent took the Chair.]

MS. MILLEY: So that could be part of what results from the Mental Health Court, that they have to come and take . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: When they go through it.

MS. RAYMOND: But would you be in a position to make representation . . .

MS. MILLEY: If we were asked, we certainly would, yes.

MS. RAYMOND: Thank you very much.



MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Burrill.

MR. GARY BURRILL: Thanks for all of these explanations. I just wanted to go back to what you were speaking about earlier about the increasing tendency for people, whose primary problem is mental illness, to end up incarcerated. I'm pretty sure that you wouldn't have to convince any of us here that this is a fundamentally irrational way of running a justice system, not to speak of being ineffective. There's lots of evidence, not only your own, that the incarceration of people whose primary problem is mental illness is something that has really increased in recent years.

Quite a number of people, who are a lot more knowledgeable about this than I am, say that one of the main reasons for this increase in this irrational way of dealing with mental illness is the new Criminal Code provisions having to do with mandatory minimum sentencing. I was wondering, does your experience give you any sense about whether or not this is the case?

[10:09 a.m. Mr. Jim Morton resumed the Chair.]

MS. MCKENZIE: With the mandatory minimum sentencing, it's definitely starting to take an effect, both provincially and federally. The provincial institution right now is starting to fill up. When that reaches capacity, I don't know what - are we going to build another prison? This is the thing and it's the same thing in the federal system, they are getting to capacity as well.

MS. MILLEY: We're lucky - not lucky, I guess - that Truro is one of only a few federal institutions that aren't double-bunking across the country. The prisons are so filled up they're double-bunking prisoners. Our national executive director, Kim Pate, who is very, very knowledgeable and very in tune, is always working on that aspect, and also the mental health piece. She works tirelessly around there. But the prisons are filling up, and it's the result of . . .

MS. MCKENZIE: It is starting to show - it's not done yet. It's going to get very, very bad, and we're going to see some things here. It's going to be a mess.

MS. MILLEY: Because the newest ones are not going to be able to be released. There's going to be no early release. There's going to be no - even going to the parole board. Everything is changing.

MS. MCKENZIE: Well, they're tying the hands of a judge. I mean, a judge who has experience and the knowledge and the objectivity to be able to - you know, he has the Criminal Code. He knows he had a certain amount of sway, and he could make an objective decision. Well, now the government is tying the hands of a judge. I think that's a crime.

MR. BURRILL: Of course it is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Churchill - who may be our last questioner.

MR. ORRELL: Always have to get the last word in.

MR. ZACH CHURCHILL: I've got to, man. I've got to try my best.

In terms of access to legal aid, have your clients indicated that the access is good when they need it?

MS. MCKENZIE: What's happening there is that they get the access to legal aid. However, there are lengthy periods of time before they're actually able to get an appointment, and the courts - the lengthy periods of time that they're being tried and the remands and everything, it's just . . .

MS. MILLEY: As they're waiting for legal representation.

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, the length of time is increasing, and that's not a good thing. You're supposed to have a speedy trial by law, and that's a barrier there. That's creating barriers there. But yes, they are able to get the legal aid lawyers. It's just that they need to have more legal aid lawyers. There aren't enough.

MR. CHURCHILL: The volume of clients who go to legal aid is too high for them to deal with.

MS. MCKENZIE: Right. I think it's just too hard with the amount of lawyers they have. I think they're expecting an awful lot from the amount that they have.

MS. MILLEY: We do referrals to the Legal Information Society which is working at putting things in place - putting in place a user-friendly access to a legal information site that is not - I don't know if it's up and running yet. They were just developing it.

MS. MCKENZIE: They're going to advertise it. It hasn't hit the media yet.

MS. MILLEY: So those are the kinds of things that help. They'll give them a half-hour consultation. But like I said, when you're poor, your legal representation is you get what you get when you get it.

I shouldn't say that, because legal aid lawyers are wonderful lawyers. It's just the time frames.

MS. MCKENZIE: Right. But what we are seeing is - I'm seeing more and more people in the community who don't have access to a lawyer because they don't qualify according to legal aid criteria. They are making a little more than they need to be making, I guess, in order to get a lawyer.

MR. CHURCHILL: Slightly more, marginally more.

MS. MCKENZIE: Right.

MS. MILLEY: I think it's \$13,000, isn't it, for legal aid?

MS. MCKENZIE: Yes, really. So what we have there - and this is happening more and more often. People who have never been in conflict with the law ever are put in a position where they actually have to now go defend themselves in a court of law, because they don't qualify for legal aid and they can't afford a lawyer, they just can't. We're talking about senior citizens who this has happened to, who have never been in conflict in their life, and they're standing and they don't know what to do. In some cases they were innocent, okay? So they may be in a position where they may have to say they aren't innocent in order to get Adult Diversion, so they can get out of the court system. They need to get out of there, because their families don't even know what's going on with them. This has happened to them. It's a one-time thing. It never happens again, and it didn't.

MS. MILLEY: As we said - we saw it with younger women, but we saw an increase in older women. A lot of it was as a result of gambling: VLT machines and fraud, theft and fraud. They might be in their 60s and 70s and never had a criminal act before. So they come into the system and they're shocked. They're in debt, but they don't have access to the legal system because they say they have too much.

MS. MCKENZIE: It's really troubling. It's very, very troubling and sometimes what I'll do is I will go with them and talk to a Crown Prosecutor and say, what do you want here? And I find that then we're sitting there and I'm like, I'm not a lawyer. What am I doing? I'm just trying to help. (Interruption) We do, we even get in there and try to do that.

MS. MILLEY: We do have some - we had to have a chuckle over it actually. Two senior citizen ladies who were charged, their restorative justice thing was to bake cookies and take them to the IWK. But this just shows they're not criminals. It's a criminal behaviour that is the result of another behaviour.

MS. MCKENZIE: They may not be able to afford things like aspirin for their arthritis because they are on a limited income.

MS. MILLEY: Yes, the other thing with seniors is shoplifting, trying to pick up their dental stuff so they can afford to buy milk and meat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Churchill, you have a final question, I think.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes. Thank you for that. That was very insightful. In terms of when women who are incarcerated are transitioning back into communities, are there suitable options for them for housing?

MS. MCKENZIE: No.

MS. MILLEY: No, we were just talking about that this morning, actually.

MS. MCKENZIE: High-crime areas - the rents, even then, are not really - there are many times, even in the high-crime areas where they are actually in the areas they shouldn't go to because there are too many triggers for them.

MS. MILLEY: The only rents they can afford through the Department of Community Services are those places. And I mean we have had women who lived in boarding houses that are just terrible and we'll say, well, we can work with you, but they will not speak up because they say look, as bad as it is, I have someplace. So no, there's not enough affordable housing, not enough safe, affordable housing because these women have to take their children into areas where there's high crime and they are subjected there themselves. If you are a woman who has been incarcerated and released, you know it's not an optimal place to go back to a high-crime area.

MS. MCKENZIE: So I think what has to happen, that maybe the government needs to get behind, is to have safe, affordable housing, and in safer areas.

MS. MILLEY: When we opened Holly House, we had women who walked in there and walked into the rooms, because through SCPI, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, we got the house and we did it and we had women who walked into the room. It was heartbreaking, it would make me cry. They cried and said, I never had a bed and a dresser that matched before. They were just so appreciative of that.

MS. MCKENZIE: It's clean, it's safe.

MS. MILLEY: It's clean and it's safe, and they're so appreciative. They sat on their beds and just looked around and they just were in awe. For someone to say, I've never had a bed and a dresser and a night table that all matched - they were so excited about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Churchill. Ms. Regan has a final quick question.

MS. REGAN: It looks like your work is mostly here in metro, but do you do outreach throughout the province?

MS. MILLEY: We're mainland Nova Scotia, E. Fry Mainland, and we have a sister agency in Cape Breton. We have a toll-free number, so we do what we can. We did a training program. The last executive director and myself had a grant from the Law Foundation. We went around the province and we trained trainers to do our programs, our personal development programs, and we have good contact with the Tri-County Women's Centre and Third Place in Truro. We developed them and they're ongoing, so we know we can refer women and we know we can call these places and get help along the way.

MS. MCKENZIE: They do call. They call us from the rural areas because out at the correctional centre, the women are coming from there. They're coming from all over Nova Scotia.

MS. MILLEY: So we do try to do as much service as we can by hooking people into the right services. You know, we've always had a dream of having some satellite offices at some point in the game, or to have some funding that we could travel, so hopefully it will come.

MS. REGAN: So that funding doesn't exist anymore? That was from the Law Society - was it like a one-time deal?

MS. MILLEY: That was one-time funding, and actually our Law Foundation money got cut a couple of thousand dollars and only because their money is from the interest on the money they hold, so not because - and the Law Foundation, of course, because of the work that we do and who they are, they have been such tremendous support to us, so when they have extra money they offer it to us.

MS. REGAN: Yes, we have heard about that at this committee before, that there were a lot of organizations that had much bigger cuts than several thousand dollars.

MS. MILLEY: Yes.

MS. REGAN: But there is no provincial funding for that kind of thing or anything?

MS. MCKENZIE: Not that we know of, unless the government wants to make it available, for sure.

MS. MILLEY: We're always searching out but, again, it's very difficult because there's only X amount of dollars and there are so many agencies that are in dire need. I mean, we have great respect for all the not-for-profits in the area; we help each other out as much as we can. But the sad part is that sometimes we're pitted against each other for funding.

MS. REGAN: So it's almost an adversarial . . .

MS. MILLEY: No, it never gets to that because we respect each other.

MS. REGAN: Not so much adversarial, but . . .

MS. MILLEY: We commiserate, I think, in misery.

MS. REGAN: . . . the thing is that yes, you know if organization X gets money then that may mean that organization Y doesn't.

MS. MILLEY: Yes.

MS. MCKENZIE: Or sometimes what we do, too, is we have partnerships: we partner, and we will provide some services and they do. That was limited funding, though.

MS. MILLEY: And we are unique because there are not a whole lot of agencies that work with women involved in the criminal justice system, and now we've really opened up with the house and the café, and really it has been very good to us because people now actively see the preventive side.

When I started at E. Fry 12 years ago and I said, well, I'm working with the Elizabeth Fry Society, they'd say oh, that's the prison women. But now I'm just as likely to hear, oh, that's Holly House or that's the café. So it really gave us that option that made us a little bit friendlier because that counts a lot in fundraising. We've actually had people say I'm not buying a ticket for women in prison, because that's the social attitude - right? Now the house and the café really opened us to the public so people can see our preventive ways in action.

MS. REGAN: I would like to encourage the other members to actually visit the café. There's a meeting room in the back and you can hold meetings there if you'd like, lunch meetings - and it's good food.

MS. MILLEY: We do catering, so we can cater if anyone is having a meeting. It's at [www.ourthymecafe.biz](http://www.ourthymecafe.biz), and the menus are there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that final question, Ms. Regan. I'm concerned a little bit about time because I know members on our side have an unexpected meeting scheduled that many people want to be at.

Ms. Milley, is there a final word that you would like to make before we wrap up?

MS. MILLEY: I would just like to thank the committee for inviting us here. I would apologize again for our lateness, we do apologize for that.

My last word is that we always love the opportunity to speak to people, to let people know what we do and to make people aware of what we do and the good that we bring to the community, and also to show the goodness of the women we serve.

MS. MCKENZIE: To be very honest, I'd like to say that I know my co-workers and myself feel very honoured to be able to work with the women and serve these women, and just maybe be a small part in helping them get some of their needs met.

MS. MILLEY: And the rewards are many.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you both for being here and thank the committee members for all their questions. I know that sitting here myself, I have this personal experience of having been raised in a household with a grandmother whose name was Flossie Nauss, who made it a regular practice to visit the jails in our area and often invited people into our house as part of their own transition. So as you were telling your stories - I'm getting pretty elderly - I was thinking that a lot of things in the world still haven't changed and we've still got a lot of work to do.

I was also reminded, I guess, as I was listening to you - I don't know how much this was mentioned this morning - this government has done a great deal of work in setting some foundations for a mental health and addictions services strategy and is at the beginning of developing a housing strategy. I think those things are hugely important, and I think you were validating the direction of that work in your conversations. I'm really pleased that you were here to evoke some memories for me personally, but certainly we're all grateful for the work that you do.

The other thing I will say before we end is that I think we'll all consider ourselves invited to the Humble Lunch Fundraiser in early May - on May 1<sup>st</sup>, in fact, if anybody can make it.

MS. MILLEY: On May Day, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, and thank you all for being here today.

MS. MILLEY: Thank you again, we appreciate it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As there is no other business on our agenda, I will declare the meeting adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:25 a.m.]