

**Wheatland Communities Crisis Society, Box 2162, Strathmore, AB T1P 1K2  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SHELTER VOLUNTEERS BETRAYED**

It's the last place you would expect abuse to occur. The WCCS shelter in Strathmore is a crisis shelter for men, women and children experiencing abuse or crisis. The volunteers, with the community, have raised in excess of \$300,000 over the past 3 years to keep operational. This \$300,000 represents thousands of volunteers hours - volunteers who are now feeling spurned. They were led to believe that after proving community support and initiative, and the obvious need for a shelter for victims of violence, that the provincial government would support this shelter.

After repeated approaches to all levels of government, individuals, and committees, the provincial government has chosen to provide less than minimal support. Of the annual \$7.3 million allotted for shelters in Alberta this shelter at Strathmore received less than 1%. In fact, this is the only emergency shelter in Alberta which **DOES NOT** receive core funding from the government. As a result, our community has donated beyond its capacity; the corporate sector has given its fair share; our volunteers are exhausted from fundraising. We have no more to give: our situation is unsustainable. Closure is imminent.

In addition to providing safety, the shelter provides the community with education and prevention, a 24-hour crisis line, highly trained and skilled workers in crisis and suicide intervention, counselling, awareness of family violence issues, support, and outreach. Shelter workers go into the community making presentations at schools and community groups to increase awareness of the effects of family violence.

Without funding we lose the programme, the facility, the staff, the board of directors, the volunteers, and the community. At a time when the government is stressing community resources, integrated partnership, and family violence prevention, the loss of a programme such as the shelter at Strathmore is irretrievable.

**For further information contact**

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**Ralph Bodor, Vice Chair; 936-5973; Lorraine Thiessen, Past Chair, 934-4557.**