



Organisation pour la Sauvegarde des Droits des Enfants Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights

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For immediate release

Family Tragedy in Ottenburn Park Could it have been prevented?

Montreal, July 24th, 2003 – Once again, this morning, the media reported that a father who could not accept an impending breakup with his wife shot her and their two daughters aged 12 and 15 before killing himself.

What pushes a parent to do such a terrible thing? Is this the act of a parent who does not love his children or are these unwanted effects of a culture that promotes conflict rather than preventing it? Murder and suicide are acts of desperation committed by a person who believes he has lost everything or is about to lose everything, who does not know where to turn for help and who has lost the capacity to have a balanced view of things and situations.

On this account, it is legitimate to ask ourselves what we could have done collectively to provide support to that desperate person and prevent such a tragedy. At present, couples going through a crisis lack information about or simply don't have access to the tools and resources they need to resolve their differences pacifically and assume their responsibilities towards their children's well-being. While the legal system, with its astronomical costs and drawn out adversarial process, more often than not further compounds what is already a highly charged and painful situation.

« For many years, the **Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights (OPCR)** has been urging various government instances to put into action the main recommendations ensuing from the numerous research projects and international conferences it has conducted on the situation of the family in Canada and in other parts of the world », says **Mr. Riccardo Di Done**, President and Founder of the charitable organization. « Free and compulsory family mediation, the creation of a specialized court to deal with family conflicts, the creation of courses at the elementary and secondary level in order to educate and sensitize students about parental responsibilities as well as the institution of a system of reconciliation for couples in difficulty are some of the integrated measures advocated by the OPCR which, had they been implemented, could have helped prevent such a dreadful tragedy », emphasizes **Mr. Di Done**.

It is our collective responsibility to provide parents with the appropriate incentives and tools to make the best choices for the sake of their children, themselves and all other family members. How many more innocent victims can we tolerate before taking action?

FOR THE LOVE OF OUR CHILDREN!

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Information: Pascal Fischer
(514) 593-4303
pfischer@osde.ca

Siège social/Head Office
Riccardo Di Done
5167, Jean-Talon est, # 370
St-Léonard, Qc
H1S 1K8
Tél.: (514) 593-4303
Fax: (514) 593-4659

Québec
Riccardo Di Done
2360, Chemin Ste-Foy, # 450
Sainte-Foy, Qc
G1V 4H2
Tél.: (418) 650-2105
Fax: (418) 650-2164

Alberta
Dr. Arthur Neumann
300 Lausage Center
10140, 117^{eme} sud
Edmonton, Alta
T5K 1X3
Tél.: (780) 488-1199
Fax: (780) 488-3755

Colombie-Britannique
Me Peter Allik-Petersenn
205-141 rue Victoria
Kamloops, C.B.
V2C 1Z5
Tél.: (250) 828-9545
Fax: (250) 828-1297

Site Internet/Web Site
www.osde.ca
Courriel/email
Info@osde.ca

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