

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I'd like to highlight the contributions of the John Howard Society to the criminal justice system in the Northwest Territories. Incorporated in 1992, as a member of the John Howard Society of Canada, the John Howard Society based in Yellowknife is a volunteer organization that promotes just, effective and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime.

Volunteers at the John Howard Society take an active role in community justice initiatives by offering 3 core programs:

Fine Options and Community Service gives youth and adults the option of settling fines through unpaid, supervised community service work hosted by local, non-profit service organizations. This is a productive alternative to serving jail time for not paying fines.

With the cooperation of the RCMP, the federal and territorial Justice Departments, the John Howard Society offers the Community Justice Program; a restorative justice program that works with individuals to resolve the affects of their behaviour outside of the criminal justice system. The program currently aims to handle 8 hearings a month, but the RCMP has publicly stated that the potential for a caseload of 50 hearings a month if the Society had the resources to meet this demand.

Combined with a Healthy Snack Program, the John Howard Society runs Judo programs which promote crime prevention through healthy lifestyle, self-respect, and positive peer relationships.

The John Howard Society co-facilitates the Dads After Divorce and Separation program at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Sessions cover problem solving, relationships, parenting, distorted beliefs, lifestyle balance, and anger management, grief and loss. These are vital areas of sound mental health and this program helps to prevent further family difficulties and crime.

In addition, the Society hosts weekly meetings of the Dad's North Association. Dads North's was formed to empower individuals to establish and maintain healthy domestic lifestyles by providing guidance and understanding in safe, unprejudiced environment to people who experience emotional trauma and financial hardship following divorce.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the effects of crime on our communities are clear to all of us. They are costly and have lasting impacts on our people, particularly our youth. I believe it's important to take this opportunity to applaud the John Howard Society for addressing these issues, and the hard work of their dedicated volunteers and staff.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.