

Advocate for Children and Youth Wants to Raise Awareness on the Issue of Youth Homelessness

SASKATOON—Corey O'Soup, Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth, is showing his support to the *5 Days for the Homeless* campaign which aims to educate, support, and spread awareness on how the issue of homelessness impacts our communities. *The 5 Days for the Homeless campaign* is occurring at several universities across the country. Both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina have selected a local organization to support and are running their campaigns this week. While O'Soup will be taking part by spending a night sleeping outdoors with the Saskatoon participants, his main focus is to raise awareness on the issue. "Our young people should not be living on the streets, in a country as prosperous as ours, we need to ensure all children and youth are taken care of. As the Advocate for Children and Youth in Saskatchewan, I want to help these young people any way I can, whether it is using my voice, or helping youth use theirs, we all need to understand that the issue of homelessness affecting youth in this province is a serious one," said O'Soup.

O'Soup stated "All children and youth in Saskatchewan are entitled to those rights defined by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*. In this case, Article 27 speaks directly to a child's right to housing, to an adequate standard of living, and to the conditions of living necessary to the child's development."

The most recent *Point-In-Time Homelessness Count (2015)* done in Saskatoon reported 45 children under the age of 18 that were considered homeless in 2015. A similar report, *The Regina 2015 Homeless Count (2015)* showed Regina having 63 children considered homeless in that same year. "We have a responsibility to our children and youth to provide the resources they need to help them reach their fullest potential. This is a duty of the government, of the communities, and of the parents and families and one day it will be the duty of these young people as they will be responsible for the generations to come."

Between March and April 2018, over 60 communities across Canada will be coordinating another *Point In Time Homeless Count*. On April 18, 2018, the Saskatoon Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP), will be conducting one in Saskatoon. For more information on *5 Days for the Homeless*, visit www.5days.ca or to learn more about SHIP visit www.shipweb.ca.

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. He 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.

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