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Memo #17

Date: November 27, 2017

To: Executive/Members

Re: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is commemorated in Canada each year on December 6. On this day in 1989, 14 young women were murdered in a tragic act of gender violence at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. This is known as the Montreal Massacre and the anniversary is marked across the nation by vigils, discussions and prayer. This day reminds us to consider the women and girls for whom violence is an everyday reality and to remember those who have died because of gender based violence.

One way to take concrete action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls is to raise awareness in our classrooms and schools. On behalf of the OECTA Status of Women Committee we invite you to share this information with your school representatives so they may encourage participation in this action. On December 6, it is encouraged that you include school announcements and prayers that address gender violence. For your convenience, a sample announcement and prayer for Elementary schools is included at the bottom of this memo. As well, on the OECTA website you will find *We Remember Through Action*, a commemorative resource guide for intermediate and senior grades, which provides ideas and links to classroom resources for teachers to facilitate problem solving and discussion in the classroom at <http://www.catholicteachers.ca/For-Your-Classroom/Curriculum-Resources/Other>

We also invite you to participate in the YWCA Rose Campaign. Ways of participating in this campaign are numerous: You can order buttons, posters, bookmarks, videos; you can send a message to your MP encouraging him/her to take action; you can participate in “Light the Night” on December 6, and light your school/unit office with red lights on December 6. Information about all the different aspects of the campaign, including ordering materials, can be found at <http://ywcacanada.ca/en/pages/rose/about>.

Key Facts

In Canada:

- Violence against women is the world's largest and most persistent human rights violation, and Canada is no exception.
- Women are more likely than men to be the victims of the most severe forms of intimate partner abuse, including spousal homicide, sexual assault and stalking.
- Over 50% of Canadian women will experience an incident of violence at some point in their lives, the majority before they turn 25.
- In half of the cases of intimate partner violence against women that were witnessed by children, the woman feared for her life.
- The devastating count of missing and murdered Aboriginal women points to a deep-seated gendered and racialized violence in our culture.
- Violence against women costs over \$4 billion per year including direct medical costs along with those of criminal justice, social services, and lost productivity.

What You Can Do to Take Action on Violence Against Women:

- Speak up about violence in your community.
- Go to <http://ywcacanada.ca/en/pages/rose/about> and wear the Rose button.
- Encourage people who commit violence to get help.
- Teach girls to protect and empower themselves.
- Raise children who can resolve conflict without violence.
- Make sure your home, workplace, and community are safe for women and girls.
- Speak out against negative media images of women and girls.
- Promote women's economic and political equality.

ELEMENTARY - Sample Announcement and Prayer

December 6th is Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. No one regardless of gender should be a victim of violence. Everyone deserves to be able to go to school and live in a community, free from harm. This December 6th remember those who have been victims and pray for an end to violence.

God of life, today we stop and remember women and girls who are suffering from harm and abuse. We pray for open hearts and minds to support women and girls. Help us to offer hope to one another and to act to end violence against women. Help us to bring about a world where women and men – boys and girls are able to love and to be loved. Amen.

**If you have any concerns, please contact the Unit office at 705-733-9625 or 1 800 558 4815
Thank you for sharing this information with OECTA members.**