

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CAMPAIGN 2000**  
**END CHILD & FAMILY**  
**POVERTY**  
**MANITOBA**

Campaign 2000 is a national coalition that monitors progress and setbacks to end child and family poverty in Canada. It was initially formed to hold the federal government to its 1989 unanimous motion in the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.

*Manitoba: Poverty Central* is focused on the situation in Manitoba. Manitoba is once again the province with the highest rates of child poverty. Our last report, *Broken Promise Stolen Futures* noted that at the rate we were ‘progressing’ from 1989 to 2017, it would take 697.5 years to end child poverty in Manitoba. With the latest available data, 2018, we are now looking at 1,179 years of Manitoba’s children and their families having to do without what they need and deserve.

“In 1989 a commitment was made in the House of Commons to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. It is a great disappointment that 31 years has passed and we are still dealing with the rooted issue of child poverty. According to the UNICEF Report 16 (2020), Canada ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 38 for the wellbeing of children and youth in high income countries. First Nations children are still the most marginalized, with the poverty rate for children living on-reserve being three times the national rate. For First Nations children in Manitoba, 47% live in poverty. In order to improve the wellbeing of First Nations children and to ensure their basic needs such as food and shelter are met, Canada needs to work with First Nation leaders to implement First Nation-led solutions.” **Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

“It is more than time we make poverty the problem and not the people trapped in it. If we truly cared about caring for our most vulnerable, we would not be seeing this disturbing rise in child poverty rates. We have to remember, this is 2018 data. The most up to date but how much worse has the 2020 pandemic made it for far too many Manitoba families?” **Kate Kehler, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg**

“Due to COVID-19, the number of Manitoba families needing food support increased dramatically with each wave of the pandemic. To help stem the tide of child hunger, we operated a community food truck in 5 high needs, urban and 3 First Nations communities, providing Breakfast2Go food kits to hungry, vulnerable children. We also worked closely with the Winnipeg School Division to provide Harvest Hampers and baby kits to identified families, struggling to provide meals to their children. A province-wide school breakfast program to improve the health and academic outcomes of Manitoba’s children and their families in the future remains one of our top priorities.” **Keren Taylor-Hughes, CEO, Harvest Manitoba**

“We are involved in educating social workers for practice in Manitoba and elsewhere. Our graduates are deeply engaged in working with families and children to promote healing and renewal from the demonstrated effects of poverty. These include compromised physical and mental health, developmental anomalies, decreased educational attainment and an increased risk of child maltreatment and risky adolescent behaviours. Our graduates are also educated in advocating for economic and social policy to eradicate poverty and to undertake this advocacy in alliance with people living in poverty.” **Michael Yellowbird, Dean of Social Work, University of Manitoba**

“Poverty traumatizes children and their families. It demoralizes, depresses and despairs. It creates shame, stigma and none of it is warranted. It is unjust and unworthy of us all. Let’s gang up and kick it to the curb.” **Phil Chiappetta, Executive Director, Rossbrook House**

“Between November 25 and December 1, 2020; Oyate Tipi Cumin1 Yape (Winnipeg’s Furniture Bank) received 41 requests for beds: 28 of those requests were beds for children, and of these beds, 11 were for children under the age of 2. Unfortunately, demand outstripped Oyate Tipi’s resources and only bed requests for children were able to be filled. Women and men cannot parent or work when they cannot get a good night’s sleep. No child should sleep on the floor, but neither should their parents. It’s time to address the structural and societal inequities which contribute to the cycle of poverty.” **Alexandra Béasse, Executive Director, Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape Inc.**

“Manitoba has a large structural child poverty problem ingrained in our economy and welfare state. The rate in 2018 is only .7 percentage points below the 1989 rate. With this level of progress it would take another 1, 179 years to eliminate child poverty in Manitoba. To end this chronic nightmare we need changes in the labour market to make work pay, in public services to provide decent affordable housing and accessible high quality child care and in income supports so that those on Employment and Income Assistance do not live in legislated poverty.” **Sid Frankel, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Campaign 2000 National Steering Committee**

"Advocates for basic income are motivated by their desire to eliminate poverty. To note that for another year we have failed so many of our children is an immoral scandal."  
**Paul Walsh, Chair, Basic Income Manitoba**

"Manitoba has seen a troubling trend in recent months of increased houselessness, illnesses among marginalized Winnipeggers not seen in decades, greater precarity for low-income workers, and disproportionate health, social, and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report shows that almost 1 in 3 (31.9%) of kids under the age of 6 lives in poverty. We need urgent action to avoid an even greater humanitarian and poverty crisis in Manitoba, such as fully exempting federal COVID benefits from EIA claw backs, increasing EIA allowances, and reinstating the provincial eviction ban during the pandemic. Further, we need comprehensive poverty reduction strategies, with reliable measurement and bold targets and timelines, as well as important policy, interventions such as livable incomes, quality public childcare, community-based mental health services, social and affordable housing options, and community economic development initiatives. This would help ensure families, parents, children, and all community members would not just survive, but thrive.” **Michael Barkman, Chair, Make Poverty History Manitoba**

“Now more than ever, we need the provision of universal, high quality, public system of child care. If we are serious about tackling the effects of this pandemic and the ever-increasing rates of child poverty we need to provide the services required to lift parents over the welfare wall, which means access to universal, affordable, accessible and high quality child care. As repeatedly demonstrated in studies of the Quebec model, a universal, public model of child care can increase women’s participation in the workforce, reduce child poverty and ensure the well-being of children.” - **Brianne Goertzen, Board member of Child Care Now and Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.**

“One of the indicators of a just and equal society is the children position on the list of its priorities. The newcomer children’s hope is that Canada would offer them a well-established reality that eventually enable them to build the future of our society in a progressive and fair way. Poverty, if left undealt with, is one of the biggest barriers to the integration process for newcomers in Canada.” **Hani Ataan Al-ubeady, Director Immigration Partnership Winnipeg**

The report not only details the data but provides through lived experiences stories, what the numbers actually mean in real life. It also once again highlights the importance of true alignment between all levels of government to ensure that what one level does, another does not undo.. For example, the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit is meant to benefit families with children. In Manitoba, the CCB continues to be collected in general revenue by the province for all children in Child and Family Services. This practice only began in 2006 and there has been a subsequent dramatic increase in children taken into care from 6,000 to 11,000.

"A state of emergency has been declared across the province due to COVID-19 but the fact is that too many kids and their families have already been in such a state for far too long. Our provincial government is absorbing federal funding meant to go directly to kids and families affected by CFS - this keeps those kids in care, and those dollars going into Manitoba's general revenue. We need every level of government to work together, stop pointing fingers and commit to sustained and conscious systemic actions so kids don't ever have be hurting and hungry again." - **Michael Redhead Champagne, Community Organizer**

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To arrange interviews with other potential speakers, please contact Kate Kehler at 204-590-8932 or [kkehler@spcw.mb.ca](mailto:kkehler@spcw.mb.ca) and/or contact the below directly

Sid Frankel, Associate Professor, Member of National Campaign 2000 Steering Committee, 204-261-3749, [Sid.Frankel@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Sid.Frankel@umanitoba.ca)

Stacia Franz, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (204) 292-1504.

Michael Redhead Champagne, Community Organizer, twitter @northendmc, [mc@michaelredheadchampagne.com](mailto:mc@michaelredheadchampagne.com)

Kiersten Haight, Communications, Winnipeg Harvest, 204-229-9660, [e.kiersten@winnipeg Harvest.org](mailto:e.kiersten@winnipeg Harvest.org)

Brianne Goertzen, Child Care Now and Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, 204-955-6782, [briannegoertzen@gmail.com](mailto:briannegoertzen@gmail.com)