

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03-07-99-
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 5 February 1999

TO/DEST. Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Co-ordinator

SUBJECT/OBJET **WORK AND FAMILY NETWORK OF OTTAWA-CARLETON**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

For Committee discussion.

BACKGROUND

The Committee Chair, Councillor A. Munter, has directed that the attached documentation, provided by the Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton, be placed on the agenda for discussion.

This material is respectfully submitted.

Approved by
M. J. Beauregard

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Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton • le Réseau travail-famille d'Ottawa-Carleton

January 29, 1999

Mr. Alex Munter
Chair, Community Services Committee
Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
111 Lisgar Street

Dear Mr. Munter:

On behalf of the Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton, we would like to request an opportunity to address the Regional Community Services Committee at its next open session on February 18th.

Stress arising from the increasingly complex and often conflicting mix of responsibilities at home and on the job would be the focus of our presentation. It would include a menu of initiatives that would position the Region as a leader in tackling this growing problem. Taken together, we believe the Work and Family program we wish to propose will add to Ottawa-Carleton's quality of life and give rise to new social and economic benefits.

By way of introduction, the **Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton** is a voluntary, community-based, association of members from the public, private and community sectors. The Network's mission is to advance the issue of work and family balance in the Ottawa-Carleton community. Established in 1992, the Network hosts quarterly community forums on a range of work and family issues, for example, elder care, child care, corporate involvement in work and family and the latest research on the changing workplace and practices which address the issue of work and family. The RMOC Health Department is an active, founding member of the Network. The Network also distributes a regular newsletter to members and in 1994 hosted the Region's first-ever conference on work and family.

The Proposal

To further progress in the area of work and family and the development of a healthy community, with the Region as a key player, the Network is proposing:

- 1/ Regional declaration of a **Family and Work Life Day on May 27, 1999**, a day to acknowledge the need for individuals, families and workplaces to balance personal and work responsibilities, and celebrate the leadership of those in our community who are addressing this issue. The Region would be one of the first municipalities in Canada to institute such a day to recognize the challenges and realities of work and family. The Day would acknowledge that work and family balance is an issue which is the responsibility of not only the individual but families, neighbourhoods, community service agencies, businesses, labour organizations, public sector employers and local government. It would be a catalyst to create visible partnerships with community and other organizations to advance solutions.

We encourage essential change toward a healthy balance of personal and work life.
Nous oeuvrons pour une transformation essentielle vers un équilibre entre la vie familiale et la vie professionnelle.

- 2/ **The striking of a Region-led Committee or working group on Work and Family Issues to explore ways to generate** greater awareness of work and family issues and encourage workplace and community practices to strike a better balance between the demands of work and family life. Cities such as Denver have developed similar committees or task forces which represent all sectors of the community and demonstrate overall commitment to develop a healthy, well-balanced community. These US initiatives link public commitment to work and family to a healthier social and economic environment.

- 3/ **That the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton investigate the benefits of participation – as an employer – in the National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium**, the country's only community-based consortium which provides emergency or back-up child care services to employees and members of the Consortium. Current consortium members include the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, County of Carleton Law Association, CMHC, Nortel, Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Nepean Hydro. Information on this specific aspect of the proposal will be included in our February 18 presentation and accompanying documentation.

The resolution we are asking Community Services Committee to endorse:

"That the Community Services Committee endorse and forward to Council the following recommendation:

That the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton:

- *endorse and declare a **Family and Work Life Day on May 27, 1999** with accompanying promotional activities organized by the Region, The Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton and other community partners such as the National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium, Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa and CJOH*
- *strike a **Region-led Committee or Working Group on Work and Family Issues** to address work and family issues in our region and to coordinate efforts in the public, private and community sectors to help individuals better balance their work and family responsibilities*
- *investigate the possibility and benefits of joining the **National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium** to gain access to back-up child care for regional employees."*

If the Region adopts this proposal, including the declaration of a Family and Work Life day, we believe that there will be the following benefits:

- an opportunity to showcase best practices in balancing work and family demands
- raising an awareness in the community about the importance and benefits to individuals, families, organizations and the community of balancing work and family demands
- highlighting the importance of addressing the work and family balance issue will hopefully serve as a catalyst for the development of more supportive corporate and public policies, programs, and services which will ultimately strengthen the Ottawa-Carleton community
- with an increased focus on the importance of balancing work and family demands the Region is promoted as an attractive location for people considering their options of where to live and work where quality of life is a priority

We are approaching the Region with this three-part proposal because we believe that municipal leadership is necessary to advance the development of a healthier community which recognizes the many responsibilities and contributions of its citizens. The Region has demonstrated leadership in pulling the community together in a number of areas, including public health and the environment. Leading a work and family initiative would make Ottawa-Carleton an even stronger community. We also believe that this presents an excellent opportunity for the RMOC to demonstrate innovation as an employer as well as a municipal government.

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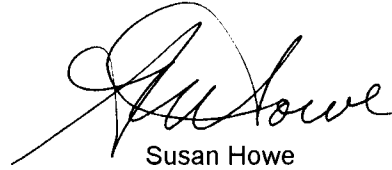
We have received preliminary endorsement for these ideas and this proposal from Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, the Vanier Institute of the Family and the National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium. A backgrounder on work and family issues and the Consortium are attached.

We look forward to hearing from you and presenting to the Community Services Committee on February 18, 1999.

On behalf of the Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton,



Heather Swail



Susan Howe

Members, Work and Family Network of Ottawa-Carleton Coordinating Committee
and
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BACKGROUNDER – Balancing Work and Family Demands

An Important Issue for Ottawa-Carleton

What is work and family: The phrase “work and family” encompasses the balance between personal/family responsibilities and responsibilities for work. The issue has gained momentum and attention since the 1980’s with the rapid changes in the composition of families, communities and workplaces, essentially change in the way we all live and work. The issue was framed and defined by changes in the workforce, with increasing numbers of women leaving the home for paid work, with the development and establishment of child care as a necessary community service to support families, changes in families with increased mobility and the loss of extended family networks to support families with their extended work responsibilities. The issue was also defined by the increasing recognition and participation of employers and labour organizations in the development of work and family-supportive initiatives such as workplace day care, and the involvement of governments with the institution of parental leave and family responsibility days.

In the last few years, the issue has been enlarged to include communities as key players and in influencing how services and supports are developed to help working families balance their increasing responsibilities.

The issue has also been defined by a growing body of research and reports which point to the costs and consequences of not supporting individuals and families – documented higher levels of stress and work-family conflict, increased short-term and long-term disability claims made by workers due to stress and proven costs to organizations due to absenteeism, loss of productivity, lowered morale, increased stress and an inability to recruit and retain workers – in the absence of supportive policies and programs.

Work and Family in Canada – a numerical sketch

Balancing work and family demands has received growing attention in academic research. Here are some highlights of the numbers and realities:

- Work and family is a reality lived by all Canadians. In 70% of dual-earner families both parents are in the workforce. In 1995, 21.6% of Canadian families were headed by single parents. This figure would be reflective of the Ottawa-Carleton population.
- 55% of lone male parents and 32% of lone female parents were in the paid workforce as full-time workers in 1994.
- Female participation in the workforce continues to grow, particularly among mothers of young children; from 1972 to 1995 the participation rate of Canadian women grew from 35.4 % to 56.8 %. By the year, 2005, women in the child-rearing years are projected to have the highest rate of participation among all women in the workforce.
- The proportion of seniors in the Canadian population is growing rapidly. The prediction is that by the year 2,000 seniors will represent over 20% of the population. More working families will have increasing responsibilities for their aging parents.

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Comprehensive research studies released by authors such as Linda Duxbury and the Conference Board of Canada indicate high levels of stress among workers due to work-family conflict and tangible, proven costs for employers and communities if these issues are not addressed. A recent study of the Saskatchewan workforce by Dr. Duxbury, commissioned by the Saskatchewan government documents rising levels of stress, increased absence and other costs and stresses the need for more collaborative and progressive action on the part of employers and communities to address work-family imbalance.

A report released by Canadian Policy Research Networks, January 29, 1999, *Comparative Family Policy: Eight Countries' Stories* by Kathy O'Hara describes how eight countries – Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States – have developed their policies for families and children. The report says that families in which both parents of young children work would find more support in balancing their work and family responsibilities if they lived in some European countries rather than in Canada.

The benefits of community-led efforts

Limited government resources and a re-defining of the role of government in recent years have heightened the need for innovative approaches to community-based development of projects and programs to address work and family problems. Governments face increasing pressures to be more inclusive and more efficient with fewer resources. A number of initiatives across the country, for example, in the area of community economic development are engaging business partners to work with non-profit partners and the larger community toward common goals of strengthening the community and contributing to its economic vitality.

Balancing work and family demands is a critical economic and labour force issue. It greatly impacts on Ottawa-Carleton's workforce, the productivity of business and industry and the community's economic vitality. The initiation of a community-led effort to address Ottawa-Carleton's work and family issue will provide long-term economic and social benefits for families, businesses and the Ottawa-Carleton community. When individuals, unions, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and government feel that they have a role in working toward a common goal, with the capacity to see results that are beneficial to them, the rewards will be greater for all.

Local Innovation – The National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium – A community-sponsored initiative

In 1995, after several years of community discussion, the National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium (NCR-ECCC) was established under the auspices of the not-for-profit Short Term Child Care Program, to address the need for quality, bilingual back-up child care for working families living in the National Capital Region. Six innovative organizations, the Ottawa Civic Hospital, Nortel, County of Carleton Law Association, Carleton Board of Education, Canadian Union of Postal Workers and Ernst & Young took the first step and by working toward a common goal of establishing an emergency child care service they had the insight to see the benefits to their employees and members and the community at large. The NCR-ECCC and the Short Term Child Care Program are unique to Canada and were recently the focus of a two-year federally-funded research project evaluating the impact of emergency child care on employers, employees and their families -*Emergency Child Care: Its Impact, Practice and Innovation – A Canadian Story*.

Short Term Child Care (STCC) is a bilingual emergency child care service based in Ottawa. STCC facilitates and provides emergency child care services, - when child care emergencies occur, either due to a child's mild illness or a breakdown in regular care arrangements - to the members of the *National Capital Region Emergency Child Care Consortium* - a community-based, multi-partner consortium currently comprising six partners and representing 20,000 employees or members.