

ST. PAUL CHILD CARE SOCIETY

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November 22, 2011

County of St. Paul
St. Paul, AB
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Dear Mr. Upham and the County of St. Paul Council:

On behalf of the St. Paul Child Care Society I wish to extend my disappointment on your recent decision to deny funding to our Society. In particular, the manner in which your decision was transmitted to us, I felt was very unprofessional. As of the date of this letter we have yet to receive anything from you in writing or even a phone call saying our request was declined and outlining the reasons behind the decline. To see a bold headline in the St. Paul Journal last week declaring "County denies funding for Child Care Society" is certainly not the way we wanted to find out your decision.

From the comments made by Coun. Glen Ockerman and Maxine Fodness as quoted in the paper, it seems apparent that our request was not completely understood. While we are not a community hall, our organization serves a valuable need to the approximately 45 – 50 children who are presently making use of our service. As indicated to Mr. Mahdiuk in an e-mail on Oct 12th, at present we have 26% of the children in the program that reside in the County. Last year it was over 50%. The numbers vary from year to year depending on the parents who need our assistance. We coordinate the provision of Day Home services in the community and county and ensure that quality care is being provided that meets and exceeds provincial standards. We feel that nothing is more important than ensuring our children are cared for by people who value and respect children.

As for the statement that the province already supports daycares, please let me make it clear we are not a daycare. Our society provides day home services only. Once our building is renovated, our intent is to lease out the part of the building that we do not use, to a day care. We need the lease income to keep our day home program

operational as these funds are used to cover the cost of maintaining the agency office. Who we choose to rent the building to should not be relevant to our request for funding. Regardless of whether it is a Day Care operation or another business, we need to make the renovations so that the building is rentable.

The only direct government funding that we receive for our operations is a wage top-up to staff and this wage top-up is provided to all day home societies as well as day cares (whether or not a day care is a private company or a not-for-profit society). So these funds go directly to our three office staff based on their accreditation levels. Our parents receive government subsidies based on their income levels – again this is not money that goes towards our operations. These funds ultimately go to the Providers who are hired on contract with our agency. The paper indicates that Coun. Ockerman feels that the County providing any funding would be a “duplication of services”. This tells me that perhaps I didn’t do a satisfactory job of explaining how the finances of our society work. On a further note, Day Cares, whether private or not-for-profit, do not receive government funding for their operations. Their staff would receive wage top-ups based on their accreditation level and the parents may qualify for subsidy, the same funding that is available to day home societies.

When we entered into an agreement with the Boys and Girls Club over ten years ago we did not anticipate that it would end the way it did. We felt that our organization was being a good community steward, assisting another non-profit society, by providing a rental arrangement that was very beneficial to their organization. We provided rent at a very reasonable rate so that parents could have a choice of affordable child care options. We believe that this is the reason why a damage deposit was never collected initially as well.

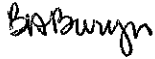
Almost two years ago we realized that there were issues – the existing Day Care board at the time would not commit to a longer term lease and we were forced to accept a month-to-month lease. We also tried to collect a damage deposit but our request was ignored. We knew that the Club was having financial difficulties due to a lawsuit with a previous employee so we decided to, again, be good citizens, and allow them to continue to lease our facility. At the time we started our own discussions on alternatives for the space, but we felt that having a tenant and generating some rental income was better than having no one there at all. We were also aware that the Club had been receiving financial assistance from the Town through FCSS over a number of years so we believed that they would continue to provide them with assistance to keep their Day Care and After School Care programs in place. It is also our understanding that they received some funding from the County as well over the years.

We believe that we were taken advantage of as our only other alternative would have been to provide them notice and force them to leave. We felt that this was not an option as there were a number of children in their care and without the Day Care those parents would very likely have been left with no options for child care. We didn’t think

it would sit well with the community if we were seen as shutting down the Boys and Girls Club's day care program. Besides, most of the building had undergone a renovation about five years ago so we didn't think it would require serious repair work. I hope that you can appreciate the position that we were placed into as the expenses we now have to incur were well beyond what we had planned to spend.

As you are aware the Town Council realized the importance of our organization to the community and made a decision to provide us with some funding. Based on the new information that I have provided, I would ask that you revisit your decision. Please consider our position and the service that we provide to this community – both to the Town and County of St. Paul. I can be reached at (780) 614-8161 to discuss this further.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barb Buryn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barb Buryn, President
St. Paul Child Care Society