



St. Leonard's Society of Canada

208-211 Bronson Avenue Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5
T: (613)233-5170 F: (613)233-5122 Email: slsc@on.aibn.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

On April 11, 2012, the award winning, internationally renowned service known as LifeLine[®], providing in-reach programming to life sentenced prisoners, was cut by government. LifeLine[®], was founded in 1991 by St. Leonard's House Windsor, which established a partnered approach with the Parole Board of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada that has worked collaboratively to provide this service. For more than 20 years, life sentenced men and women who have proven their ability to reintegrate successfully have offered support, friendship and counselling to men and women serving long term and life sentences. They have offered hope that there can be "life after Life".

Elizabeth White, Executive Director of St. Leonard's Society of Canada states that the cuts are a huge loss to effective corrections, and will affect many hard working and dedicated staff who have committed their time to helping some of the most vulnerable people within Canada's federal institutions.

"Whether or not current evaluations have been adequate is not the issue." says White, "We hear about the impact on individuals from our people who are working within the institutions and in Canadian communities." She also notes that ongoing program evaluations and new tracking tools deserve the opportunity to demonstrate the good public safety results the program achieves.

In-Reach Worker Daryl Clark, who has been with the program for 8 years, serving 6 institutions in northern Alberta and one women's healing lodge, notes the important purpose that his job serves. "Anything is a big deal when someone might get hurt" says Clark, stating that the lack of support leaves institution staff in more danger. "When you walk into prison as a young fellow facing life, you can't see an end to that. Losing the support leaves them more volatile upon coming into the system".

LifeLine[®] has been recognized with awards from the International Corrections and Prisons Association, the American Correctional Association, and in October 2011, it was the recipient of the Canadian Criminal Justice Association's Achievement Award.

Men and women inside our prisons need support. LifeLine[®] has proven itself a key element in providing that support for more than 20 years. This program is a credit to Canada, and White hopes that means will be found to keep the spirit of LifeLine[®] alive.

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For more information please contact:

Elizabeth White,
Executive Director, SLSC
(613) 233-5170