Manitoba Advocate
for Children and Youth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MANITOBA ADVOCATE RELEASES 2025-26 ANNUAL REPORT

Report highlights issues impacting children, youth, and young adults, calls for immediate response from government to end Manitoba's sexual exploitation and human trafficking crisis

NOVEMBER 18, 2026 – TREATY 1 TERRITORY AND NATIONAL HOMELAND OF THE RED RIVER MÉTIS, Winnipeg, Man.

Today, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth Sherry Gott released MACY's annual report for the 2025-26 fiscal year, highlighting serious issues affecting young people in Manitoba and MACY's work to improve their lives by supporting, advocating, and empowering them so their rights are upheld and their voices are heard.

Tragically, this year's report sheds light on a recurring, and highly concerning issue: **over half of MACY's serious injury reviews and assessments are related to a child who has been sexually assaulted and/or sexually exploited.**

Children in Manitoba are being sexually assaulted and/or coerced, lured, or exploited for sexual acts, the sex trade, and child sexual abuse material at alarming rates. **"Manitoba's outdated strategy to prevent sexual exploitation and human trafficking has glaring systemic gaps and barriers – leaving children unprotected from harm," said Gott.** "Sexual exploitation and human trafficking of children is a crisis in Manitoba that requires an urgent and systemic response from government."

MACY is also analyzing an emerging and troubling trend in which a child's serious injury occurs while in the care of a paid caregiver, including foster parents, educators, placement staff, and others.

Additionally, the Serious Injury Reviews and Investigations program **completed 42 per cent more reports this fiscal year**, pointing to a staggering increase in workload for the team. It is becoming increasingly clear that MACY requires increased program resources to provide meaningful information and support to service providers working with injured children, youth, and their families.

This fiscal year, MACY made foundational changes to our Child Death Review and Investigations process. "Our new *Honouring Our Children* process shares outcomes of the review with service providers, supporting a mutual understanding of the holistic experience of the child who died, their circumstances, and realities," said Gott. "This new approach honours the child's life by reflecting the voices and experiences of that child, their family, community, and the service providers who worked to support them."

Families continually contact MACY for help navigating systemic barriers to Manitoba's children's disability services, with concerns related to mental health, educational inclusion, and access to appropriate supports. Despite their obligations to uphold children's rights, the Manitoba government has made limited progress to improve children's disability services. **Eight (of nine) recommendations for system improvements made in MACY's special report, *Bridging the Gaps: Achieving Substantive Equality for Children with Disabilities in Manitoba*, remain outstanding.**

The Manitoba Advocate's annual report also highlights important outcomes and outputs achieved in the 2025-26 fiscal year, including the number of children, youth, and young adults who accessed MACY's programs, or joined the office's initiatives and events. The executive summary, available in English, French, and Ojibwe highlights these key statistics:

- 2,637 requests for advocacy services
- 643 children, youth, and young adults supported through ongoing advocacy
- 60 child death reviews completed
- 135 serious injury reviews completed
- 1 special report on findings from the first 18-months of the Serious Injury Reviews and Investigations Program
- 1 special report on Manitoba's child welfare system
- 29 recommendations and implementation submissions analyzed under the new recommendation monitoring model
- 1,500+ children reached through I Love to Read Month
- 300+ students reached via a National Child Day event
- 1,500+ youth reached through engagement workshops

Read the Advocate's 2025-26 annual report in English or French here: https://manitobaadvocate.ca/reports-publications/annual-reports/.

-30-

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About the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth:

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) is an independent, non-partisan office of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. The office represents the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children, youth, and young adults throughout Manitoba who are receiving, or should be receiving, provincial public services. MACY does this by providing direct advocacy support to young people and their families, by reviewing public service delivery after the death or serious injury of a child, and by conducting child-centred research regarding the effectiveness of public services in Manitoba. The Manitoba Advocate is empowered by legislation to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of services provided to children, youth, and young adults. MACY is mandated through The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, *guided by the* United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *and acts according to the best interests of children and youth.*