

An Open Message from Kids Kottage

Our mission at Kids Kottage is to protect children from abusive situations and help build stronger families. We work hard to have the policies, procedures and trained staff and volunteers to ensure that children at Kids Kottage are as safe as possible.

This past October, Kids Kottage was informed by the Edmonton Police Service that a volunteer at the Kottage was under investigation for possession of child pornography. The individual, Todd Tenetiuk, was immediately informed that he could no longer volunteer at the Kottage. Mr. Tenetiuk has since been formally charged with possession of child pornography.

We have been in communication with the police, who have informed us that their investigation into Mr. Tenetiuk's activities has not turned up anything that would place children directly at risk. Our own internal reviews have also not revealed any evidence of wrongdoing whatsoever on his part while at the Kottage and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Everyone who wants to volunteer at the Kottage has to go through a Criminal Record Check and a Child Welfare Record Check, as well as providing three letters of reference and going through an interview. Every three years thereafter, new criminal and child welfare checks are required. Volunteers are always paired with a staff member and only on rare occasions are they left alone with children. Even then, there are safeguards: Doors at the Kottage are left open and neither staff nor volunteers are to be alone with children in a room where the door is closed.

Yet despite our best efforts, someone charged with possession of child pornography was able to volunteer at the Kottage.

We take our responsibility to the children and families we support to heart. We're in a position of trust and we work very hard to be worthy of the faith that parents, donors and the community have in us and our services.

We will redouble our efforts to ensure children are safe, including a complete review of our policies, procedures and training to ensure that they are as effective as possible, and we are reviewing our volunteer records to ensure that everything is up to date and in order.

Kids Kottage is an accredited agency funded primarily through donations and with the support of Alberta Children's Services. Kids Kottage helps ensure children are safe and receive the care they deserve when their families are in crisis or need respite, and supports their parents as they work towards their potential. We do this through a 24 hour crisis nursery and follow-up services, an after school care program for children with FASD, and Basic Shelf which teaches parents how to ensure they always have food on hand to feed their family. We've been serving children and families for over 12 years, and each year give over 1200 children a nurturing place to stay.

This has been a difficult episode that reminds us of how vigilant we all must be. Thank you for your continued support – we're more determined than ever to keep working on behalf of children and families.

Judith Dyck
Board Chair

Lori Reiter
Executive Director

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