



Statement

March 15, 2022

For Immediate Release

For the past two years, we have celebrated Social Work Week under the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a profound effect on the lives of social workers both professionally and personally. Social workers have been working tirelessly to support children, youth, families and others who have felt disproportionate effects from this global pandemic. Social workers have also had to deal with climate catastrophes, a toxic drug crisis, an environment of hate and divisiveness and ongoing labour shortages – while still providing care and support to those who need it most. Despite these challenges, social workers have continued to go above and beyond.

This year has been particularly difficult with the impact of recoveries at the sites of former residential schools in communities across the province and country. The news of the recoveries has been heartbreaking and painful to both witness and live through for so many children, youth, young adults and families. Social workers in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Indigenous Child and Family Service agencies, health authorities and community social service organizations across the province have been key figures in identifying and providing supports for young people through these difficult times.

The hard work and dedication displayed by social workers is inspirational. We have seen the impact of these challenging times on the children, youth, young adults and families we care about as they face increased mental health concerns, substance use, violence, precarious housing and other external factors impacting their lives. Social workers have been at the forefront, ensuring that appropriate cultural supports are in place for young people and, most importantly, being there to listen, identify and support the complex needs of each individual, all while simultaneously facing these difficult times as part of their own families and communities.

At RCY, we continue to see the tremendous effort and positive influence social workers have daily. They are acknowledging and lifting up the unique Nation-specific identity of the young people they support and are collaborating to ensure that young people receive the specific supports they need – even when it seems like there aren't any available. Social workers have been creative, persistent and passionate about the work they do. Their resolve is something we should all aspire to incorporate into our own work.

We know the work is difficult. It's not an easy task to put extraordinary effort and commitment into supporting children and youth and, at times, to bear witness to tragedy. However, we recognize the positive effect social workers can have on the lives of young people, particularly on those who, after experiencing tremendous trauma, are feeling more settled and are experiencing a greater sense of belonging – to people, school, community and culture – as well a more positive sense of self.

The continued commitment, creativity, resourcefulness and passion of social workers to support young people is both inspiring and motivating. We are grateful to have such amazing individuals dedicating their time to help improve outcomes for young people. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of so many children, youth, young adults and families. We raise our hands this week to celebrate you and your profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J Charlesworth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth