

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

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It was 28 years ago today that Marc Lépine, walked into École Polytechnique with a mini-14 rifle and a hunting knife, and shot 28 people, killing 14 women, before killing himself. Today we remember those women and other who have lost their lives as National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

"I think it will never lose its importance," shared Christa Daku, Executive Director with Envision Counselling and Support Centre, "as the years go along, we're at 28 years this year. Intimate partner violence is still a prevalent issue. We know that our Saskatchewan statistics are the highest in Canada. So we try as an organization to bring light to this remembrance yearly."

"It was unfortunate when the massacre happened 28 years ago, but it set a precedent around what kind of education and what kind of interaction needs to happen within communities. We want to take a moment to remember on December 6th that intimate partner violence is still fairly prevalent within our community and until we do the prevention piece, and until the government supports the prevention piece, it will continue, I believe."

She adds that there are organizations working with the government on how to prevent violence within the home.

"Unfortunately prevention dollars and education dollars are only grant supported so even within our own agency here, to have our outreach educators out in the communities, doing presentations to the youth in the schools, and I believe that's where it needs to start, grants support those positions."

She added that around 24,000 children witness male violence against their mothers in Saskatchewan alone.

"And unfortunately, in that too, there's a real lack of children exposed to violence programs in the province. We're fortunate to have one program in Estevan but we also have four offices that are dealing with

interpersonal violence and abuse counselling. So it would be really helpful to have additional dollars put towards that as a prevention measure."

"We know that it's learned behaviour so if we can teach something that is not what they are experiencing is normal, we believe that down the road, it will make a significant impact."

Lépine walked through the halls and separated males and females before shooting the female student. He blamed 'feminists' for ruining his life and claimed he was fighting feminism.

The victims included:

- Geneviève Bergeron (born 1968), civil engineering student
- Hélène Colgan (born 1966), mechanical engineering student
- Nathalie Croteau (born 1966), mechanical engineering student
- Barbara Daigneault (born 1967), mechanical engineering student
- Anne-Marie Edward (born 1968), chemical engineering student
- Maud Haviernick (born 1960), materials engineering student
- Maryse Laganière (born 1964), budget clerk in the École Polytechnique's finance department
- Maryse Leclair (born 1966), materials engineering student
- Anne-Marie Lemay (born 1967), mechanical engineering student
- Sonia Pelletier (born 1961), mechanical engineering student
- Michèle Richard (born 1968), materials engineering student
- Annie St-Arneault (born 1966), mechanical engineering student
- Annie Turcotte (born 1969), materials engineering student
- Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz (born 1958), nursing student