



**For Immediate Release**  
April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## **Scrivens to be sentenced in relation to the death of their sister - Betty Anne Gagnon**

Calgary, AB – a sister and brother-in-law will be sentenced in Edmonton court on Friday afternoon for failing to provide the necessities of life which resulted in the death of a 48 year-old Betty Anne Gagnon who was mentally disabled and legally blind.

This case underscores the disturbing fact that domestic violence can take many forms and can happen to anyone--often to our most vulnerable. The Action Committee on Disabilities and Abuse (ACDA) and the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective are encouraging everyone to break the silence, stand up and speak out against violence towards persons with disabilities and to hold offenders accountable.

“ACDA wants to bring awareness to the issue of abuse against people with disabilities so all members of the community can learn how to help people with disabilities overcome abuse, find help to stay safe and protect themselves” says Carmela Hutchison, President of Disabled Women’s Network of Canada.

Betty Anne Gagnon was found dead in a pick-up truck on November 20, 2009. Originally Gagnon’s sister and brother-in-law, Denise and Mike Scriven, were charged with: manslaughter, failure to provide the necessities of life, criminal negligence causing death, unlawful confinement, 2 counts of assault and conspiracy to commit extortion. However, on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 the Scrivens entered a plea to the single charge of failure to provide the necessities of life. With this plea, all other charges are expected to be dropped at the April 19<sup>th</sup> sentencing. The plea was followed by the entering of an agreed upon Statement of facts. In this statement, the Scrivens admitted using crack cocaine and beating, caging, and starving Betty Anne.

Canadian research shows that individual victimization rates for persons with disabilities are two to four times higher than for persons with no activity limitations, mental or behavioural disorders. Furthermore, persons with activity limitations were two to three times more likely to be victims of the most severe forms of domestic violence.

“Learn about the lives and issues faced by people with disabilities, educate yourself about abuse and how to find help and look out for each other in the community” says Hutchison.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, there is help available: dial 911, Connect Family & Sexual Abuse Network (403) 237-5888 (Toll Free: 1-877-237-5888); 24-hour Family Violence Helpline (403) 234-SAFE (7233); Family Violence Information Line (403) 310-1818 (Toll Free); Distress Centre (403) 266-HELP (4357).

### **Media Contacts:**

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The Calgary Domestic Violence Collective (CDVC) works with community partners to provide a coordinated response to domestic violence prevention and intervention in Calgary. It works to help prevent domestic violence through increased public awareness, education, and improved legislation. **Representatives include:**

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association, Alberta Child and Youth Services, Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters, Alberta, Employment and Immigration, Alberta Health Services: Addictions and Mental Health, Aventa Addiction Treatment for Women, Awo Taan Healing Lodge, Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Brenda Strafford Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Calgary Action Committee on Housing and Homelessness, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary Catholic School District, Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens’ Association, Calgary Communities Against Sexual Violence, Calgary Counseling Centre, Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association, Calgary John Howard Society, Calgary



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Legal Guidance, Calgary Police Services- Domestic Conflict Unit, Calgary Sexual Health Centre, Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, Cerebral Palsy Association of Alberta, Child Advocacy Centre, Chinese Community Response to Family Violence, Community Corrections and Release Programs Branch, Alberta Solicitor General, Community Crisis Society of Strathmore: Wheatlands Shelter, CONNECT Family and Sexual Abuse Network, Developmental Disabilities Resources Centre of Calgary, Disability Action Hall, Discovery House, Distress Centre, Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, Forensic Research Network, Further Education Society, HomeFront, Jane M. Oxenbury, M.Ed., R. Psych., Edan Counseling Associates, Jewish Family Service Calgary, Kerby Centre, Legal Aid Alberta, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Calgary and Area Chapter, Mustard Seed, Peer Support Services for Abused Women, Red Cross Society, Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE) Alberta, Rowan House Emergency Shelters, Servants Anonymous Society, Service Canada, Sonshine Community Services, The Mustard Seed , United Way of Calgary and Area, University of Calgary - Faculty of Social Work, Women's Centre of Calgary, Youville Recovery Residence for Women, YWCA Banff, YWCA of Calgary