Policies for Canada's Challenged Families

Friday, October 29, 2004 – Policy challenges arise whenever existing policy and programs are out of whack with a changing reality.

It goes without saying that the profound changes in the Canadian family, workplace and demographics in recent decades create pressing social policy challenges. The failure of social policy to catch up results in excessive demands on the family, in particular.

The necessity of two-earner families, the number of lone-parent households, the numerous jobs that don't pay a living wage, higher life expectancy and an ageing society are just some of the factors responsible.

"Not only must Canadians strive to *earn enough* for their families; they must also struggle to ensure that they can *care enough* for them," says Jane Jenson, former Director of the Family Network and CPRN Research Associate, in a recent presentation to provincial and territorial labour market and social services ministers.

The meeting, entitled "A Labour Market in Tune with Families", was organized by the Ministère d'Emploi, Solidarité sociale et Famille of Quebec, in La Malbaie in August.

Jenson's presentation draws on the research of CPRN's Social Architecture project which she directed. She maps key changes in family structure and labour markets and their impacts on family responsibilities She goes on to outline the kind of policy mix needed to balance the dual demands on today's families of *earning* and *caring*.

You can access or download a copy of her presentation, ***New Realities of Earning and Caring***, by clicking here.

Jane Jenson is Canada Research Chair in Citizenship and Governance at the Université de Montréal

A Nation of Baby-sitters

The OECD this week gave Canada (Quebec excepted) a failing grade for its patchwork approach to early childhood education and care. Likening Canadian child care practices to baby sitting, the OECD reported in its *Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care* that Canadian children and families need

…/2

e-network e-network work e-network e-net

better access to *developmental* child care. These conclusions are supported by CPRN research findings, which argue that increased public investment in low-cost, developmental child care is both a critical enabler of good child outcomes and a necessary component of Canada's new social architecture. In addition to today's posting, see the publications below on our Web site:

Catching Up to Reality: Building the Case for a New Social Model (2003), Jane Jenson

Redesigning the "Welfare Mix" for Families: Policy Challenges (2003), Jane Jenson

Two Policy Paradigms: Family Responsibility and Investing in Children (2001), Caroline Beauvais and Jane Jenson

School-aged Children across Canada: A Patchwork of Public Policies (2001), Rianne Mahon

What Is the Best Policy Mix for Canada's Young Children? (2000), Jane Jenson and Sharon Stroick

Final Report: Child Care Policy Conference (2002)

Graham Lowe Wins Prestigious Award

Graham Lowe, former Director of CPRN's Work Network and a CPRN Research Associate, is this year's winner of the Canadian Workplace Wellness Pioneer Award. He receives the award today at the annual Health, Work and Wellness Conference in Vancouver.

The Award is given to an accomplished professional from the public or private sector in recognition of their significant achievements and contributions to the field of organizational health.

Graham's award citation states that "his extensive body of workplace research has generated useful analytical tools that are helping others identify, understand and evaluate workplace issues toward developing healthier work environments."

CPRN is proud to be associated with Graham and his work in this regard. Congratulations Graham!

Graham Lowe is also President of The Graham Lowe Group.

e-network e-network work e-network e-net