

Road ahead: York Region faith community dedicated to fight against child poverty ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

With the federal election now in the rear view mirror, York Region's faith community is determined to keep the issues of child poverty and affordable high quality daycare in the public eye in 2016.

Mosaic Interfaith, made up of York residents belonging to the faiths of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism, urged politicians to address the concerns during the election.

Now, they plan to pressure the new Liberal government to follow through on its election promises.

"With the new federal government having made significant commitments to both a new child benefit system and to establishing an early learning and child care framework with provinces (and) territories and Indigenous communities, I think we will have lots of opportunities to keep this issue top of mind," said Carolyn Ferns, public policy and government relations co-ordinator with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, who will be a speaker at Mosaic Interfaith's annual Martin Luther King Jr. event Jan. 17.

"The trick will be to continue to push the federal government on their promises and to convince Ontario to take a leadership role among provinces in getting the (early learning and child care) framework right."

Mosaic Interfaith has focused on the need to provide universal and high quality child care as a key strategy to reducing child poverty, said Natalie Doucet, a member of the organization's steering committee and a pastoral associate at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Thornhill. At the same time, members recognize concerns require a long-term approach.

"This issue is an issue in progress. It will take time, energy and patience to bring the goal of affordable and universal childcare to fruition," she said.

"It is an important issue because it says something about the kind of society we want to be. So, in 2016, we will continue to highlight this issue whenever we have an opportunity to do so."

Mosaic Interfaith will continue to advocate at all levels of government, Doucet said.

"Investing in children and families, helping to break the cycle of poverty, raising some families out of poverty, (of) which affordable child care is a component, helps build a more just, equitable society and peaceful society, hence affects us all and should matter to all of us," she said.

"We need to invest in our social infrastructure, in the social conditions that help families and children thrive. When families thrive, the society as a whole thrives and that benefits us all."

-reprinted from YorkRegion

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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child poverty ^[5]

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