



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 022

Monday, July 20, 2020



Chair: Mr. Sean Casey

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Monday, July 20, 2020

• (1405)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 22 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Pursuant to the orders of reference of April 11 and May 26, 2020, the committee is resuming its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Today's meeting is taking place by video conference, and the proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

The webcast will always show the person speaking, rather than the entirety of the committee. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. I would like to remind everyone to please use the language channel of the language they are speaking.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses today. We have Steve Cordes, the chief executive officer of Youth Opportunities Unlimited, as well as Monsieur Bernard Racicot, coordinator at Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides.

Mr. Cordes, please proceed with your opening remarks.

Mr. Steve Cordes (Chief Executive Officer, Youth Opportunities Unlimited): Thank you, everybody, for the opportunity to be here today.

I want to give you a bit of an overview of Youth Opportunities Unlimited. I understand that in your package you received a letter that we received from a young person who recently graduated from a program at YOU. I'll come back to it, but I included that in the package because most of that young person's activity with our organization took place during the pandemic. He had what we found to be really wonderful insights into his experiences that reinforced what we find is quite helpful in supporting marginalized youth in particular.

What does Youth Opportunities Unlimited do? In a nutshell, we're a local not-for-profit organization, incorporated in London, Ontario. We've been around since 1982. I've been with the organization since 1984 and been its CEO since 1988, so I have a lot of history with this organization.

It started off as a provincially funded youth employment centre focused on providing employment supports for young people who were leaving school early. It was to help address the gap between

their not having experience in getting a job and needing access and supports to access the job market when they didn't have experience and had limited education.

As we've developed our organization, we've kept with that same mandate. Our vision is a community where all youth are embraced and engaged and will thrive. Our vision statement is as much about our community as it is about youth and what we do—actually, it's more so about community. That informs key priorities for us.

We're funded by all levels of government. We still provide employment programs. We do a variety of job placement programs, many of those funded by our provincial government. We also have a significant footprint in affordable housing. I know MP Vaughan would know about that because he's been to our facility a number of times in his tenure. We have a growing footprint on that. We also have a long-standing training platform using social enterprise models as a vehicle for training people and preparing them for employment.

How does all that work? In a nutshell, we have 25 or so different programs operating at any one time, funded by all levels of government: the federal government, through a couple of departments; the provincial government, through three different ministries; and the municipal government. We are also funded by the United Way and earn a significant amount of revenue from Youth Opportunities Unlimited's social enterprises. Although this can be messy in terms of administration, from a young person's experience, the programs all interplay with each other beautifully.

A young person can come into our organization at various access points. They may be experiencing homelessness and are looking for a place to eat or a safe place to help them find housing for that night, whether it's a shelter or permanent housing, or they could have graduated from school and are looking for their very first career opportunity. For all of the above there are various access points that put people at the right starting point for them. It might be setting up an employment counsellor or working on a resumé. It might be not touching a resumé for a long time and focusing on how we get a young person in front of some employers who will want to meet with them. It might also be connecting them with a housing adviser to help them find permanent housing.

What's key around those successes really is the relationship with people. While they may come in looking for a particular touchpoint, what really works fundamentally well for a marginalized and vulnerable young person is finding the right person to connect with.

That's where I think the letter jumps into play. Of course I won't read it to you, but as a highlight, that young person—his name is Sam—wrote the letter voluntarily after he graduated from some programs at YOU. He was engaged with YOU after providing physical care for his mom for a number of years. I think since he was a very young child he was caring for his mother. It was through his grandmother that he got connected to Youth Opportunities Unlimited. She was worried about his overall health and worried about her very isolated grandson.

• (1410)

She wasn't sure what the outcome was but she wanted him connected to an organization. He engaged with one of our employment counsellors, which is a provincially funded program at YOU. Through that, he started exploring what options were available to him. He ended up being connected with a federally funded program called ISE, which is delivered through Youth Opportunities Unlimited. Through that, he trained in a recycling facility at YOU.

I mentioned our social enterprises. We use them as a platform to train people, in this case, with recycling, not because he necessarily wanted to work in the recycling industry, but he'd never drawn a paycheque before. If you had the opportunity to read the letter, you will have learned that he suffers from significant mental health issues and addiction issues that were profound. In his own words, every time he went to bed, he didn't care if he woke up the next day. He wasn't actively trying to prevent it from happening, but he didn't care. It was his grandmother who got him connected to us. He was not ready to go out looking for work, so that recycling facility was an opportunity for him to start getting a place of security, a place of grounding, and to start building a community for him.

Out of that, he ended up going back into some provincially funded programs, and most recently he was hired through an online interview with Home Depot. He's been with Home Depot for just over a month and he's already had one promotion. He and I shared a panel sponsored by CAMH on serving youth with mental health issues during COVID. His insights were that he probably would not have connected with this program, with this organization, if not for COVID. His anxiety was so much that he could not have envisioned himself walking into an office and sitting across a table from strangers. An online platform made it easier for him to do that.

That gives a bit of insight into why I chose to use that letter.

I'm going to talk a little bit about what we have under [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] because they provide insight, particularly around the COVID time right now. We have a couple of projects on the go that really focus on housing. One is a project with our partnership with the Children's Aid Society, our child welfare organization in London, where we're providing housing for young people aging out of care—young people as young as 16 years old who, otherwise, would be experiencing homelessness. There is a shelter in town right now that they could go to. There is shelter space access for them. Many of these young people have experienced human trafficking, they've experienced horrible trauma, and they just won't go into a large shelter. They'll sleep on the streets instead. They'll couch surf with friends. They'll get by. They'll trade off and find a place to live, but they won't have a home. This place provides an access path towards a home. There are six apartments, each of them

independent. Every day they have some contact with a staff member from Youth Opportunities Unlimited and ongoing care from Children's Aid Society. The program has been an amazing success. It actually operates without additional government funding, just through the funding relationship between YOU and Children's Aid Society.

MP Vaughan will be interested in knowing this. Our shelter actually completes construction this week, Adam. It will open to the public on August 17. We've created, over the past three years, a concept for a 30-bed youth shelter. As it turns out, it's an amazing resource in COVID because unlike most shelters, there's no dorm style. It's 30 individual rooms for 30 people with 10-foot-wide hallways. Why did we create that? Certainly, we envisioned it long before there was a pandemic, but we know that young people who come into shelters have experienced physical and emotional trauma in many ways. To put them in a dorm style, many young people would choose to sleep outside instead of that. Thirty beds for 30 people allowed us to support people of the LGBT2Q community without feeling like they're at risk, people who need the emotional respite of having their own room, or people who need isolation for the safety of other people. The 10-foot-wide hallways are for emergency responders to come and go easily because, if they're ever on site, it's an emergency and they need to come and go fast. As it turns out, this is an amazing facility during the time of a pandemic.

• (1415)

The Chair: I'll get you to wrap up there, Mr. Cordes, please.

Mr. Steve Cordes: Absolutely.

What I think works really well, and what I would hope that the government will continue to invest in, outside of just the individual programs that I've talked to you about, is looking at infrastructure that you're investing in that offers leverage opportunities. Our experience over the past 40 years or so has taught us one thing very loud and clear, and that is that young people who have been marginalized, who are vulnerable, rely heavily on relationships. It's not so much about these wonderful programs that get created. It's the people behind the programs that really matter.

As a government, if you could find ways to invest in organizations and individuals who have a track record of supporting vulnerable or marginalized people, you'll get a better result and your communities will get a better result. As a national government, I think one of your challenges is how to offer a national program that is really delivered at a local level. I would urge you to continue to find ways for local flexibility and local delivery organizations because that's where change really happens. Again, the glue is these local partnerships, these local experts.

I think I'll stop there because I know there'll be some questions, and to make room for the other panellists.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cordes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Racicot, you have the floor.

Mr. Bernard Racicot (Coordinator, Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides): Good afternoon.

My name is Bernard Racicot and I am the coordinator at the Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides. Unfortunately, Ms. Manon Coursol cannot attend this meeting because she is on holiday. She sends her apologies.

The Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides is first and foremost a gathering place for young people, mainly aged 12 to 17, from the greater Sainte-Thérèse region. They come here to spend quality time and are accompanied by the team of counsellors who give them a warm welcome. This place must be safe, lively, motivating and dynamic. We also want it to be a place in their image.

The Maison des jeunes is also a meeting place for a community that cares about young people, their experiences and their opinions, where ideas emerge, where discussions are lively, sometimes very lively even, and where awareness, problem-solving and prevention projects take shape. As a partner in the community, the Maison des jeunes is involved, in its own way, in concerted action plans with the municipality, public safety, the various levels of government, the health and social services centre and other community partners. We work as a team.

Our mandate is to be a privileged gathering place so that teenagers who come to see us experience the most harmonious transition possible into adulthood. We accompany them through the various stages of their lives. During the summer period, we are present through community work in various targeted locations in the municipality where some young people are about to adopt risky behaviours.

As I said earlier, our clientele is made up of young people aged 12 to 17 who live in the Sainte-Thérèse and Lower Laurentians region. First of all, they come out of curiosity. All the young people who come to see us do so of their own free will. Second, they come because they find a place in their image. We also want to identify with them.

Customers are not excluded on the basis of their age, but rather on the basis of their behaviour. We will make sure that young people behave in a respectful and community oriented manner at the

Maison des jeunes. They must respect themselves, respect others, and respect the ethics and values of the Maison des jeunes.

Our mission is to foster the development of self-esteem by offering presence and active listening, by providing individual and group interventions, by leading young people to experience success—this last point is very important—by helping them to adopt values related to respect and autonomy, and by developing their social skills so that they can live with others, despite their differences, without experiencing rejection.

Our interventions take the form of promotional activities. We include all young people in our awareness and referral activities. Social intervention encourages the development of ties with young people to enable them to communicate, exchange, open up and feel important and reassured. Educational intervention helps develop social, academic, cultural and athletic skills. Broadly speaking, this is what we do at the Maison des jeunes.

We organize several activities. I'm a music teacher, so music activities are more part of my role as a counsellor. We want to put young people in a context of success by organizing events with them where they will be put in the spotlight, producing studio recordings or concerts. This is a flagship activity at the Maison des jeunes.

We also have activities where young people learn to cook with what we have at the Maison des jeunes. For example, in the "pimp your food" activity, we try to see what we can do with a box of Kraft Dinner to make it better. We also do theatre and improvisation. We teach young people to develop their response mechanisms, respect for others and speech, as well as their ability to live as a team. We also organize sports activities and games. All this is aimed at building a relationship with young people.

Our young people feel marginalized. There is a lot of poverty in our community, in Sainte-Thérèse, but also a lot of anxiety. Our activities are therefore aimed at reaching young people in their community.

• (1420)

Our grants come mainly from the City of Sainte-Thérèse and the governments of Canada and Quebec. Our fundraising activities are very important. The events we organize, such as music concerts, allow us to raise a lot of funds.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us in several ways. We had to close our doors on March 16. Since we are a youth centre, we had to stay closed. We were not able to carry out any activities until mid-May. So we organized meetings with young people on social networks—Messenger, Instagram and Zoom. It became very popular and it allowed us to communicate with youth where they were. We found out on social networks that young people who were taking courses on Zoom or through other means were very unmotivated and isolated. It was hard to reach them.

The crisis related to COVID-19 also forced us to cancel several concerts and fundraising activities. On May 8, we had planned a fundraising event, a lobster night, which usually raises between \$30,000 and \$40,000 in donations. We had to cancel that event. It was quite difficult for young people to accept that, because it's an opportunity for them to speak publicly and to highlight what we do.

In addition, we had to cancel concerts this summer, as well as the activity at Camp Péniel, which is very important. It was a three-day stay in the country. That too was very difficult for them to accept.

We resumed our activities on June 1, but unfortunately, we could not open the Maison des jeunes. All our activities take place outside, in the courtyard. We bought a garden pavilion to welcome young people, even when it rains and it is very hot. The young people come to see us in the courtyard, but we can unfortunately only accommodate 10 at a time.

We also go to the village of Sainte-Thérèse to try to reach out to young people. We announce our activities on social networks.

The strength of the Maison des jeunes is to be creative in its ways of reaching young people. Our watchword this summer is to adapt to the situation. Because of the pandemic, that is what we do every day. We take one step forward and two steps back. Our strength as a community organization is our ability to adapt.

Thank you for listening to me.

I'm ready to answer your questions, if there's time.

• (1425)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Racicot.

[*English*]

We will now begin with questions, starting with Mr. Albas, for six minutes, please.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming today, Mr. Racicot and Mr. Cordes. I would like to start with you both.

Mr. Cordes, you mentioned that the approach you've taken in your municipality is highly localized. Could you explain a bit how Youth Opportunities Unlimited started and why you think it's so important to have a bottom-up community response to some of the challenges you see in your community?

Mr. Steve Cordes: We started as a provincially funded youth employment secretariat, and although it was a hard start, I'd say a real benefit of the start was that the provincial government at the time would invest a certain platform of dollars and match either donations or in-kind contributions to the organizations. They might have approved a couple of hundred thousand dollars in funding, but only if you got a couple of hundred thousand dollars' worth of contributions from the community. They would match that. I'd say that created within this organization a spirit that is phenomenally community based.

For example, we have a federal training program that's delivered through something called ISE. We can purchase short-term training

from a registered educational institution to leverage employment opportunities in high-demand areas for youth. In London, for example, we purchase customer-care training from Fanshawe College. They deliver it on-site at our facility.

The young people who we support would not go to the college. It's a physical barrier and an emotional barrier. They just wouldn't go. We can coach the college staff. They have amazing expertise, but what they don't necessarily have is a platform for how to engage with a vulnerable population, with a marginalized population. We work with them on curriculum adjustments, and the feedback we get from the youth who go through this program is amazing.

• (1430)

Mr. Dan Albas: That goes back to the relationship you said you have. It's not about the programming. It's about the trust they have. Is that correct?

Mr. Steve Cordes: Exactly. About 25% of our clients want to go on to post-secondary education, and a significant number of them do actually go on to Fanshawe College or even some of the schools at Western University, in London. It's these partnerships that start opening the bridge to help them redefine themselves. They would not walk in those doors otherwise.

Mr. Dan Albas: I'm going to move to Mr. Racicot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Racicot, is it the same thing for you?

The Chair: Mr. Racicot, would you please move your microphone away from your shirt a little? When it makes contact with it, we can't hear you properly.

Mr. Bernard Racicot: All right.

Could you repeat your question, Mr. Albas?

Mr. Dan Albas: It's about the work you do in your community. From what I understand, the local approach is key to improving young people's situation. Is that right?

[*English*]

Mr. Bernard Racicot: You can speak in English, too, if you're at ease with that.

[*Translation*]

Yes, and that's the case with everything that affects young people and the work we do with other organizations. We are part of issue tables. That's crucial when we want to intervene. Concerted action is of major importance in our community. We always work with other organizations and with those who intervene with us in the community. This is the basis for young people's success in school. I don't know if that answers your question.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Do you also have a similar approach to funding? Are you exclusively funded by government, or is there a combination of matching funds between the private sector, charity from individuals and local...?

Mr. Bernard Racicot: We're asking for funds from the private sector and we also have matching funds. Everything we can take, we're taking.

[Translation]

We also receive grants from the Government of Quebec. We always have these partnerships, which are very important. With the Chamber of Commerce, we organize events. Private sector partners are also part of our fundraising. Having said that, the levels of government are really essential to our operations, especially at this time.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: I appreciate hearing about the importance of having funding from government to give you that sustaining amount and about the fact that it's the community itself that supports the enterprise and that it's not being forced on the community in any way, shape or form.

Perhaps both of you can share how your organizations have handled COVID-19.

Mr. Cordes, I'd like to hear you speak specifically about how every day at the affordable housing shelter there is contact between your staff and the young people.

Monsieur Racicot, you've said a bit about the gazebo. Maybe you could give us an idea of what other alterations you've had to make since COVID-19.

The Chair: Gentlemen, we're out of time, so we're going to need very brief responses from each of you, please.

Mr. Steve Cordes: We have gone to a bit of a blended model. For our housing support programs there is a mobile housing team, and for our daily food programs, those are still delivered in person with all protocols, distancing and so on.

Our employment supports are delivered online. We have workshops that are delivered online as well as individual employment counsellors who make a point of reaching out and connecting with young people probably more frequently than what they would have seen when there were actually in-person appointments.

We're about to relaunch more of our in-person employment counselling over the next couple of weeks.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Racicot: I would like to thank Ms. Chabot and her team, who made it possible for us to have an additional summer job.

This summer, our team's work will focus on organizing a survey to reach out to local youth and understand how they experience the pandemic. This will guide the interventions we will make with them when they return to school and give us a very clear answer

about their needs. Our team is organizing a survey and meetings with them. In addition, we are taking advantage of our activities in the small pavilion and in the city to distribute this survey and to really get feedback from the youth of Sainte-Thérèse and the region.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Albas.

Mr. Dan Albas: Thank you.

The Chair: Next we're going to go to Mr. Turnbull for six minutes.

Go ahead, please.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to both of our witnesses for being here today. It's great to hear from both of you, and it's amazing how much experience you bring to this conversation.

Mr. Cordes, most of my questions will probably be for you because I think my colleagues will probably focus on our other witness today, Mr. Racicot.

Mr. Cordes, thank you for your 35 years of commitment to your local community. I actually had an opportunity to tour your organization's facilities on Richmond Street in London a few years ago, and I know you're profiled as an organization that's really been embracing social innovation, so thanks for all your work.

Can you maybe paint us a portrait? Certainly the testimonial from Samuel paints us a portrait, perhaps, of the at-risk youth in your community. During this pandemic there's certainly evidence to suggest that youth at risk would be even more vulnerable than normal.

Can you tell us or paint us a picture of how vulnerability is increasing for those youth at risk?

Mr. Steve Cordes: A really blunt comment is that our staff tell me that we've lost five young people to overdoses over the past few weeks. That level of loss is.... There's no comparison to our previous history.

Most of that would have been unintentional. It would have been daily use that escalated as a coping strategy. Certainly drug and alcohol use, substance abuse, has gone up.

What's really become even more important for us are those daily connections, so I mentioned our housing team briefly in the answer to the last question. To elaborate a little bit on that, we're still knocking on doors of young people who live in our buildings on an almost-daily basis. We have a daily breakfast program that's now a bagged program, so it's limited in terms of all the protocols, of course, that underline everything. But it's really important that we're still that touch space for people, because that level of isolation for people who are already feeling marginalized and outside of the community is just profound. Anxiety levels are up. Depression levels are up, and of course I mentioned that some of the evidence of that is loss of life. It's profound.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you for sharing that, and I know it's concerning for all of us.

Does this inform any changes that we can make? I know that we as a government have been deeply concerned about all different segments of the population that may be marginalized and also more vulnerable at this time. We've been rolling out supports very quickly for all of those segments of the population.

I wonder whether you have, from your experience, anything to inform any further changes to help youth in your community.

Mr. Steve Cordes: That's a really good question and I've thought about that—what are the specific things—and you know, they still need in-person support. I would say that wherever you're making investments, you look to your providers and encourage—within safety, of course—in-person support. We can talk about our circles of 10 and about our social frameworks and so on, but either these folks just don't have that or the folks who are around them are really not what you and I would consider supportive.

One of the young people put it to me really, really well a couple of years ago. Actually, Adam would have met her. Her name is Courtney. She talked about how when you're experiencing homelessness, your friends—who we would consider as friends—don't give; your friends take. If you get money, your friends want it. If you get food, your friends want it. With drugs, whatever might be of value, a home, an apartment, your friends will come and crash....

Your friends aren't necessarily building you up. They're so hungry—hungry in a very general sense, not literally necessarily—for support that they'll take whatever they can from you. To break from that, those folks need a strong community around them. They don't need to be told what to do. They need a strong community around them, support they can gravitate to.

I think Sam is a good illustration of that, because Sam credits 50% of his success to his grandmother and 50% of his success to YOU. That's what he said when he was on that webinar a couple of weeks ago. We didn't let him get away with that because he earns 100% of his success, but these folks were the community that we all have a right to. Not everybody has that, and marginalized folks particularly don't have that.

Encourage your providers to find ways to be there in person. Many of my colleagues.... Not to be armchair quarterbacks, but I saw too many organizations that walked away from the in-person contact right away, without any platform for how they were going to get back to it.

• (1440)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thanks, Mr. Cordes.

I have a last question here, quickly.

Your model seems particularly effective because it combines housing, employment supports, a variety of programming to engage youth, food and social enterprise. I'm really interested in the successful combination of housing, food and social enterprise, and I wonder how that might be informative for economic recovery and youth success in the future.

Do you want to say something about that quickly? I know Mr. Chair is going to cut me off any second.

The Chair: You're out of time.

Give a short answer, please, Mr. Cordes.

Mr. Steve Cordes: A short answer....

The Chair: I know it's a big question, but do your best.

Mr. Steve Cordes: Yes, it's a big question.

Could you summarize the question really quickly, because I did have a short answer that I could come back to? Are you allowed to do that?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: With regard to the intersection between housing and social enterprise and food, do you want to tell us anything about that successful model?

Mr. Steve Cordes: Absolutely. Thank you very much.

In brief, most of our very marginalized young people never walk in the doors at YOU and say they're looking for work. It's not because they don't want it. They don't see it in their realm. They don't see it within their future.

Our social enterprise platforms have been really successful in helping young people find their niche, not because they want to work in a café or a recycling facility or whatever, but because it inspires community. It inspires work and hope.

I think Sam's letter spoke to that. With housing, and supportive housing that provides that safe place, that becomes the starting point for people. The intersection around all that is just phenomenal. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cordes.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. First of all, I want to apologize to you, to my colleagues, to the clerk, and to the interpreters. I hope everything will go well despite my lateness.

Is everything okay with the interpreters?

The Chair: Yes, it's going very well.

It's always a pleasure to be with you. Welcome.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you. I'm usually on time, very much on time. There, I just lost 30 seconds.

I really want to thank our two witnesses.

I will start with a general comment.

Mr. Cordes, as you just said, in a webinar, for example, young people mentioned that half of their success is due to their grandmother. That's great. If my grandchildren need my help, I'm here for them. We know that grandparents are significant people for children. Young people have said that organizations like yours, Mr. Cordes and Mr. Racicot, have also helped them succeed. It is true that it takes dedicated workers, managers and people to ensure that these homes or the services they offer help young people a great deal. I am convinced that we have every interest in continuing to support these organizations.

Mr. Racicot, when we look at the history of the Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides, we see that it has had its ups and downs, but it is truly beneficial to the community. In the early 1980s, there was not really a place for young people to gather or to belong. That's what you offer them. Parents I met at your wonderful gala told me, with tears in their eyes, how much your organization meant to their young people.

Mr. Racicot, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit us in early March, we were totally confined, and the Maison des jeunes had to close its doors. The young people who met there regularly for their various activities were deprived of them.

Your organization has a team of community stakeholders. You said that it is a non-profit organization funded largely by grants. Have you had to resort to federal assistance programs such as wage subsidies or to temporary layoffs? Have your workers benefited from the Canada emergency response benefit? If so, do you feel that the programs were sufficient to deal with the situation?

• (1445)

Mr. Bernard Racicot: Yes, we used federal programs. Two of our stakeholders have received the CESB; many of our stakeholders are students. For us, these programs have been essential in dealing with the situation. We wouldn't have been able to do it otherwise.

I am a part-time employee at the Maison des jeunes and I benefited from the CERB as an employee of another organization for which I worked. As I said earlier, I was able to give some of my time to the Maison des jeunes through social networking. So the programs were essential for us and helped us get through the crisis.

The needs are immense and we would certainly like more. We are dealing with huge anxiety issues among young people.

Of course, our team is downsized this summer, but thanks to you, Ms. Chabot, we were able to have one more counsellor during this period.

We have to adapt continuously and it's difficult, because we're always a bit caught in the middle. In our meetings with stakeholders in early summer, we were wondering how we were going to respond. No one knew, but we still had enough money and a team, even a small one, to be able to intervene with young people this summer.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, that's very interesting.

I have a second question for you. There is a survey to find out how young people experienced the COVID-19 crisis. Hopefully, that won't happen, but everyone is talking about a second wave and fearing the arrival of the fall. If I am not mistaken, it is mostly young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who attend the Maison des jeunes des Basses-Laurentides.

• (1450)

Mr. Bernard Racicot: Yes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: We've seen their anxiety and distress. The high schools that the majority of them attend were not open. They were isolated and all.

Were you able to keep in touch with them after all? What would help you most in the future? We mentioned the CERB, but are there other ways or measures that would help you get through this?

The Chair: Could you give a brief answer, please?

Mr. Bernard Racicot: All right.

I'm just going to tell you a little story. We get in touch with them through social networks and through our activities in the courtyard. We also go to the village and call them personally. My colleague called a young girl who is suffering from anxiety and who had not left her house until last week. My colleague went to her house, and they were able to go for a walk. It was the first time this person had left her home. This little story shows how young people can be isolated and suffer from anxiety. This anxiety is linked to problems that can go as far as drug use.

So, as far as future needs are concerned, it will mainly be a question of having a team capable of organizing these meetings, which will be more and more individual.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot and Mr. Racicot.

[English]

Next is Ms. Kwan.

Go ahead, please, for six minutes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of the witnesses. Both of you actually emphasized the need for individual connections, and there is no question. I come from the non-profit sector, and making that connection and building that trust with the individuals is absolutely paramount.

To the issue of supports in the program for the youth you are providing supports to, I'm wondering, in the face of COVID-19 and the special situations and challenges that it presents, and given that some of the programming is coming to an end with respect to COVID supports, if you have any concerns with respect to that or if you have any recommendations to make in terms of going forward with ongoing supports for folks at this time.

Maybe we can start with Mr. Cordes.

Mr. Steve Cordes: Thank you very much.

Absolutely. I know that specialized programs are going to be coming to an end, and I'd suggest that for any ongoing recovery supports that you not make partnerships for the sake of having partnerships. I think I've been around long enough to have seen that when government wants to send support letters or to have six partners before it will fund a program and so on, you end up with nothing but a lot of paper going back and forth between organizations.

Where you can have really significant impact is by assigning true value in your funding assessments, in your programs, to interdisciplinary partnerships. For example, we have a great partnership with a local not-for-profit called London Abused Women's Centre. Their focus is on women who have experienced physical or sexual abuse. They are taking the lead on an anti-human-trafficking initiative. Part of that involves girls as young as 15 years old. They've reached out to us, and we have a very active memorandum of understanding between our two organizations whereby, for anybody who falls into our age mandate, we can help them out with housing. When the shelter opens, we'll ensure that each young woman who comes in through a referral gets a dedicated room at the shelter. Then these two organizations together—LAWC through the work that they do around the violence experiences and us around the housing and employment supports that we can offer—are doing something that neither one of us could do individually. We do that with mental health space, with CMHA, and even with our local hospitals around mental health care.

I would think that going forward for COVID recovery—these will be very complex issues—no one organization is going to be able to do all of these things. I would hope that any ongoing federal investments would look at.... You're not going to fund agency A to do what they normally do plus a whole bunch more, and then measure them. You should look at how, fundamentally, they are working with their partnership and can demonstrate the value in that, whether it's through an MOU that articulates the value added for the federal investment and then the community benefits.... It should be something like that, something that really instills these active partnerships.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you, Mr. Cordes.

I just want to build on this question. One of the issues that I know, certainly in my own community.... In fact there are two paramount issues. One is the lack of safe, secure and affordable housing, and particularly for youth it's very difficult. They try to get

an apartment, notwithstanding that rent is really high and the vacancy rate is low, but when people see a young person come to the door, they have all kinds of reasons to not offer the unit, truth be told. That's the reality they face. Then whenever governments, like our provincial government here in British Columbia, build a housing project dedicated to young people, it just fills up, just like that.

With regard to safe, secure, affordable housing for young people, what action needs to be taken up by the federal government?

• (1455)

Mr. Steve Cordes: It would be the investments in affordable housing, period. Last year we had 30 affordable housing units. By the time we're done the few projects we have on the go, we'll have 101. It's not just the number of apartments that becomes community changing; it's the partnerships that are part of that. We're creating within Joan's Place, which is the next one we're about to develop, 35 apartments but also two floors of what will be a youth wellness hub. There will be on-site delivery from justice. There will actually be a court hearing room. We just signed an agreement with the Province of Ontario around that, so youth court will be in this building. CMHA will be in this building. Our local school board will be there with an alternative education centre.

Our great success has been that we've raised \$7 million towards this. Our great detriment is that we need another \$10 million.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Have you made an application to the federal government for this?

Mr. Steve Cordes: Yes, we're working with CMHC.

One of our challenges in terms of affordability is that we try to keep our housing units at the rate where they're matched roughly to what social income support would be, so around \$560 for a family. That's very, very deeply affordable. Our challenge is that we can't afford to carry a lot of debt and make that work. Typically CMHC funding goes up to a platform, but then you have to carry debt. It's very affordable debt, but it's still debt, and it makes us charge more for apartments than we would like to charge. That's the thought.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Thank you, Mr. Cordes.

Next we're going to go to Ms. Falk.

Go ahead, please, for five minutes.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Thank you.

I would also like to thank both of the witnesses for your testimonies today and for the valuable work that both of your organizations do.

We know that job creation and job security are going to be integral to a successful economic restart. Some businesses, we know, have been able to weather the pandemic and some businesses have weathered it with the help of the emergency government programs that have been offered. Unfortunately we also know that some businesses haven't and that others are on the brink of permanently closing and others have had to restructure completely.

My first question is for Steve Cordes with Youth Opportunities Unlimited. Connecting at-risk youth to employment opportunities is very valuable on the individual level, and also we know that it benefits society as a whole. I did have an opportunity this morning to look at the letter from Samuel that you shared with the committee. It's certainly a testament to how empowering a job opportunity is but also to how empowering people can be when we take the time to listen and to help others one on one, and that comes from taking the time to genuinely listen and grow a rapport with them. Frankly, it comes down to caring. It's important that youth job opportunities continue to be available and accessible.

I'm just wondering, in your view, what the greatest barriers facing at-risk youth seeking employment are and whether the pandemic has changed these barriers.

Mr. Steve Cordes: I think there are a couple. One is that young people—not as a whole, but many young people—don't see themselves as employable. Therefore, they opt to remove themselves from the job market.

Our platform around social enterprise—and again Youth Opportunities Unlimited is a national platform—delivers in many communities across Canada. A social enterprise platform, when it's used as a training vehicle, can be game changing for those folks, because it takes them away from having to demonstrate how they're going to help a company make money and fit into a game that they don't necessarily know how to play, and allows them to learn about their passions, their hopes and their sense of what they enjoy. I think when we serve sometimes vulnerable or marginalized youth, we forget that as much as the great programs are there for them and the employment opportunities can be there for them, those still have to be connected to their dreams and their hopes for themselves.

“Any job is a good job” and so on is true in a lot of cases, but they need to see that, and it can't just be lectured to them. They have to start feeling as though that's part of it, because starting a new job can be really scary if you've never worked before. The social enterprise platform allows for that and allows them to start seeing that they are part of this economy and that there are next steps for them. The success rates of those programs for us are just phenomenal. Typically the most marginalized populations we serve are the ones who do exceptionally well at that. They excel because of the confidence, and Sam's letter is a testament to that.

• (1500)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I think it definitely comes down to that one on one. When you read Sam's letter, he didn't feel valued. With having people take that opportunity and that time to sow into somebody and speak those words of affirmation and give them the opportunity to try, things can change.

I have another question for you.

This committee in particular has heard testimony from other witnesses who have talked about some businesses moving toward permanent remote structures. I'm wondering how this would change the work you are doing and how the change would impact at-risk youth.

Mr. Steve Cordes: There can be some pretty significant negative impacts on that. Our experience is that their networks tend not to be very supportive of their long-term growth and long-term inclusion in a community.

As I talked about earlier, you could be the one fish that's swimming upstream when all your friends are going downstream, and it's really hard to keep swimming upstream. If everything is online, including jobs—remote in the way that a lot of things are virtual now—and that stays that way for this population, they'll not have that opportunity to experience a sense of community, where they feel they've landed somewhere that feels good and that reinforces the behaviours they want to develop. If everything remains virtual, it's very hard for them to develop that sense, that community or communal experience.

I think there's some risk there, for sure. If we're going to lose some of that personal contact, the challenge will be how we maintain whatever limited contact there is that is engaging and incredibly important.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Falk. Thank you, Mr. Cordes.

The last questioner for this panel will be Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Housefather, please, you have five minutes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank both witnesses for the excellent work your organizations are doing in your communities. I very much appreciate it.

I'm going to get to a couple of questions for both witnesses.

I'll start with Mr. Cordes, because I'm on the English channel.

Mr. Cordes, my colleague Kate Young very much wanted to be here today. She wanted me to express her appreciation for the great work you do and to ask a question about whether you have seen a change in mental health or issues with respect to greater homelessness during the COVID pandemic.

I heard you answer Ryan's question already with respect to the five suicides and the added impact on mental health, but could you tell me about the added impact on homelessness?

The second question I have for you—I'll let you both answer—is this. Could you let me know if your organization has benefited from any of the COVID-related federal programs? Are you using the wage subsidy? Are you using the rental subsidy at all?

Mr. Steve Cordes: On the impact on homelessness...absolutely.

For example, I think about our existing youth shelter. YOU is about to open up our own shelter, but the Salvation Army in the city of London has some youth beds. Their experience has been that since COVID, young people are sleeping rough outside rather than going into that shelter these days. That creates more risk, a lot of behaviours like drug addiction issues, trauma, being taken advantage of. We're certainly seeing more young people who have experienced trafficking.

We have staff who are dedicated to anti-human trafficking. We have two and a half staff dedicated to that initiative. We would expect to see a fair number of people who, unfortunately, have experienced that. The difficulty now is that with fewer housing options available, fewer support options available, it's harder to get out of that. We're finding that becomes more embedded in people's experiences. That's certainly an area of concern for us.

With regard to homelessness, we're seeing more young people sleeping rough.

• (1505)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: My other question was about whether you have benefited from any of the government programs during the course of the pandemic.

Mr. Steve Cordes: We're still exploring the wage subsidy.

I know there was an announcement last week around the 30% platform. We've lost significant earned revenue, but our government revenue, in the short term, has not dropped significantly. We're not quite at the 30%, so—

Mr. Anthony Housefather: But you know you have the option.... I don't know enough about your organization, but non-profits generally have the option of disregarding government revenue.

If you need any help, please feel free to reach out to your MP on that.

Mr. Steve Cordes: Perfect. Thank you so much.

I know that our finance team is working through the right option for us to pursue.

On the rental one, we're exploring that. Some of the properties we own ourselves, so that's the challenge. When you own your own property, you're not eligible for that. We rent some of the space, so we're exploring it with one of our landlords.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Perfect, and hopefully you're benefiting from other programs such as the national housing strategy and the social innovation funding. Again, thank you for your great work.

[Translation]

Mr. Racicot, thank you once again for the work you are doing. I was very pleased to hear that, thanks to your excellent member of Parliament, Ms. Chabot, you have obtained more federal summer jobs. I also noted that you were able to take advantage of the emergency benefit.

I'd like to ask you, as I asked Mr. Cordes, if, during the pandemic, you observed in the young people you work with different mental health problems from those you had observed in the past.

Mr. Bernard Racicot: The problems are no different, but they are amplified. Everything is amplified, whether it is anxiety, loneliness, stress or uncertainty about summer jobs. I would say that the intensity level has doubled for young people. We must deal with this complex situation. The problems are pretty much the same, but they are amplified.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Is it the same for people who are homeless?

Mr. Bernard Racicot: We work with an organization called the Resto Pop, but given our age groups and location, we do more homelessness prevention.

We do not have many homeless people in our community, but we do have some. I worked with homeless people in downtown Montreal for 15 years, but in Sainte-Thérèse, it is very different. Homelessness has another face. We are working to prevent homelessness. Our approaches are mainly focused on prevention.

In terms of grants, our goal for September and the fall is prevention in the back-to-school season. Young people are wondering what back to school will be like. The issue is always on their minds, and we want to be there for them.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Racicot and Mr. Housefather.

I'd like to thank our two witnesses for their presentations, but especially for the work they do in their communities.

It is very important that all Canadians have organizations like yours in their communities to do this work.

[English]

With that, we're going to suspend for three minutes to get ready for our next panel of witnesses.

• (1505)

(Pause)

• (1510)

The Chair: We are now back in session. I would like to welcome Mr. Owen Charters, president and chief executive officer, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada; and Isaac Fraser-Dableh, member, national youth council, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada; as well as Nora Spinks, president and CEO of the Vanier Institute of the Family.

We're going to go with the Boys and Girls Club first for your opening statement, Mr. Charters. Go ahead.

Mr. Owen Charters (President and Chief Executive Officer, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be starting and then passing it over to Isaac, who will give a bit of his personal experience.

Mr. Chair, honourable members and committee staff, thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to you today and to contribute to this conversation about how we can support youth employment during this most challenging time in our country's history.

Community-based services, positive relationships and life-changing programs—as Canada's largest child- and youth-serving organization, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada provides vital programs and services to over 200,000 young people in 775 communities across Canada. During critical out-of-school hours, our clubs help young people develop into healthy, active and engaged adults. Our trained staff give children and youth the tools they need to realize positive outcomes in self-expression, academics, healthy living, physical activity and mental health.

Over the past 100 years, and during these last five difficult months, our clubs have been there for vulnerable children, youth and families. Today, clubs are actively providing food for families and partnering with their local food banks. We are providing child care and programs for children and youth of essential workers now and will for more families as our economy reopens. We are providing technology to support connectivity and running high-quality virtual programming to promote educational, physical and mental health outcomes when kids can't be in clubs. Also, we have continued to offer essential services such as transitional housing throughout these trying times.

Our clubs across the country support youth to obtain employment, and we are a direct employer of thousands of youth within our programs each year. Clubs implement programs that engage youth in developing employable skills and acquiring a job, such as resumé building and interview preparation.

Clubs also have direct links to employers that support vulnerable youth to get and keep that all-important first job, yet over the last five months we have witnessed young workers being disproportionately affected by the downturn in the Canadian economy due to COVID-19 closures and physical distancing. We've seen unprecedented layoffs in industries such as restaurants, hotels, child care services and retail, and in our own charitable sector. These industries are the sectors where young Canadians most often enter the workforce. We also know that across all sectors it is often the most junior employees who are laid off first.

Historically, the unemployment rate among young Canadians has been twice as high as that of all Canadians. National statistics also paper over deep inequities and barriers faced by youth in equity-seeking groups. Indigenous youth, newcomers, young people living in poverty, LGBTQ2+, young people with disabilities, racialized youth and youth in rural and remote communities face unique and elevated barriers to labour market participation. These are the youth our programs serve.

Given the unparalleled youth labour disruption, we need significant policy responses, and I want to take some time both to acknowledge the current response and to push us collectively to do more.

First, the Canada emergency student benefit has provided many of the youth we serve with much-needed financial support during a time when many are unable to find work due to COVID-19. It is

important to note here that many youth receiving this benefit were previously contributing to their family's day-to-day expenses through employment. This program is supporting vulnerable families to stay afloat during this time.

In the early days of the pandemic, we and others called for a significant new investment in the youth employment and skills strategy; it is not built to tackle a youth employment crisis of this magnitude. In late April, we welcomed the new investment of \$100 million-plus in the youth employment and skills strategy. We also want to recognize the \$15 million for the supports for student learning program, which aims to ensure that vulnerable children and youth, many of whom our clubs serve, do not become further marginalized as a result of COVID-19.

Finally, the Canada summer jobs program changes announced on April 8 are important and are furthering the policy objective to support youth to enter and stay in the workforce. Temporarily allowing part-time positions and job placement end dates as late as February 2021 will support vulnerable youth—who often have other family obligations—in accessing this program and providing employers the flexibility they need in order to continue to move forward with the positions they previously applied for. We were surprised, however, that our clubs only saw a small number of additional grants when the Canada summer jobs program was expanded earlier this spring, and some positions didn't get grants.

On the whole, these are very positive developments, yet we know more is needed as businesses and non-profits scale back their employment plans given the economic conditions. In respect of this, we are making three recommendations for the Canada summer jobs program.

First, today we are repeating our call and the recommendation of the Canadian government's expert panel on youth employment to permanently evolve the Canada summer jobs program into a year-round Canada youth jobs programs. We know that the normal mode of Canada summer jobs doesn't reflect the reality of many youth and how they organize their time, work and education, and that many youth who are not in post-secondary studies would benefit from accessing these placements throughout the calendar year.

• (1515)

We also know first-hand that employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises as well as non-profits and charities, would benefit from the flexibility to offer placements at different times during the year. Permanently modifying the Canada summer jobs program into a year-round youth jobs program will provide the flexible and holistic supports that are needed now for young Canadians to develop the skills and work experience they need as they enter and navigate a very challenging labour market.

Secondly, allowing for part-time jobs and instituting a trusted employer mechanism and corresponding multi-year funding as part of the Canada summer jobs or Canada youth jobs program will further enable employers to better plan for and meaningfully engage youth employees.

Thirdly, as the Canada summer jobs program transitions to the Canada youth jobs program, we recommend another round of CSJ-like grants to support employers in hiring young Canadians. This round should be launched in the late fall potentially, with employment to begin early in 2021. We've seen civil servants move mountains over the last five months, so we know this can be done.

These policy recommendations build off of the federal government's expert panel on youth employment's final report and are even more relevant now to support young Canadians during this unprecedented time.

I'd now like to take the opportunity for a member of our national youth council, Isaac, to speak about his personal experiences during COVID-19.

I'll turn to Isaac.

• (1520)

Mr. Isaac Fraser-Dableh (Member, National Youth Council, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada): Thank you, Owen.

Good afternoon, committee members. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Isaac Fraser-Dableh. Today I want to share how COVID-19 has affected me, my employment and my community.

I am 16. I live in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and I am a member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's national youth council. Members of the youth council help at our local clubs and also work directly with the Boys and Girls Clubs' national team in setting priorities to support children and youth.

Prior to COVID, I was attending high school and working at a bakery, getting a couple of shifts a week. Once COVID hit, that came to a screeching stop. I was laid off. I couldn't save for college or even pay for my phone bill.

This didn't just happen to me. It happened to many of my friends. Some of them weren't as lucky as I was to return to work. They were either let go or the business has closed. Now they are trying to find new jobs to save for college or other things. However, in today's environment, it's very hard to find a job.

I want to take a moment to dispel what young people often hear: that we don't want to work and we want things handed to us.

I've been working since I was five by helping my great-grandfather sell Christmas trees at the local market. I continued to do this until I was 14, when I started to work at a gourmet grilled cheese food truck. For the past two years, I have worked at a bakery.

Starting to work at a young age taught me the concept of money and helped me to build a strong work ethic. Working at a young age will help others learn these important skills. I know that many people who are given whatever they want without earning it will never learn that life doesn't work like that and they won't get what they want all the time. The young people I know who have worked understand how hard it is to make a dollar. It also helps you learn how to save for college or even buy a new car. I personally think it's better to learn the importance of money and saving at a young age, because if you don't, you could possibly have financial problems when you're older.

We aren't lazy and we will change the world.

I want to close by urging you to be bold in supporting youth employment during this really difficult time. We have been out of school, isolated from our friends and laid off from our jobs. We can make real differences in our communities and across Canada with the policy recommendations we are proposing.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Owen Charters: Thank you, Isaac.

Mr. Chair, we will turn it over to you. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Great job, Isaac.

Thank you, Mr. Charters.

Next, we'll go to Ms. Spinks, please.

Ms. Nora Spinks (President and Chief Executive Officer, Vanier Institute of the Family): Good afternoon, and thanks for the opportunity to spend a little time with you this afternoon.

This has been a time of disruption—a time of difficulty for some, a time of opportunity for others and certainly a time of adaptation and adjustment for us all. This disruption has changed the way we work, who works and who doesn't; how we connect with our co-workers, our colleagues, our clients and our customers; and how we connect to family and friends, our community and the world. This is a period of focus on health and well-being. It's also a period of generosity and gratitude. It's a period of responsiveness and responsibilities. It's a period of time for learning and growth.

As a research and education organization, we're focused on understanding families, family life, and family experiences, expectations and aspirations. COVID has really put a spotlight on family. Either we have spent intensive amounts of togetherness or we've experienced extreme separation. Every system has been tested—our economic system, health care, justice, child welfare, community services, education, early learning and child care, long-term care and our system of families.

One of the things that we have learned through all our work in the last several months is that every strength and every weakness of each of these systems has been magnified, intensified and amplified during COVID. An example of this is our health care system—the magnification of the dedicated medical professionals and those who support them, and the weaknesses in the long-term care sector, where our reliance is on family, friends and volunteers to supplement the care. Once you remove them from that environment, we know that the quality of care drops dramatically.

This has been a period of time when we've focused on needing to be well, to do well and to stay well. To do that, we need to really understand how our systems have been tested. We know that each of them has had an impact on family well-being, and we've come to the conclusion that there are about nine things that need to be in place to optimize family well-being during COVID and hereafter.

The first one is income. It needs to be adequate, stable and predictable. The physical environment needs to be adequate, it needs to be stable and there needs to be access to outdoors. Employment or attachment to the labour force needs to be flexible, it needs to have tools to be successful and there needs to be autonomy on how, where and when work gets done. Children need to have attentive adults. They need access to the Internet for home-schooling. They need opportunities to play, explore and discover. Families need adequate nutrition, opportunity for exercise and access to the health care system. They need quality connections with each other and others, and they need access to current, reliable and accurate information. Last, they need to be able to optimize their connections through individual and family well-being.

We know that not everybody has all of these elements in place, in particular in rural, remote and northern communities where there's high density and high precarity.

To give you a bit of a sense of what we've been up to since we went into lockdown on March 10, we began collaborating and partnering immediately with Statistics Canada, the Association for Canadian Studies and Leger to do week-over-week polling.

We've collaborated with a group of people to establish the COVID-19 social impacts network, which is now over 125 people who study, serve and support individuals and families, and who need to understand how COVID is impacting. We've been part of the CanCOVID network of experts, who have been brought together by Canada's chief science officer. We have been collaborating with our colleagues in Australia, the European Union and the U.S. We've been working with the G7 team for women's empowerment, with UNICEF, with the UN on the expert panel on families and with our university colleagues who are receiving SSHRC and CIHR grants.

• (1525)

We've also been partnering with the Canadian association of marriage and family therapists and the Canadian counselling and psychotherapists association. Also, a project we've been working on is looking at veterans' families, with the True Patriot Love Foundation, Veterans Affairs and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research.

What we've been doing is that, week over week, we've been collecting data through a poll. We have a standard set of questions that have been the same since March 10. We change a few of those week over week. We've also done some targeted surveys and have participated with Statistics Canada on their crowdsourcing survey. We collect the data, analyze it, synthesize it, mobilize it and operationalize it. The surveys go out on Friday and run over the week-end. We get the data back on Monday and analyze it on Tuesday. We write the report on Wednesday and translate it on Thursday, and on Friday the cycle returns again.

We've also been doing specific surveys with children and youth in collaboration with both UNICEF and Experiences Canada, a survey with family therapists, because we want to know what they're seeing in their offices and, as I mentioned, with veterans' families. Also, we've done boosters in the week-over-week work that include new Canadians, indigenous peoples and people from visible minority communities, and again, some boosters with youth. We collect that data and we've been running conferences and doing reflective practice sessions across the country week over week.

We've been posting this data. I've been looking at what I can share with you. There is a ton of information on our website and a lot more on the COVID-19 social impacts website. I'll make sure you have access to all of that.

As for what we've been finding, we're waiting for funding for looking at a broad “families in Canada” survey. We're waiting to hear back for some funding on families in recovery and families new to Canada, and also for a study on fertility and pregnancy implications, because what we've been hearing is that young people who were planning pregnancies in 2020 have postponed those, and that's going to have huge implications for everything from maternity benefits through to kindergarten and to high schools in the years ahead. We're also looking at parents' confidence in the early learning, child care and education systems as we start the rollback over the summer and into the fall.

We've been designing these surveys and polls so that we can compare them with pre-COVID using existing tools and then look at them post-COVID. We're also looking at some of the international things, such as what are the impacts on air pollution, childhood allergies and asthma, and premature births. Premature births have been dropping steadily during COVID. Nobody really understands why, so we want to get a handle on that. We also want to look at the stresses and strains on families and community and the impacts on well-being.

With just a few minutes left, I want to give you some samples of some of the results that we've experienced in the last little while.

One of the things that's interesting is that the data that's being collected right now is of very high quality. It's representative. It's solid information.

One of the things is that people are really interested to tell their story and to share their information. For the very first crowdsourcing survey that Statistics Canada did in relationship to COVID-19, when we had the questions ready and it was ready to roll out, we were hoping to get about 15,000 responses within 10 to 15 days. By day six in the field, we had more than 275,000 responses and, of those, 68% gave their email addresses for further study thereafter, so the data we have is solid.

We do know that those who were doing well before COVID are still, by and large, doing well. Those who were not doing well are doing way worse. For those in the middle, many of them are doing better, and a few of them are doing not as well.

• (1530)

Just to give you some specifics, I'll share with you briefly a couple from the very last poll that we put out, which I think might be of particular interest to you. It was around how many people are worried about the deficit. Thirty-five per cent are very worried, 43% are somewhat worried and 18% are not at all worried or not very worried. In response to the deficit, asked whether or not they thought government should scale back on the programs or payments, 41% said yes, and 44% said no.

On mask wearing, most people who are wearing masks are doing so in grocery stores. For those who flat-out refuse, it's mostly in bars, which has the highest refusal rate, and on public transit. When asked whether or not people think that we're at the end of the first wave, 40% say yes, and 47% say no. When asked about releasing protective measures, 10% said that the government should accelerate that pace, 64% are quite content and ask that you maintain it, and only 26% want you to slow it down.

In terms of mental health, if you had excellent or very good mental health going into COVID, chances are you're still experiencing excellent or very good mental health. If you had bad mental health, it's as bad or worse. There was a slight shift around early April, where a lot of the negatives peaked and then they came down.

This is true, too, for couples. Couples in March and into early April were very lovey-dovey, had meaningful conversations, no stresses, no strains, and then by week three, they were getting a little testy with one another. It was not so great by week three to four, and then it stabilized and has been fairly positive thereafter.

People find that it's very stressful leaving their homes, even with masks. The youth are more afraid of their loved ones contracting COVID than themselves, and they're much interested in looking after each other.

In terms of fear—

• (1535)

The Chair: Ms. Spinks, can you wrap it up? We're well over time.

Ms. Nora Spinks: Oh, I'm sorry.

Fear was highest in early April, and it was also lowest in early April. If you were very afraid, it was high in April, or not at all afraid, also high in April.

You can see by just these few examples that there is a lot we can learn from the data that has been collected, and now it's time to figure out how we're going to apply some of this learning in the programs, services and supports going forward.

Thank you for your time, and I apologize. My clock says I'm still on time. Sorry.

The Chair: Thank you very much. It was extremely valuable information. I was quite reluctant to stop you, quite frankly. However, there will be more to come out in the course of the questions, I'm sure.

We'll start with Ms. Kusie, for six minutes, please.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you very much to all of our witnesses here today.

Owen and Isaac, it's very wonderful to see both of you here at committee.

Owen, I'm going to start with you.

You mentioned that you did not receive all of the Canada summer job grants for which you had applied. I'm wondering if you got any information or reason as to why you did not receive grants for all of the positions for which you put requests forward.

Mr. Owen Charters: There were definitely some clubs that received all of them. We had several who are used to receiving certain portions, or allocations I guess, of the summer jobs grant and then discovered that they had not all been approved.

When they talked to their local MPs, they were given the reason that there was a much higher demand for the summer grants than had been normally the case. I think there were more employers out there looking for it. They were told that while there may have been more grants given overall, there were many more employers looking for them.

That's all we've been told at this point in any of the follow-ups. I think some have done a follow-up to see if there is a way to refine some of those positions, but I don't have a follow-up yet on how that has gone.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Okay. Thank you for that, Owen.

Isaac, thank you so much for being here today. I just loved listening to your story about your life in Fredericton. I was in Fredericton this past summer, and I think I had the good fortune to go to the market that you described. It's a wonderful place.

Your story really resonated with me in terms of the hopes of young Canadians today. When you and your friends talk about the future, how do you feel about your futures and what do you see?

Mr. Isaac Fraser-Dableh: When my friends and I talk about our future, we talk about what jobs we're looking at and where we want to be set up, where we think we will work, where we should be set up when we're working.

One of my friends likes computer science and the technology of that, and he thinks maybe he should go to Toronto because there's a bigger demand there than here.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: You think about the different dreams you have for your future, like all young people and like all young people should. Thank you for that, Isaac.

Mr. Isaac Fraser-Dableh: You're welcome.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Ms. Spinks, thank you very much for your testimony.

I was very happy to hear you mention True Patriot Love. A certain leader, a candidate I'm supporting in the Conservative race, is a founding member of the board of directors, so thank you for that. I feel as though you might have had a spy cam in my house, seeing the interactions between my spouse and me over the last few months.

I find legitimacy in all the responses you gave, but what really breaks my heart is that in regard to the testimony of all our witnesses here today, we're talking about jobs, programs and how the jobs and supports are going to be distributed, but from that we need a strong economic recovery plan. The Conservatives have said over and over again that we are the only nation in the G7 that doesn't have an economic recovery plan.

I want all Canadians to receive the supports they so require. I want young Canadians like Isaac to have good jobs to go to, and I'm very concerned that we are not seeing an economic recovery plan fast enough to allow for all of that.

Ms. Spinks, those are a few comments on that. I really appreciate your commentary. Thank you very much.

I'll go back to Mr. Charters, Owen as I've been calling you, if I may, please. I wanted to give you an opportunity to explain your program, your year-round Canada youth jobs program, and to expand on that. I wanted to get your opinion in addition to further explaining the program you envision. Have you seen the CERB negatively impact the youth initiative? Isaac has talked about how young people want to enter the workforce. They want to be in the workforce but have you seen any influence on youth employment?

Could you perhaps explain a bit more of your program and then comment a bit on the CERB, please?

• (1540)

Mr. Owen Charters: I'll try to do a bit of both.

The first piece is that we're looking at the fact that—it's not just about this pandemic—youth don't just simply leave school at the end of the spring term and come back in the fall anymore. They're changing the times at which they come back to school. They're taking gap years. They're juggling their schedules to start in different semesters. There's a lot more flexibility in post-secondary education.

We see a program designed around an older agrarian model that says you have the summer off and that's when your summer jobs happen, yet we're seeing employers saying there are opportunities that don't just happen in the summer. There are opportunities in lots of industries that happen year-round, and if we were able to offer these opportunities to youth at times that make sense for them and allow for them to save for education, in some cases, to take the time before they re-enter post-secondary education, then we'd have a program that better fits the realities of how youth think about work and how they think about education.

The idea around this, which came even pre-pandemic, is that this is a program that would better suit the needs of both employers and students these days. I think that's the first piece in rethinking this in terms of what would be a greater modernization of how the program works.

I can't speak as significantly around CERB, except to say that students, to my understanding, are not eligible, but they've been benefiting from the Canada emergency student benefit. That's been okay but not adequate, because we're seeing a huge demand for students to go into savings mode through the summer months, and the living expenses, tuition expenses, when you add all of them up, you have a lot of youth who aren't pulling in the same incomes either from jobs or from these benefits that they might have done if they had full-time employment or opportunities around that. We're seeing that it's not significant enough to give youth the opportunities they're looking for from those benefits.

I have to admit I don't have any more details on access or lack of access except that students are saying it's not enough for them.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Charters and Ms. Kusie.

Next we're going to Mr. Long, please, for six minutes.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, everybody.

Mr. Charters, first and foremost, I want to acknowledge the great work that you do and that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada do right across the country. Certainly, in my riding, Saint John—Rothesay, the Boys and Girls Club has an excellent executive director in Amy Appleby-Shanks and her team. They continue to do fantastic work. They opened up their gym throughout this pandemic for Outflow, our men's shelter. They just do wonderful, wonderful work.

Isaac, I want to thank you. Hello from Saint John, New Brunswick, your neighbour. I want to thank you for sharing the youth perspective. Your presentation, your words were very profound and meaningful, so thank you for that.

Mr. Charters, I just want to also throw in that I wholeheartedly support your advocacy for the transformation of the Canada summer jobs program into a Canada youth jobs program. Last Parliament, last committee, I was proud to be part of the committee when we recommended—as part of the report “Experiential Learning and Pathways to Employment for Canadian Youth”—that ESDC explore transforming the jobs program into a broadly based youth jobs program for Canadian youth. I just wanted to throw in that you certainly have my support in that.

Mr. Charters, my question to you is this: Our government announced a \$350-million emergency community support fund to support charities and non-profits delivering services to help communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. Has the Boys and Girls Clubs, the local branches, applied for or received any of this funding? If so, what has been the impact of this funding on the ground?

• (1545)

Mr. Owen Charters: Thank you, Mr. Long. That's a great question, and it's great to acknowledge Amy Shanks, who does wonderful work, as you say, in Saint John and keeps our feet to the fire, as well, in our national team to make sure that they get what they need from us.

I would say that with regard to the \$350-million emergency community support fund, most clubs have applied and have received funding. They've received it through the streams of community foundations, through the Red Cross, as well through United Way, depending on what sort of support they were looking for. Many have talked about the support that's provided.

A lot of it is when our clubs on the ground are providing emergency food relief, a lot of emergency mental health supports and check-ins to families. All of these measures cost money. That program is critical to supporting that work. We've also seen it support the personal protective equipment that clubs need.

I think one thing I would add, though, is that clubs have struggled with the fact that it doesn't support some of their own financial needs. It very much is designed to support the direct service—which is fantastic—what they've seen that the families, children and youth in our communities need. What they've struggled with is that it doesn't pay things like their rents and overheads. Our clubs are infrastructure-based, so they see those costs continue through. We continue to push for some form of a sustainability fund that non-profits and charities might benefit from beyond the \$350-million fund....

Sorry, go ahead.

Mr. Wayne Long: That's okay. I just want to get a few of these things in.

You just acknowledged that the fund may not support some of the financial needs of the clubs, and I've heard that from other non-profits too. How would you like to see funding roll out that would impact you more effectively?

Mr. Owen Charters: There is a proposal put in originally by Imagine Canada—and I think it's still on the table with ESDC—that looks at a grant-based program that looks at losses and I think allows charities, especially charities and non-profits, to calculate.... If you think more about their balance sheet and what they might be struggling with, we're not replacing all income here. We're thinking about the fact that these organizations sometimes have costs that are draining their reserves, and most charities don't have many reserves. Therefore, Imagine Canada put in a proposal that looks for a grant-based fund that would allow organizations to apply for cost recovery for things that would allow them to keep the doors open or to return to service when they can and safely can do so.

Mr. Wayne Long: Okay. Thank you for that.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to share the rest of my time with MP Kusmierczyk.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Long.

Go ahead, Mr. Kusmierczyk.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Charters, I really do appreciate your enthusiasm for the Canada summer jobs program. I can tell you that when our government stepped forward in 2015, one of the first things we did was double the number of Canada summer job placements. During the COVID pandemic, we actually invested to add an additional 10,000, so I can tell you that we've created 86,000 quality positions for young people across the country at this point.

In addition to giving you the number of jobs, I just want to give you an opportunity to talk about some of the flexibilities that we introduced, especially the flexibility to be able to carry out the placements up to February 28, 2021. If you can speak about the importance of having those flexibilities for young people to be able to take advantage of those placements while they're in school....

Mr. Owen Charters: Yes. I think that's actually exactly the sort of flexibility we're looking for. I think we've seen that those investments, with the doubling in the funding, have been fantastic. It has worked. We see that many clubs—as employers—and many others are taking advantage of these positions. I think that's clear in the fact that we have some clubs that may not have filled their usual quotas, so the demand is there, and I think on both sides, both for employers and for youth.

I think the flexibility to take it through to February is a great recognition of the flexibility that employers want but that students are also looking for. In terms of what I'm hearing from a lot of students, Isaac is one example, and I hear from many others who are saying that they're really uncertain about how they're going to return to school, and they're uncertain about what their employment prospects look like through this winter season. They're looking at the fact that they may need to be working more, either by doing school work and working—they may be doing school work virtually—or they may decide to put off school work by a term in order to earn enough. I think some are looking forward to returning in person and are waiting for the moment when they can return to the classroom on an in-person basis.

From the clubs we've spoken to, that extension has been received quite positively, and also by other employers. I also think it's a model for how the program might evolve to become something that is a more year-round program, recognizing that it's not just for during a pandemic, but that it is how students are increasingly thinking about school and work.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Charters and Mr. Kusmierczyk.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you.

First, I have a quick question for Mr. Charters. I would also like to welcome Ms. Spinks.

With respect to the Canada summer jobs program, if I understood you correctly, a panel—

The Chair: Ms. Chabot, could you move your microphone closer, please?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Yes. It was on top of my head. My inspiration comes from the brain, but that's not where the voice comes from. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Charters, I heard you talk about a panel, the Canada summer jobs program and three recommendations. First, if I understand correctly, you want the program to be available year-round, not just during the appointed time period. Second, you want to encourage part-time employment; this was the first time employers were allowed to offer part-time jobs under the program, if I am not mistaken. Unfortunately, I did not understand what the third recommendation was. What is the third recommendation?

The reason I am asking is that you should know this committee adopted a motion to evaluate the Canada summer jobs program, which had its strengths and weaknesses against the backdrop of COVID-19, in preparation for the next program.

Mr. Owen Charters: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

If the program is replaced by a year-round program, from January to December, another call for funding applications must be issued. Our third recommendation is about that. We ran a program in the spring, and I think it needs to be renewed in the fall for other employers and other students as well.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you.

My thanks to Mr. Fraser-Dableh for his testimony.

I feel that, through federal programs, we tried to meet two objectives. We will not be evaluating the Canada summer jobs program here. It could have been improved, however. The rules were changed. For example, the government used to provide 50% in funding but now provides 100% for public and private organizations. It also permits part-time work. You should know, however, that all this was from the same budget.

You are recommending that a new program be made available in the fall to allow businesses to benefit from this type of employment because of COVID-19. It would also make students, who have a

hard time finding work, eligible for this type of employment while still at school.

Is that your objective?

• (1555)

[*English*]

Mr. Owen Charters: The concept of the program is that there are more students who are now looking. There are so many students that the unemployment rate we've seen for students remains stubbornly high and is higher now during the pandemic. This is a program that, if we can continue it year-round and run a second round of grants for employers and students in the fall, you're going to see that may have a significant impact on getting that unemployment rate down for youth and getting them into jobs. I think we're going to see employers who are back up and operating and looking for jobs to be filled and looking for students to fill those jobs.

It is tricky while doing studies. I think we've also seen the fact, though, that students typically are balancing studies and work as they see the increasing costs of schooling go up. We're also seeing people who are deferring the start of their school year and have the capacity to continue to earn, depending on how flexible the program is to accommodate that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: I will refrain from commenting. I feel that the Canada summer jobs program, which is precisely for the periods between school semesters, aims to help many students get jobs, in youth camps, for example. I will stop there. What's more, I don't take issue with student jobs, even when people are in school. We know that it is uncertain when the school year will start as well. Thank you for the recommendations. They are worth considering.

I have another question. As you know, the Canada emergency student benefit, CESB, was designed for students. It was supposed to give students and businesses access to more jobs. The Canada summer jobs program is not the only program. People have made negative comments. They said that the program was not flexible enough and that full-time jobs were being shunned because of the program.

Have you assessed the CESB? Do you feel it could have been improved, like the CERB, to be more flexible and allow more hours and more jobs?

[*English*]

The Chair: Give a very short response, please. We're well past time.

Mr. Owen Charters: In fact, as we've looked at the CESB, which is \$1,250 a month to cover living expenses, it doesn't, in fact, cover a lot of living expenses as it currently stands. There is also the fact that students are usually employed not just to cover expenses but to earn an income that allows them to save for school, and in some cases, they are contributing to family expenses as well. We see youth increasingly in a position of multiple pressures, where they are providing both for their education and providing for their family.

The current benefit, the emergency student benefit, isn't significant enough to replace what many students would have earned in a job. Our understanding of the CERB is that, because they're not in standard employment, they're not eligible for the CERB in the way it operates. What we're looking for is a program that has students in jobs and being employed, which we think would benefit the economy and would benefit students in terms of both experiences and income overall.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Charters.

[Translation]

Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Next is Ms. Kwan, please, for six minutes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

To our witnesses, thank you for your presentations.

I'd like to follow up on the issue around Canada summer jobs. I mean, part of the problem, as in my own riding, is that it's consistent every year that the dollars are deficient in funding all of the applications. In fact, this year only about a third of the applicants actually got funding, and it's not 100% funding by any stretch of the imagination. The government also asked us to identify additional groups for them that were tied to COVID. We made our recommendation, we phoned around and contacted everybody, and still, as it stands right now, barely any of those organizations that I submitted got funding at all. Hence, we have a situation where there's a lot of hype about it, but the reality is that there are not a lot of resources to support the groups. This has been an ongoing problem for as long as I've been a member of Parliament.

Mr. Charters, I'm particularly interested in the notion of doing a year-round program. Aside from creating flexibility and stability for organizations, there's the perspective of the kinds of resources that would be required. I wonder if you could speak to what kinds of granting resources we would need to see for this program to be effective in that way.

• (1600)

Mr. Owen Charters: That's quite a good question, because I think there have been critiques of the granting program from the start in terms of not just availability but also timeliness. There have been times where I think organizations.... I myself can recall applying for grants and getting calls on the Easter long weekend to finalize applications for positions. When you look at small businesses and non-profits especially, they're waiting for this grant to decide if they will hire. Many university students are looking for those jobs back in January, yet we can't post or be certain that the jobs are available until pretty much too late, towards the actual start of the summer employment program period.

One of the pieces in flexibility that I think would be beneficial is if this became year-round. It seems to me you would ideally have civil servants dedicated to this program who could begin processes earlier and keep those processes running. If there were two or three granting cycles, those processes would be more cyclical. I think you might have a program that's able to listen to and really benefit

what employers are looking for and what students are looking for, instead of one that happens on a seasonal basis, as it currently does.

I think part of that is the idea of being able to really understand the needs of employers. Clearly, right now the needs of employers have changed significantly due to the pandemic. Being able to really understand what employers are looking for and what students are looking for out of the program, I think in a more dedicated way, would be pretty fantastic.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Related to the funding stream and what the government decided, it's a huge controversy, as we know, with the WE funding, with almost a billion dollars going into volunteering, and then effectively, if you count out the hours, it's minimum wage, and in some cases less, for young people. Some would argue that directing those dollars into the Canada summer jobs program would be a far more effective means.

I don't want to get into all the controversy around WE. That belongs somewhere else. I'm talking about investment in young people and making sure they get the employment opportunities as well as the earnings and experience. I wonder if you could speak to the value of redirecting dollars, such as those allocated for volunteering in the WE program, toward Canada summer jobs.

Mr. Owen Charters: I'm happy to talk about the fact that... First of all, I think volunteering is fundamentally important. We are actually a founding member of Canada service corps. We firmly believe in the incentivizing of volunteering amongst young people. I think it becomes a lifelong value that people really benefit from.

That said, in some of the conversations we had with other potential partner organizations, we had that conversation, and we declined with our clubs, because we felt that employment was a much more significant priority for our clubs. Our clubs work in fields where, given the fact that we work with children and youth, security checks are high. Training needs are significant. We want to be sure that people we're putting in front of our youth, our members, have had the capacity and commitment to go through that.

While there are possibilities to get committed volunteers, for us staffing was job one. We have about 7,000 staff across the country. Many of those staff are youth. They are hired for the summer months to work in summer camps and to work with children and youth. We saw 6,000 of those staff laid off at the beginning of the pandemic. They slowly came back on, as CERB and other programs allowed for.

In our case, employment was first and foremost the priority, and we believe that in terms of the summer jobs program. With regard to any investment that can be put in, whether that comes from other programs or other investments, that's up to the government to decide. For us, I think, a greater investment in our jobs program would see the greatest benefit for most youth of this country.

• (1605)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much.

I disagree with you about the value of volunteering, but I think there's a difference between what was done with the WE program and what should be done.

In any event, I'm going to turn to Ms. Spinks for a minute. With all the data that she provided to us, I wonder whether she can shed some light with a gender impact analysis, if you will, of COVID, and particularly its impact upon women and the value of a national child care program.

Ms. Nora Spinks: Sure.

We had a ton of data that model very clearly that women are disproportionately affected by COVID. There's no question. Financially, physically, emotionally, intellectually—all of that—they are much more impacted.

We know that this is particularly so for women who are at risk of violence or who are vulnerable in terms of their attachment to the labour force, whether they are essential workers and their vulnerability is about getting sick or they are caregivers and their vulnerability is about not being able to provide that care, particularly since long-term care facilities have been really locked down.

Also, financially more women are either leaving the workforce in order to care for their children or are thinking that if schools do not return on a full-time basis in the fall, they will not be able to continue working from home remotely and home-schooling and raising children all at the same time—particularly those women who don't have other adults around to rely on or to support them. Definitely, women are disproportionately represented.

They're also disproportionately represented in the research. In a crowdsourcing survey, for example, more women will respond than men, so we have a really good voice of women in the data. Women are articulating that they're quite pleased and satisfied with the government measures that are in place. The “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” ratings are at 76% at the federal level and 79% at the provincial level.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Let me interrupt for one second. I wonder whether in that data there's any information about the need for child care? I'm hearing that a lot in my own riding. People are saying that we need a national child care program.

Ms. Nora Spinks: Absolutely.

The Chair: We're well past time. It absolutely is a fascinating discussion.

Ms. Spinks, please feel free to supplement or augment any of your answers, including the answer to that last question, by following up in writing.

Folks, we're past the hour. I want to thank all of you. It's good to see you again, my colleagues.

Ms. Spinks, the work of the Vanier Institute is extremely important and influential for our policy-makers and for the national discourse. Thank you for what you do.

Mr. Charters, I can't let you go without telling you what a fantastic job Amanda Beazley is doing at the Boys and Girls Club in Charlottetown.

Mr. Fraser-Dableh, 41 years ago I took my first job, as a student at Fredericton High School, at the convenience store on Regent Street. Just be careful, then, about the path you take; you may end up here.

To all members, thank you very much. We'll see you in a couple of weeks.

We're adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>