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## Football Saskatchewan and Sask Sexual Assault Services announce new program

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News Room

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Football Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Sexual Assault Services are proud to announce the launch of *Be More Than a Bystander Saskatchewan*, an award-winning, UN-recognized program designed to combat violence against women and girls.

The original *Be More Than a Bystander* (BMTB) campaign was launched in July of 2011 by the Ending Violence Association (EVA) of British Columbia, as a ground-breaking partnership between EVA BC and the BC Lions Football Club. BMTB BC utilizes the iconic status of BC Lions football players to substantially increase awareness and understanding about the impact of men's violence against women and girls.

Football Saskatchewan will be the first sporting organization in Canada to roll out anti-violence programming at the amateur level.

The Be More Than a Bystander Saskatchewan program includes:

- presentations/workshops within schools (grades 9 to 12) and in the locker room via Football Saskatchewan programming, leveraging the accomplishments and celebrity of Saskatchewan's elite CIS and junior football players into mentors and role models for youth
- engaging educational films and supporting media materials so as to build a broader base of

understanding about and to address violence and abuse in the region and the province;

- an extensive marketing campaign raising public awareness about violence against women and girls, involving advertisements across a variety of media;
- training clinics with amateur sport coaches to provide them with the tools and skills to teach their players about mutually respectful relationships, behaviors and attitudes both within and outside of sport.

“One of Football Saskatchewan’s mandates is to establish conditions, on and off the field, that are conducive to the safety and enjoyment of everyone, including our players, fans, family and friends,” said Mike Thomas, Director of Operations for Football Saskatchewan. “By bringing Be More Than a Bystander to Saskatchewan, we hope to use our platform to increase awareness about the impact of violence against women and girls, and to play a role in defeating it for good.”

“Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of sexual, physical, and emotional violence against women in the Canadian provinces – and we have to do something about it,” said Dianna Graves, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Sexual Assault Services. “Research shows that when people and communities understand the problem, they become engaged in the solution – and that is what Be More Than a Bystander training and program is all about.”

“We are excited to be partnering with Football Saskatchewan because they have taken the initiative to educate and train their players about interpersonal violence,” continued Graves. “They are tackling an uncomfortable topic head on and changing socially accepted norms about violence against women. They are to be commended on having the vision and foresight to lead this program for junior sports and are making history not only in our province, but in Canada.”

Saskatchewan’s elite junior and CIS football players who have displayed exception leadership on and off the field, and who will be taking the BMTB training and then facilitating presentations and workshops across the province, are:

Evan Turkington – Saskatoon Hilltops (Saskatoon)

Quinn Pierce – University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Saskatoon)

Cole Benkic – Saskatoon Hilltops (Saskatoon)

Justin Filteau – University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Moose Jaw)

James Vause – Saskatoon Hilltops (Saskatoon)

Jordan Walls – Saskatoon Hilltops (Saskatoon)

Drew Burko- University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Saskatoon)

Yol Piok – University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Regina)

Lance Bashutsky – University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Wynyard)

Evan Johnson – University of Saskatchewan Huskies (Regina)

Paul Woldu – CFL (Regina)

This program has been made possible in Saskatchewan thanks to a generous contribution from the Heather Ryan and David Dube Foundation.



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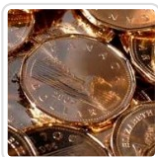
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