

# National Children's Alliance (NCA)

## E-mail Digest, week of 10-14 November, 2003

---

---

1. **Reminder:** visit of Chinese delegation
  2. **Action:** member feedback required
  3. **Announcement:** YOUCAN International Conference, 13-16 November 2003, Edmonton
  4. **Invitation:** Volunteers requested for Working Group on Child Rights Issues
- 
- 

1. **There is still space** for interested members to attend a meeting with a visiting delegation from the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China. This group of central, provincial and municipal financial and health officials, hospital administrators and a grassroots activist have requested to meet with the NCA to learn more about Canada's early childhood development programs and the Alliance's advocacy efforts in this area, as well as to share their own experience in developing such initiatives for the youngest children in China. The event will take place on Tuesday, 11 November, 2003 at the Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2490 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa (tel: 232-1505). Please RSVP with Tara Ashtakala, Manager of the NCA: [tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca](mailto:tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca), tel: 238-1591 ext. 228.

---

---

2. **Member feedback required** on the Upward Amendment Proposal for a feasibility study on a national data strategy as a first step in developing sustainable mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of government commitments to children. Please review the attached proposal; if you have any comments or concerns, please direct them to Dianne Bascombe, at [Dbascomb@nvo-onb.ca](mailto:Dbascomb@nvo-onb.ca), at your earliest possible opportunity.

---

---

3. **YOUCAN is hosting its 4th International Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution** this Nov. 13th - 16th in Edmonton. Thanks to Exchanges Canada they now have 200 travel bursaries to assist youth and chaperone's from across Canada in attending this event.

This is a chance for students and staff to learn valuable information on how to implement positive changes in your community. We're inviting you to share in more than three days of workshops, motivational speakers, training sessions, action planning groups, and conference activities on conflict resolution,

peacebuilding, and other youth related issues. Our goal is to equip youth with the tools and information they need to bring these lessons learned back to their communities and schools to build safe and healthy relationships. Youth from Edmonton will link up with youth from across Canada, as well as with some delegates from around the world, to discuss youth crime, violence prevention, ethno-racial conflict, youth empowerment and leadership and much more!!

We invite you to visit our website at [www.youcan.ca/youthwave](http://www.youcan.ca/youthwave) for more information about the conference.

YOU CAN is a national organization that is run for-youth-by-youth. We exist to try and get conflict resolution and peacebuilding training in the hands of all youth in order to create a culture of peace in our schools and communities.

---

**4. Members interested in child rights issues** are invited to join a new Working Group on this topic that is intended to foster collaboration between the Canadian Coalition on the Rights of the Child and the National Children's Alliance and develop a rights-based approach to our advocacy in general. The Group will identify current and emerging issues that have implications for the rights of children both in Canada and internationally. Current topics for consideration include:

- **Negotiations will soon begin on the draft of a UN Convention** on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. Information on the position of the Government of Canada at the Ad Hoc Committee meetings leading up to the negotiations has been scarce. If there are going to be consultations with Canadian NGOs on what Canada wants to see in the Convention, then the NCA and its members should contribute to that process in order to ensure that the needs of children with disabilities are taken into account. This presents an opportunity for the Alliance to revive and build upon the National Round Table on Children with Disabilities that it organized last year.
- **National Missile Defence** and overall security spending: Prime Minister-to-be Paul Martin has made no secret of the fact that he wholeheartedly supports Canadian participation in "exploring" the development of a National Missile Defence program with the United States. This system will cost the US about 1 TRILLION dollars, which is why Washington is pushing its allies like Canada to get involved so that the costs can be shared. Besides flying in the face of the statements of the Government of Canada that it seeks a

world for our children free from the threat of a nuclear arms race, such money could be better spent on improving the living standards of Canada's military families. The NCA and its members are in a good position to monitor whether increased spending on security as a whole since 11 September 2001 has come at the expense of programs and services for Canada's children. Given our vested interest in peace dividends, should we be taking a more active stance on defence/disarmament/security issues?

- **Gun Control:** the Firearms Act is "under fire" again; hearings took place in the Senate last week reviewing the Regulations to implement the Act. We have been inundated by the media reports on the financial costs of the gun registration program, but little on the impact it is having on safety and well-being of Canadians, particularly that of children. The statistics have been around for a while: guns are the third leading cause of death among Canadians from ages 15 - 24; guns kill more youth in this age group than cancer, drowning and falls combined; guns are frequently part of the cycle of intimidation and violence that many victims face in their homes. In most cases, the firearm used was easily accessible in the home. Safe storage of firearms, as per the new law, is essential, and must be enforced by making owners accountable for their guns. If it is true, as the Canadian Firearms Centre has reported, that up to 90% of gun owners have complied with the law, can we not assume that many lives, including those of children, will be saved? Gun control opponents and their political allies have been relentless in watering down the provisions of the Act; advocates for children are probably the most potent voices to counter them.

If you are interested in joining this Working Group, please let Tara Ashtakala know, by e-mail: [tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca](mailto:tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca), or by phone: (613) 238-1591 ext. 228. We anticipate our first meeting will be in the third week of November.

---

---

**You are receiving this e-mail as a member of the National Children's Alliance General Distribution List. If you wish to be removed from this list, please reply to this e-mail with the subject "Remove." Please send any comments or feedback to [tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca](mailto:tashtakala@nvo-onb.ca)**