

I came here today, just as people from across Manitoba and across Canada have come, **to voice outrage** at what the Gary Doer Government has announced. This government has a plan that **violates the fundamental human rights of people in this province**. Our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters are **losing their rights and freedoms** to participate as **free members of our society**.

This government is proud of itself, it is proud to be spending 40 million dollars to rebuild an institution that continue to remove people from society.

The rest of Canada, the rest of the western world has know for at least 40 years that all people **live better, happier and more fulfilling** lives when they live in the community.

Why does Gary Doer believe our sons and daughter our sisters and brothers should be shunned away in the dark corners of institution? This is one of the **most ill conceived ideas** this or any government has had, **and we know it**.

I am here to tell you that the Canadian Association for Community Living and the People First Task Force on Deinstitutionalization and our thousands of members all across Canada, **stand beside you in fighting this government's decision**

This decision is out of sync with what's happening across Canada. British Columbia, Newfoundland, have both closed their institutions, Ontario last year made a commitment to close its remaining institutions within the next three years. Other provinces are committed to support people to live in the community.

This government's decision **is a threat.**

**It's a threat to families who have young children with disabilities.** Instead of providing services in the community, this government in the future will want your children to move into the institution away from your family and friends. No institution will ever replace the love and care of a family.

This \$40 million should be used to support people in their community not on rebuilding a relic of the past.

**It is a threat to the people currently living in the institution.** They will never have the opportunity to live as valued citizens of our community. Instead, they will continue to be locked away.

**It is a threat to people** that have a disability and live and work in our community. It would be easy for this government to say we don't have any money to provide services in the community, and you have to go into an institution.

**It's a threat to society.** Institutions prevent citizens from adding value and diversity to our community. Institutions do not respect the different and unique gifts that we all have. Institutions deny us an opportunity to show compassion, love, respect and support for each other. Institutions tell our community, some of us are not valued members of our society.

Being sent to an institution is worse than going to prison, at least in prison you get released at the end of your sentence. Institutionalization is a sentence for life. And what's the crime? It makes no sense, it isn't right, we know better than this. Why isn't this government listening to the people most impacted by its decision?

Premiere Gary Doer and Minister Christine Melnick

### **Shame on You**

**Shame- on- you** for not believing that people with disabilities are part of the fabric that makes communities strong and diverse.

**Shame- on- you** for not believing that individuals with disabilities should be entitled to live in the community with their families and friends.

**Shame- on- you** for not believing that all individuals whether they have a disability or not have something to wonderful to contribute.

**Shame- on- you** for not listening to the people here today.

**Shame- on- you** for not consulting with organizations such at the Manitoba Association for community Living and People First

**Shame- on- you** for not understanding that diversity of your citizens build strong and vibrant communities

I call on the Premiere Gary Doer and Minister Melnick to immediately stop your plans to rebuild your institution at Portage La Prairie.

It takes courage to admit a mistake. Now is the time to show leadership and courage.

I ask the Minister and the Premiere to actively and meaningful engage the Manitoba Association for Community Living and People First **to dream a bigger \$40 million idea.**

To support people and help them find their **rightful** place in society as our neighbors and friends. To dream a \$40 million vision that does not include removing people, shunning people away from society in hidden dark corners of an institution.

I ask this government to do what is **right** not just for people with a disability **but for all of society.**

I challenge this government to **lead with vision, compassion and justice for all its citizens.**