**Media Release – March 27, 2017**

**Southern Alberta Child Advocacy Centre Planning Committee to Host Former NHL Player Sheldon Kennedy’s Documentary *Swift Current* and Discuss the Launch of Child Advocacy Centers in Southeastern Alberta**

Since the first Child Advocacy Centre (CAC) was launched in the U.S. in 1985, CACs have become recognized internationally as an effective and efficient way to support child and youth victims of sexual and severe abuse. CACs increase interagency collaboration, reduce costs and increase viable prosecutions. CACs offer a central location for families to visit to gain access to supports such as police services, victim support, counselling, medical care, and child and family protection services.

Sexual abuse is the root cause of PTSD, addictions, mental health issues, homelessness, and suicide. With intervention and support, children affected by sexual abuse can start on a path of healing.

On April 5th, 2017 the Southern Alberta Child Advocacy Planning Committee is pleased to bring Sheldon Kennedy (former NHL player and Lead Director of the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre) to Medicine Hat to show his documentary, *Swift Current*, and begin the discussion surrounding the development of a CAC in Southern Alberta.

CACs help children, youth, and families navigate the systems once child sexual abuse or extreme physical abuse has been identified. “Child abuse tears at the fabric of our society,” says Dave Slomp, Coordinator for the Southern Alberta Child Advocacy Centre. “The goal is to have our systems collaborate to provide integrated services by building multidisciplinary teams. This is critical in insuring children and their families get the supports they need to be safe and heal from the abuse they have experienced.” Inspector Brent Secondiak, Support Services with the Medicine Hat Police Service adds “Children's Advocacy Centres provide a lifeline to victims of child abuse and neglect. The goal of the CAC is to bring hope, help, and healing to victims of child abuse through protection and prevention. Heal the past, live the present, and dream the future.”

When: April 5, 2017 from 9:00am – 12:00pm

Media interviews with Sheldon Kennedy from 11:45am – 12:00pm

Where: Medicine Hat College, Main Theater (299 College Drive SE)

Registration: Register for this event online at www.medicinehatpolice.com

For more information please contact:

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