

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MISSION, B.C. – The Safe OnLine Outreach Project, (SOLO) is pleased to announce that Project Coordinator, Merlyn Horton has been invited to speak in Dundee Scotland on September 6, 2002 on the topic of online sexual exploitation from a Canadian perspective. A mix of 150 professionals from social work, health, education, police, and volunteer organizations will attend the Conference, entitled “Multi-disciplinary Perspectives on the Exploitation of Children”.

This invitation follows the launch of the SOLO website, (www.safeonlineoutreach.org), which has received over 8000 hits during its first two months online. The site offers information about sexual exploitation on the Internet and links to research sources, public safety information and background on the SOLO Project. International inquiries about the SOLO Project have been received from parties in Kosovo, Liberia, and Pakistan.

SOLO is a British Columbia, Canada based project that aims to reduce the sexual exploitation of children and youth, in Internet environments, through education and curricula development for youth serving professionals.

SOLO is a project of PASA, Parents Against Sexual Abuse a non-profit organization comprised of a diverse group of individuals dedicated to sexual abuse prevention and support of victims and parents.

The SOLO Project mandate is to reduce the sexual exploitation and damage to youth who are targeted by predators in online environments such as instant messaging and chatrooms. SOLO's goals are; to educate youth serving professional such as police, social workers, teachers and crisis response workers; to educate policy makers about online risks for youth; and to collaborate with other concerned stakeholders about youth sexual exploitation and responsible Internet use in Canadian society.

The SOLO Project is partially funded by the Vancouver Foundation, a non-governmental community foundation, founded in 1943 as a collection of funds that form a permanent endowment for charitable purposes. The Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation. It administers over 760 endowed funds with total capital exceeding 560 million and distributes some \$30 million a year to community organizations across British Columbia.

Additional funding for the Project comes from the Canadian National Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization Program.

Merlyn Horton, Project Coordinator for SOLO says, "The invitation to speak in Scotland is an opportunity to share the curricula we are developing. International cooperation between researchers, educators, and law enforcement agencies is crucial to a comprehensive response to the exploitation of children online. Education has a tremendous role to play in that response and I'm happy to contribute."

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