

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver Expands Storybook Program to Ferndale Institution**

New Westminster, B.C. – The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver (EFry) has expanded its Storybook Program, which provides children of prisoners with books and recordings of their parents' reading them, into Ferndale Institution in Mission, B.C. The program is also available in Maple Ridge's Alouette Correctional Centre for Women and Fraser Valley Institution, and at the Surrey Pretrial Centre.

"The Storybook Program creates an opportunity for parents and children to connect through a shared reading experience," said Shawn Bayes, executive director, EFry. "Children of prisoners want and need contact with their parents. Through the Storybook Program, they can hear their parent's voice anytime. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from inmates who tell us how much they and their children look forward to sharing the stories."

EFry introduced the Storybook Program a year ago in the Alouette Correctional Institution for women as a way to help female inmates and their children retain a strong bond. The program's popularity led to its expansion into other prisons, where it attracted participation by male inmates as well. The Storybook Program is currently the most popular voluntary participation program at the Surrey Pretrial Centre.

The launch of the Storybook Program in Ferndale Institution marks the first time in its 71-year history that EFry, an organization focused on supporting the needs of females at risk or involved in the justice system, has operated a program at a male-only facility.

Since the program's inception, more than 100 parents have shared over 300 stories with their children. Parents choose from age-appropriate new books supplied by EFry. Recently, Calgary-based Institute of Cross-Cultural Reading donated 400 books to support the initiative.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver is a non-profit, community-based organization providing support to women, girls and children involved in or affected by the justice system. Founded in 1939, EFry serves over 2200 clients annually and was the first Elizabeth Fry Society in Canada. Today, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies has 24 member associations across the country.

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