Media Release

Date: **July 10, 2025**
Regarding: **Murder of Bailey McCourt**

Trigger Warning: This article contains details which may be disturbing to some readers. If you or someone you know has been impacted by intimate partner violence, contact Archway Society for Domestic Peace at 250-542-1122. All programs are easily accessible, free of charge and confidential.

In Vernon, we know all too well the devastating impact of losing a woman – a mother, daughter, sister, friend, and colleague – to intimate partner violence. We know what happens when patterns of violence are ignored, when warnings from friends and family go unheard, and when the systems meant to protect women fail. Just over a year ago, our community lost Tatjana Stefanski, and we continue to grieve alongside her family and friends.

Forty-eight percent of women and girls in British Columbia have experienced intimate partner violence. In January 2025, Premier David Eby declared gender-based violence a national epidemic. Dr. Kim Stanton's report to the Attorney General outlines clear, actionable steps that could prevent tragedies like these. The Gender Equity Office leads the Safe and Supported Action Plan. But without concrete action these are only empty words and headlines.

What you can do:

- Contact your MLA to urge the provincial government to implement Dr. Kim Stanton's recommendations and commit the necessary resources and political will to create real change.
- Contact your local MP to advocate for amending the Criminal Code to include femicide – the intentional killing of women – as its own specific offence.

What our communities can do:

- Check in on friends, teammates, and neighbours. If someone seems withdrawn, anxious, or isolated, reach out. Let them know you care and are there to listen without judgment.
- If you suspect someone is experiencing IPV, believe them. Ask how you can support them. You don't need all the answers; listening, believing, and connecting them to specialized supports can save lives.
- Support organizations that help survivors and prevent violence. Donations, volunteering, and advocacy strengthen our community's safety net. Local shelters, counselling programs, and victim services rely on this generosity to continue their life-saving work.
- Support children impacted by IPV. Coaches, teammates, teachers, and friends can provide stability and care to children who have lost a parent to violence. Simple acts of kindness, routine, and inclusion help them feel safe and valued during unimaginable grief.

Local resources include:

- Kelowna Women's Shelter
- Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society
- Archway Society for Domestic Peace (Vernon)
- SAFE Society (Salmon Arm)
- Kelowna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre
- Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (Vernon)

What Archway is doing:

- We provide wraparound support for adult, child, and youth survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault through safe shelter, counselling, advocacy, outreach services, and collaborative community projects.
- All our services are free, confidential, and support is available 24/7.
- Archway is a proud partner in the Battered Women's Support Network's #DesignedWithSurvivors initiative. *"We are creating a real-time, community-rooted framework for public safety: one that centres survivors, trains first responders, supports court navigation, and strengthens cross-sector collaboration. We are doing the work now—because every day without action is another risk. More than 100 organizations and individuals across B.C. have joined this coalition. Because violence doesn't end with a disclosure. It ends when the systems around her stop deferring action."* *Battered Women's Support Network*

Intimate partner violence is preventable and more deaths are preventable. We can build a community where everyone feels safe, respected, and supported. If you or someone you know needs help, please reach out to us, your local women's shelter, or call the crisis line at 1-888-353-2273.

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