October 16, 2009

Dear School Administrators,

**Re: Encouraging Appropriate Halloween Costumes:**

Halloween is fast approaching and Children of the Street Society is raising awareness amongst schools about Halloween costumes which glamorize the sex trade and costumes which sexualize youth. Children of the Street Society is a local non-profit organization dedicated to education and awareness on the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children and youth.

The fact is that sexual exploitation of children and youth is NOT glamorous. Dressing up as “pimp and ho” glamorizes sex work and exploitation which is unacceptable. The harsh realities of the sex trade include violence, drug addiction, manipulation, emotional abuse, and even death. Recruiters and pimps often attempt to lure young children and youth, by making promises of a glamorous lifestyle. Pimps will recruit on school grounds, shopping malls, on the Internet, at bus loops, and anywhere teenage boys and girls gather.

In today’s youth culture the word pimp has taken on the meaning of cool, thanks in part to the media’s use of the term in a positive light. However the reality of a pimp remains the same as it always has and earning a profit off of a lifestyle that ruins the lives of children, youth, and families, is a crime, and child abuse.

Please encourage your student body to choose alternate Halloween costumes that do not glamorize the sexual exploitation of children and youth. Also, please discourage the social norm among youth that Halloween is a time for girls to dress in skimpy costumes. Instead, please encourage youth to choose appropriate costumes that represent their own expressiveness, individuality and creativity.

Children of the Street Society hopes for your students a safe and eventful Halloween. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Diane Sowden, Children of the Street Society at 604-777-7510 or email at childrenofthestreet@telus.net .

On behalf of Children of the Street Society,

Diane Sowden,

Executive Director - Children of the Street Society