



Canada Court Watch Report



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Child protection workers use illegal drugs during Hamilton CAS fund raising event!

By Mike March, Justice Reporter

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An inside CAS whistleblower who attended the Hamilton Children's Aid Society's "Grape Expectations" event in Hamilton, Ontario has reported to Court Watch that she was shocked and disappointed to see a number of the younger CAS employees smoking drugs and getting high while attending the public gala.

Out of fear of reprisals upon herself by some CAS workers, she spoke to Court Watch on the condition that her identity remains anonymous.

The well publicized "Grape Expectations" event was put on by the Hamilton Children's Aid Society on October 30, 2006 as part of a fund raising effort for the agency.

The high profile event was held at the Luna Station Banquet hall on James St. N. in Hamilton with tickets being sold at \$100 each.

According to the informant, a number of female CAS workers gathered outside the front entrance to the facility and in open view began to smoke hash.

The CAS workers huddled in a group and shared the drugs amongst themselves with the sweet smell being noticeable to those going by.

One well-dressed, elderly gentleman who was dropped off at the event by a private limousine was also not too happy with the abuse of drugs by CAS workers at the entrance to the event.

The unnamed gentleman walked over to the CAS workers and told them that they should be ashamed for what they were doing and that they should at least be going to the back of the building to make the activities a bit less obvious.

The CAS workers ignored the well intentioned gentleman who obviously could see that the CAS workers were not exercising very

good judgement.

According to eye witnesses, the CAS workers were clearly stoned and talking quite freely to anyone about their business at the agency.

This incident of illegal drug use by Hamilton CAS workers falls on the heels of the arrest and conviction of another Hamilton CAS worker, Sarah Villella who was recently convicted in court of helping to bring illegal guns into Canada.

Ms. Villella was found guilty on 13 charges, including smuggling guns through Windsor and the possession of prohibited weapons.

In addition to jail time for gun smuggling, the former Hamilton CAS worker is still facing charges for the possession of illegal drugs.

The CAS workers knew Sarah Villella and had worked with her at the Society before her conviction.

To some workers Ms. Villella was kind of a hero who would not have been caught if she had been more careful.

Most law abiding citizens of Ontario would agree that illegal drug use should have no place at any CAS agency or function.

Allowing CAS workers to indulge in drug use sets a double standard as many parents are subjected to drug testing by CAS agencies before being allowed to have access to their children.

It would seem that the CAS workers have one set of standards for parents in the community and a more lax set of standards for themselves.

The National Chairman of Court Watch, the Archbishop Dorian A. Baxter, said that the Government of Ontario should take immediate steps to clean up the Hamilton CAS.

"Even if it is only a few workers at the agency are doing drugs, they must be removed so that their influences will not rub off to the other

workers or on to some of the children and families they serve”

Court Watch has received calls from some teenage children who have reported that CAS workers have provided kids in care with booze, cigarettes and sometimes even drugs.

When a culture of drugs and involvement with the criminal sector infiltrate a CAS agency and become accepted as the normal amongst workers and volunteers, a lot of damage can be done to the very children who CAS are supposed to be caring for.

One young girl formerly in care of CAS reported to Court Watch that when she was in care the group home managers would sometimes bring drugs and booze into the group home and share them with the kids in care.

She said that it was CAS group home workers who had taught her how to take “shooters” when she was about 14 years of age.

“Worker at her group home facility would actually let the kids write the worker’s notes” said the girl.

She said the kids were literally running the group home while young CAS workers acted as if they were one of the kids and partied with the kids in care, some of whom were only 13 years of age.

Another problem with workers using drugs is that it exposes workers and others in the agencies to criminal elements.

It is well known that organized crime is responsible for importing most illegal drugs and CAS workers who become involved with those associated with organized crime put the agency they work for at risk.

The case involving former Hamilton CAS worker Sarah Vilella is a clear example of how her connections with organized crime led up to her arrest and conviction of gun running.

Chances are that she was involved with drugs while she was an employee of the Hamilton CAS.

This latest incident of CAS workers taking drugs at the Grape Expectations event can only lead many to question if other workers are connected to the same circle of friends as was Sarah Vilella.

This begs the question; could some CAS workers be bought off with favours with free drugs?

Could a CAS worker turn a blind eye to

suspected abuse of children in families connected to those involved with drugs?

Could a CAS worker become addicted to drugs to the point where he/she could be blackmailed to obtain the confidential CAS records?

In another troubling case involving the York Region CAS, a supervisor with the agency, Ms. Donna Lennon, recently pleaded guilty to stealing money from children in care.

According to the mother of the child, she believed that Ms. Lennon may have become involved with drugs and that this might have led up to the CAS supervisor stealing.

If it has not been for Court Watch assisting the mother to uncover the story, the CAS supervisor would likely still be working for the CAS.

In response to this report of drug use by Hamilton CAS workers, Baxter said that he will be sending a letter out to the Minister about the reported drug use.

Baxter said that all CAS employees at the Hamilton CAS office should be required to submit themselves to immediate drug testing and any workers who are found to have illegal drugs in their system, immediately relieved from their duties without pay.

“When it comes to illegal drugs with CAS workers, there should be a Zero Tolerance policy,” said Baxter.

In light of the recent case involving Hamilton CAS worker, Sarah Vilella, in which she was arrested for running guns into Canada from the United States, it is imperative that other workers involved in illegal drugs at the CAS be weeded out and their links to organized crime broken.

The only way to find out this for sure is to have drug testing done on all workers by an independent lab and monitored by the RCMP or Hamilton Police.

“Workers found with drugs in their system should only be allowed to get their jobs back after they have been re-tested and found to be clean.” said Baxter.

Readers with information about cases where CAS workers are involved with illegal drugs are urged to contact Canada Court Watch either by phone at (416) 451-0797 (Toronto) or by Email at info@canadacourtwatch.com.