

# Grassroots Women

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November 4, 2009

President of University of Victoria  
Dr. David Turpin  
Via email: [dturpin@uvic.ca](mailto:dturpin@uvic.ca)

Dear Dr. Turpin,

I am writing on behalf of Grassroots Women, an organization established in 1995 that has been working on issues of vital importance to working class women. Grassroots Women tackles women's experiences of displacement and forced migration, serving as cheap labour in the service sector and domestic work, and being burdened with increasing responsibility for their families when there is no national childcare program, health is being privatized and housing is unaffordable.

It has come to our attention that the University of Victoria is actively considering contracting with the national child care chain ***Kids and Company*** to address the critical shortage of quality, affordable childcare for U Vic students, faculty and staff.

From our organization and most importantly our members' experiences, we have long advocated for a genuine universal, national childcare program. That is to say one that is free, accessible to all children, public and not-for-profit that offers quality programs and curriculum and pays living wages and benefits to childcare workers.

In May 2005 we released a report "**Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Examining How the Lack of Universal Childcare Impacts Marginalized Women's Equality**" where we raised concerns about the possibility of bringing "big box childcare" to Canada. We believe that childcare is a fundamental right of women and children and it should not be a venue for profit making under globalization.

In October 2006 we co-organized a conference themed "**Universal Childcare is a Women's Right!**" where we were had UVic childcare workers in attendance. We are concerned for the welfare of these workers and how they would be impacted should ***Kids and Company*** be awarded the contract.

As an organization, we are urging the University of Victoria to reject the false solution of big box child care. The international evidence shows us that this is

NOT the way to provide affordable, quality, sustainable child care. But, there are real solutions.

Here is what you, the University's Board of Governors, can do:

- Adopt University policy establishing the provision of on-site, quality, non-profit child care as an essential element of university life.
- Join with the community in advocating for adequate public funds from the province to build and sustain quality child care services.
- Work with the stakeholders at U Vic, including on-site child care providers, parents, faculty, staff and Victoria's larger child care community to develop real, sustainable solutions.

We hope that you will give this serious consideration and take action to better the lives of children and working families who are accessing the University of Victoria's services.

Sincerely,

Monica Urrutia  
Chairperson

cc. University of Victoria Board of Governors, [usec@uvic.ca](mailto:usec@uvic.ca)