

Funding to help stop sexual violence

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Central Nova MP Sean Fraser joined Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association (AWRC-SASA) personnel for a panel discussion, which was open to the public, Oct. 13 at the People's Place Library.

The discussion was to follow up on a late-August announcement from the federal government that they allocated more than \$2 million towards gender equality projects in Atlantic Canada.

From the money, AWRC-SASA received \$395,000 to, as noted in a press release at the time, "prevent sexual violence against women and girls in the rural county of Antigonish, Nova Scotia."

"Sexual violence can happen anywhere, in communities both big and small," AWRC-SASA executive director Lucille Harper said as part of the release.

"We look forward to working with our partners to ensure that Antigonish is equipped to address this problem. Together, we will take action to prevent sexual violence against women and prepare ourselves to support survivors effectively when it does occur."

"The minister (Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women) announced, in general terms, there were funds available for these projects and hinted at which organizations had been successful, but this was, sort of, the roll-out, locally, of the details of the actual program what the funding would be supporting," Fraser said,

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Sean Fraser

following the panel discussion.

He said the funding comes "on the heels" of a report he was part of in Ottawa.

"On the standing committee for the Status of Women, in Ottawa; one of the recommendations we made was to fund community organizations that are already doing good work to end gender-based violence rather than trying to come up with a new approach based in Ottawa," Fraser said.

"Go to the communities where it's already happening and this, almost \$400,000, is going to help programming at the local level bring an end to sexual violence in our community."

He talked about AWRC-SASA partnering with others in the region towards ending sexual violence.

"They've partnered with St. F.X., Paqtnkek First Nation, and the SRSB (Strait Regional School Board) to help them develop policies and a framework to end gender-based violence which can be applied across the entire region," Fraser said.