

Media Advisory  
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**New Video Games to help youth end the cycle of violence**

Toronto, ON – September 22, 2005 –

Minister Papatello joins the Metropolitan Action Committee to End Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) to launch *RePlay*, a video game project that teaches players the fine art of *Anti-Violence*.

Where	The Drake Hotel, 1150 Queen Street West
When	Monday September 26, 2005 at 6:00 PM
What	<i>RePlay</i> Launch Speech by Minister Sandra Papatello
Why	Video game violence is a growing concern

Usually a bastion of gratuitous violence and scantily-clad women, the designers of this video game believe that games can be harnessed to promote non-violent messages and peace-making skills.

METRAC is launching *RePlay*, an innovative new project that will transform the medium and create educational video games to prevent gender-based violence and model healthy equal relationships for youth aged 8 to 14 years.

*RePlay* is one of many products being funded and developed as an Integrated Package of resources for the education and youth sectors under the Ontario Women's Directorate's *Promoting Healthy Equal Relationship Community Grants Program*. The Honorable Sandra Papatello, Minister Responsible for Community and Social Services, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, and Minister Responsible for Ontarians with Disabilities will speak at the *RePlay* Launch Event.

Many parents are shocked to discover that their kids' favourite video games are based on violent themes and outmoded stereotypes about women and men. But researchers have long said that video games typically portray women as weak or as sexual objects and trivialize violence, showing violence against women and girls to be normal and even acceptable.

METRAC's Executive Director, Wendy Komiotis, explains: "While the gaming medium teaches some important skills, they are usually played in isolation from adult supervision and critical discussion of their story content. The violence and sexism in them often remains unchallenged. Most adults feel locked out of the gaming world occupied by their children. They have no control over the lessons taught by the game-makers. Here we have an alternative – skills taught through gaming that are not contradicted by sexism, violence, and mayhem."

Adds Komiotis, "We have been challenging social attitudes that condone violence against women and girls for several decades at METRAC. Along with all our community partners, the government, and law enforcement, we continue to be frustrated by the slow pace of progress. *RePlay* is one important step in the direction of speeding that progress up."

**Andrea Gunraj, Outreach Manager, The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) Phone: 416-392-4760; [www.metrac.org](http://www.metrac.org) or [outreach@metrac.org](mailto:outreach@metrac.org)**