BCBUSINESS

BUSINESS

Opinion: Single mothers are key to B.C.'s workforce—so why are they stuck in survival mode?

As Mother's Day approaches, the founder a B.C.-based charity supporting single mothers argues that investing in stability, not just survival, is essential to strengthening the province's workforce and long-term economic growth.

By BCBusiness Guest Author / May 5, 2026

As we approach Mother's Day, there is an opportunity to look beyond recognition and reflect on a more fundamental issue: the role single mothers play in British Columbia's economy, and the barriers that continue to limit their participation.

In B.C., child poverty rates are often used as a measure of progress. When those numbers hold steady, it can suggest stability. But after two decades working alongside single mothers across this province, I have seen a different reality. Survival is not stability. Too often, our systems stop short.

This is not just a social issue. It is an economic one.

Single mothers represent a significant and often overlooked segment of the workforce. Yet children in single parent families are nearly five times more likely to live in poverty, and the gap between income and basic needs continues to widen. For many women, the issue is not willingness to work, but the barriers that make steady employment difficult to access and sustain.

Childcare gaps, housing instability, and the cost of education or retraining all play a role. Even full timework at minimum wage often falls short once these realities are factored in. Without sustained support, many women remain in a cycle of precarious work and financial insecurity.

From a business perspective, the impact is clear. When capable people are left out of the workforce, productivity and growth suffer. In a tight labour market, this is a gap we cannot ignore.

At Cause We Care Foundation, we see what happens when that gap is addressed. Through our Single Mothers Support Fund, we provide up to $10,000 in wraparound support to remove key barriers, including childcare, housing, education, and career training. The results are clear. Women re-enter the workforce, pursue more stable employment, and build long term financial independence.

Government programs play an important role in preventing families from falling further behind. But preventing decline is not the same as creating stability. Month to month support helps families get by, not move forward, and when we measure success this way, we risk missing the opportunity to unlock their full economic contribution.

Investing in stability is a practical economic strategy that strengthens workforce participation and supports long term growth. Support that stops at survival keeps families treading water, while support that creates stability allows them to move forward.

As Mother's Day approaches, the opportunity is clear. If we are serious about strengthening B.C.'s workforce, we need to invest in the stability that allows single mothers to fully participate in it.