

Annual General Meeting June 18, 2008





Our Vision

Working together to make a difference...one person, one family at a time.

Our Mission

To provide high quality services that enable individuals and families to achieve healthy family functioning in a safe and supportive environment.

Our Objectives

- To provide safe, temporary accommodation to battered women with or without children
- To ensure that shelter services and programs are designed and delivered in a manner which to promote self-esteem, independence, and individual decision-making
- To provide support services including crisis intervention, temporary accommodation, essential transportation, food, childcare programming, emotional support, referral and advocacy
- To provide outreach and peer support services to former shelter residents
- To promote public awareness and education within the community

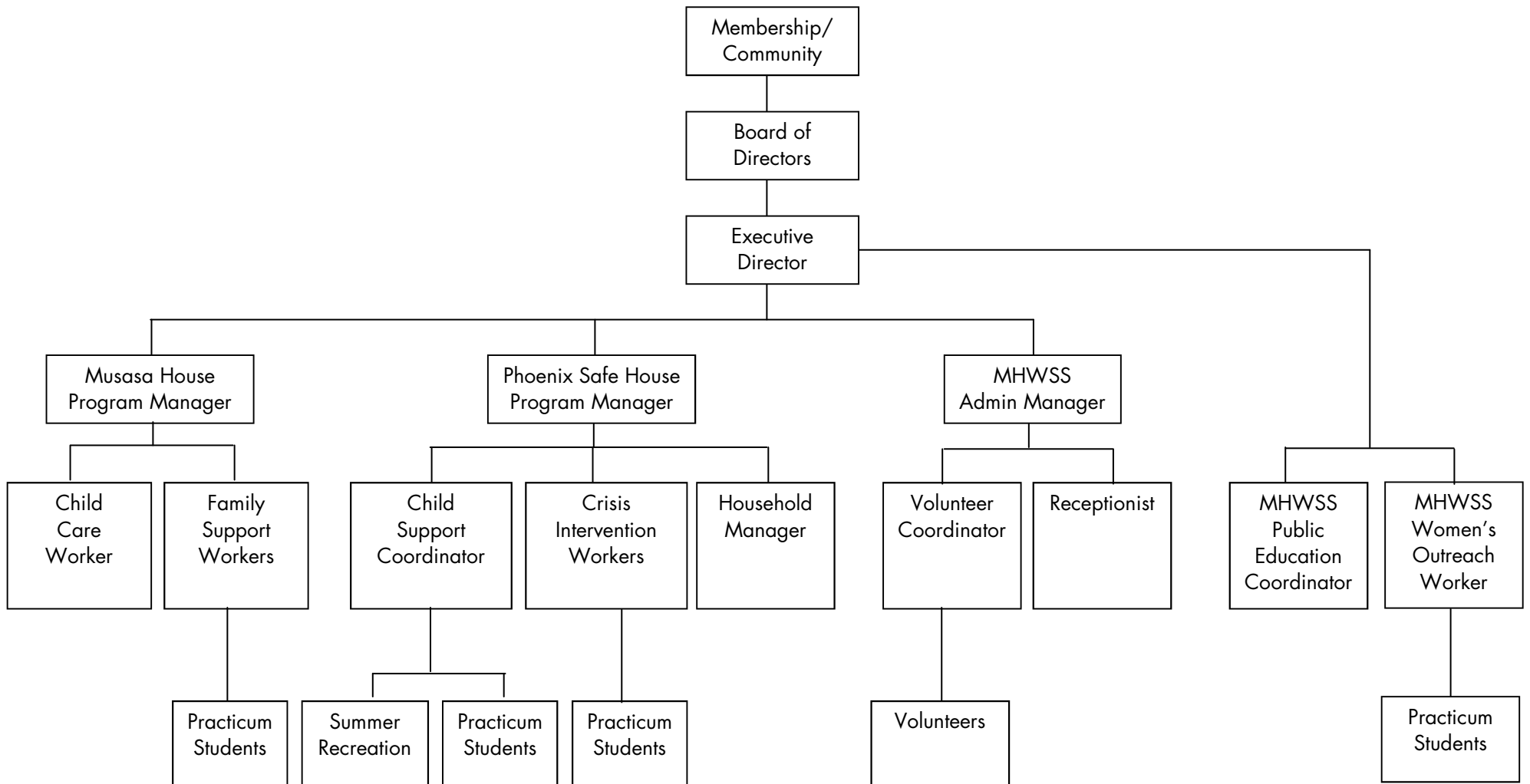
Staff of the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society

Executive Director	Natasha Carvalho
Program Manager, Phoenix Safe House.....	Jennifer Dickinson
Program Manager, Musasa House.....	Catherine Ohama
Administration Manager	Dianne Finch
Crisis Intervention Worker, Phoenix Safe House	Joy Metz
.....	Rachel Metz
.....	Tracey Robinson
.....	Stephanie Dockrell
.....	Shannon Gaetz
.....	Hope Hamerston
.....	Janelle Hazel
.....	Lily Laurent
.....	Jessica Nixon
.....	Christy Parsons
.....	Christine Robins
.....	Amy Stewart
.....	Amy Toews
.....	Kyla Zimbowski
Family Support Worker, Musasa House	Laura Berner
.....	Kelsey Hilsendager
.....	Vanessa Klaudt
Child Support Worker	Mirna Avelar
Women’s Outreach Worker	Jannay Douville
Household Manager	Ineke deVries
Public Education and Awareness	Jamie Evans
Receptionist.....	Vivian Young
Volunteer Coordinator	Jennifer Ottenbreit

Board of Directors

President.....	Sandra Redden
Vice President.....	Kambi Heywood
Secretary	Wanda Simmons
Treasurer	Donna-Lee Sheardown
Director	Bert Mahura
Director	Ken Marran
Director	Andy McGrogan
Director	Dean Milne
Director	Hilary Munro
Director	Darlene O’Reilly

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society
Organizational Chart
 Updated December 2007



The Contradictions of Womanhood

Being a woman means the prettier you are the easier life will be for you
The prettier you are the harder life will be for you
And being ugly is not an option.
Being a woman means living in continuous fear
Not being able to walk down the street at night
Not genetically possessing enough muscle mass to put up a fair fight.
Being called "butch" when you do have the ability to put up a fair fight.
Doing your hair and makeup everyday or being looked down upon for not
Doing your hair and makeup everyday and being called superficial for doing so.
Being a woman means having your ass pinched at a bar by a stranger, and being
expected to act like you enjoyed it.
Being called prude for not enjoying it,
And being called a slut for enjoying it.
Being told you would look better if you lost weight
Losing the weight and overhearing people calling you anorexic.
Being a woman means getting paid substantially less than men,
And getting looked at in disgust for wanting to do something about it.
Being told bigger is beautiful
Being told thin is in
Getting told both on the same day.
Being a woman means living in constant scrutiny of yourself.
Being told not to be so insecure and self-conscious
But being called narcissistic and self-absorbed for loving yourself.
Being told that the success of a woman is not defined by marriage
Yet being told that a woman has failed in life if she has not married and had children,
The exact same day.
Being a woman means having your intelligence seen as a virtue,
Having your intelligence seen as a downfall,
At the same time, not having your intelligence really seen at all.

Written by Jannay Douville
Women's Outreach Worker
Phoenix Safe House

President's Report

As I think about the past year and look forward to the next, the thought that comes to mind is the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society becoming 'Rock Solid'. The society, facilities and services provided over the past couple of years has doubled and it is time to ensure that the foundation is solid before we progress any further.

Natasha Carvalho, Executive Director, Dianne Finch, Administration Manager, all of the staff and the volunteers have worked very hard over the past year to ensure that the necessary funds are available, facilities and programs are most importantly meeting the needs of our clients but also provided as efficiently as possible. On behalf of the board I commend and thank them for all of their hard work and dedication to the clients and MHWSS.

Our Facility Committee is made up of two long time board members who have dedicated significant amounts of time at both facilities to guarantee that the maintenance issues are looked after, Ken Marran and Bert Mahura. The security system has been upgraded, sink holes repaired, ground maintenance completed, fencing issues addressed and a stove-top replaced - just a few of the issues that keep them busy. Our Policy committee has been busy updating and creating policies that were either outdated or nonexistent.

In addition to the ongoing work of the board, a significant amount of our time this year has been spent working toward a rock solid foundation of funding. We now have two excellent facilities providing an essential service to our community, however there is no government funding for the facility and program costs of Musasa House. A fund development 'think tank' was held in April with key community people to gather information about solving this funding issue and the direction required. The information provided that day was invaluable and confirmed the need to develop a Fund Development Officer position. This person will grow with our organization and most importantly work closely with the board, staff and members of the society to ensure the funding required (approximately \$300,000/year) is in place so that both facilities and programs continue to operate and our foundation is solid.

A very large thank you to all of the board members for their time and energy commitment over the past year. It has been a bit stressful and some difficult decisions needed to be made so 'thank-you'. Bert Mahura and Ken Marran will be leaving our board, but will continue to assist with facility maintenance. I welcome new board members and look forward to our upcoming year working towards improving the lives of families affected by violence.

Submitted by,



Sandy Redden
President, MHWSS Board of Directors

Executive Director's Report

This has been another wonderful year for the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society! I can not believe I have already been here for 18 months. On one hand I feel like I just began in this position and have so much to learn, but on the other hand I can feel proud that we made it through another year of budgets, grants, staff recruitment and retention.

I work with a terrific team at the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society. The staff is committed, loyal and dedicated to the cause of ending family violence and providing a safe haven for women and children in these situations. They work tirelessly and go above the call of duty on many occasions to provide services and supports to the women and children we serve.

I would also like to acknowledge the Board of Directors for their hard work this year. Thank you to Sandy Redden our Board President for her support.

This has been a busy year for the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society. We admitted 266 women and 123 children to Phoenix Safe House. At Musasa House, we received 53 referrals. Of those referrals, 22 women and 48 children were admitted to that program.

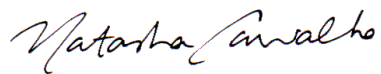
A special thank you goes out to Alberta Children Services for recognizing our difficulties with staff recruitment and retaining. This year they were able to give us two separate cost of living increases, bringing our staff's wages a bit closer to being on par with other non profit agencies.

We were chosen this year to participate in a research project on "Danger Assessment" with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and Dr. Jacqueline Campbell of John Hopkins University. The "Danger Assessment" is a lethality risk assessment that helps to determine a woman's risk of intimate partner homicide. The Danger Assessment has been an invaluable tool for our staff in their work and assessments with the women on intake at both the emergency and second stage shelters. We are finding that the data that comes from this assessment gives us vital information in helping the women to make a decision about leaving or returning to an abusive situation.

As we receive no sustainable funding for Musasa House, we must rely solely on fundraising, grants, donations and gifts in kind. This year we were successful in our application for grants from the Community Incentive Fund, Catholic Charities, the Canadian Women's Foundation, Telus, and the Mary Kay Ash Foundation. Our annual charity golf tournament hosted by Scotiabank once again brought in an extremely generous donation for our programs and services.

The generosity of our community members is a true blessing to our organization. I never cease to be amazed when someone shows up at the door announcing they have 'passed the hat at work' or 'held a car wash' or 'hosted a tournament' with proceeds coming to our programs. These wonderful, unsolicited acts of generosity are truly appreciated and so very gratefully received.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natasha Carvalho". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Natasha Carvalho B.A. M.Sc. R.S.W
Executive Director

Musasa House

Musasa House is a second stage shelter for women with children who have experienced a significant impact from domestic abuse and are in need of a secure residence and program in which to heal, gain stability and successfully reestablish their family in the community. Women with children who qualify for this program are admitted for up to one year; the first six months are devoted to stabilization and healing, the second six months to making a supported transition into the community. All residents are provided with regular one to one support, psycho educational groups, advocacy, and supported referrals to community resources. When families move out of Musasa House, Outreach Support is available to them.

Between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008 Musasa House program received 53 formal referrals and many other enquiries.

An initial assessment process includes an interview with the referral source, (usually emergency shelter workers) and an interview with the woman applying to Musasa House.

Of the 53 formal referrals, 17 women changed their mind before the assessment process started. Six women changed their mind after the referral source interview and prior to the woman's interview. Thirty full assessments were conducted.

- Six of those did not meet program criteria due to presenting issues, level of risk, impact of abuse, or readiness.
- Fifteen assessments were completed and the families were admitted.
- Six women changed their mind after being accepted to program and did not admit to Musasa House.
- One woman was put on wait list because the program was full at the time; this person made alternate arrangements before a space became available for her family.
- One woman was refused admittance due to documented behavior at another second stage shelter she was evicted from.
- One woman was refused admittance to this second stage due to safety concerns (partner living in Med Hat, dangerous and stalking). This client declined our offer of assistance in relocating to another second stage out of area.

The Families of Musasa House

The total number of families who resided at Musasa House during this fiscal year was twenty two. Thirteen families discharged during this time having spent an average of two hundred and seven days in the program. The shortest stay was thirty seven days for a family who (due to safety issues) moved on to a second stage shelter in another province.

Two of the thirteen families were ready to move back into the community after four months of participation, six families after eight or nine months and two families completed a full year at Musasa House before successfully moving on. Two families found the program did not fit for them and moved out after two and three months. Nine families were resident at the end of March, 2008.

The Children of Musasa House

The twenty two families described above have forty eight children who also received services at Musasa House. Twenty six of these children were infant to five years of age, thirteen were six to twelve years old and nine were thirteen and over.

Each child, infant to five years old received ten hours of preschool programming each week and one to one support time as deemed necessary. This year twenty-six preschool age children received a total of 3,313 hours of preschool programming.

This year Musasa House implemented preschool developmental screening; three children were referred and received intervention services from CHADS after delays were identified.

During their stay at Musasa House, twenty-two children ages six to eighteen received two hours of psycho-educational groups per week (301 person hours), three hours of homework club (124 person hours) and regular one to one support (139 hours total) with a Family Support Worker. Musasa House staff also worked closely with the schools, assisting children and youth in achieving success socially and academically.

Submitted by
Catherine Ohama
Program Manager

Phoenix Safe House

The Phoenix Safe House Residential Program offers a safe and supportive environment for women and their children who are in physically, emotionally, financially, and/or sexually abusive relationships. The program also accepts women who are transient and /or indigent, awaiting treatment in a hospital or treatment programs and women who are victims of sexual assault. This past year, 77% of the women who were admitted to this program presented as abused women or abused women with children. Phoenix Safe House offers these women and their children short term shelter with 24 hour security, safety planning, advocacy, educational resources, emotional support and community referrals.

Crisis Intervention Workers complete an initial assessment prior to bringing the client into shelter. This is usually completed over the telephone; however it can also be done through drop in appointments or in person when a woman presents at the shelter. Once a woman has been accepted into the residential program, she sits down with a Crisis Worker to complete a series of intake forms. An 'Abuse Assessment' is completed on every client to determine if abuse is present in their situation and the level of severity. If a woman is deemed to be in an abusive situation, a 'Danger Assessment' is completed with the client to determine her risk of intimate partner homicide. A safety plan is then developed to help the women keep herself and her children safe.

A woman's stay at Phoenix Safe House is limited to a maximum of 21 days, during which time she is provided with the necessary counseling, supports and referrals that will allow her to leave the shelter with a safety plan in place and the resources she needs to carry on her life, free from family violence.

The Residential Program runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As of April 1, 2007 Phoenix Safe House expanded from an 11 bed shelter to an 18 bed shelter. This has impacted the whole team. We were able to implement double shifting for 4 hours a day, 7 days a week, which has allowed us to provide improved service to our clients.

From April 1, 2007- March 21, 2008 there were a **total of 266 women and 123 children** admitted into the residential program. The average length of stay for these women and their children was 9-10 days.

Submitted by
Jennifer Dickinson
Program Manager, Phoenix Safe House

24-Hour Telephone Support

Phoenix Safe House provides 24-hour telephone support to women in crisis. Crisis Intervention Workers provide individuals with emotional support, information, referrals and, when needed, advocacy. From April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2008 there were a total of 996 calls to the Phoenix Safe House crisis line, totaling 27,910 minutes of telephone support.

For those individuals who may be unable to comfortably or confidentially discuss sensitive issues over the telephone, Phoenix Safe House provides them with the opportunity to meet in person with a worker. Emergency drop-ins at the shelter may be arranged through the crisis intervention team.

Individuals from the community may also book appointments to meet in the shelter or the community with the Family Outreach Worker. These appointments are highly valued by women, as it gives them an opportunity to do safety planning, gather information about community resources, receive emotional support and information about domestic violence.

Mothers also appreciate the opportunity to meet with the Child Support Coordinator to discuss the well being of their children. The Child Support Coordinator is also able to meet with children to help them express their feelings about the family situation.

Submitted by,
Jennifer Dickinson
Program Manager, Phoenix Safe House

Child Support Program

The Child Support Program at The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society offers children who have been exposed to family violence a safe and nurturing environment to share their feelings on the issues occurring in their home, and to teach them to enjoy healthy experiences. The program provides emotional support and information and links to community resources for the mothers. The Child Support Program accomplishes these goals through four key areas of service: residential support, group support, community drop-in services and summer recreation. The success of the program relies on the participation of caring volunteers and the continued involvement of students from the Child and Youth Care Program at Medicine Hat College. From April 2007 to March 31/08, approximately 123 children received support services through the Child Support Program.

Residential Support

The Child Support Coordinator works closely with the crisis team to provide support to mothers and their children during the transition of leaving their homes and adjusting to life in the shelter. While in residence the Child Support Coordinator meets with mothers to discuss parenting guidelines and routines for shelter living and completes and assessment of the children's needs based on feedback from their mothers. The Child Support Coordinator assists mothers with parenting skills such as nurturing, child interactions, and behavior management. Together, the Child Support Coordinator and mothers develop strategies to make the families' stay as comforting as possible. Sometimes the Coordinator will assist the mothers attending to the appointments. In addition, the Child Support Coordinator makes referrals to other agencies in the community when children have special needs and will work closely with the agencies in specific cases where the language is another barrier for the mothers.

The Coordinator works with local schools to ensure the children's academic needs are being met and to develop safety plans on behalf of families to increase their sense of safety and security in the community. Children are provided with activities such as crafts and recreational pursuits when they are not in school or during holidays. The Child Support Coordinator also provides on-call support for crisis intervention workers as needed.

Children's Support Group

The Children's Group Support runs every year from September until June. The group is geared for children between the ages of 6-12 years old. The group gives the children an opportunity to express their feelings, learn safety strategies and strengthen their self esteem. The children partake in a number of different activities as arts and crafts and enjoy special celebrations at Halloween, Christmas, and Easter. The group facilitator

follows up with the mothers to discuss the progress of the children's participation and behaviors. At least once each year the Child Support Coordinator completes a presentation to participants in the Women's Weekly Support groups. The presentation stresses the importance of the parent-child relationship increasing the frequency of positive interaction through playing, nurturing, establishing boundaries, etc.

Community Drop-In Services

The Child Support Program also provides drop-in sessions in the community to children that might be exposed to domestic violence and assist the mothers with strategies and information. This appointment is arranged through in-house referrals as well as other community agencies including the school system.

Summer Recreation Program

Based on the availability of year to year funding, the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter offers a summer recreational program for children 6 to 12 years of age during July and August. The purpose of this program is to engage children in socially acceptable behavior while at play. The program offers a variety of outdoor activities in the community. Some of the activities include swimming, tours to restaurants, water parks, bowling. Past participants enjoyed visits a number of different places in the community included the Fire Station, Medalta Pottery, and Multicultural Centre.

Submitted by
Mirna Avelar
Child Support Coordinator

Women's Outreach Program

The Women's Outreach Program is a supportive, empathic and non-judgmental program geared to promote independence and to maximize each individual and families strengths, abilities and potential. Through scheduled appointments, departure follow up, support groups and supportive programming The Women's Outreach Program offers non-residential support to individuals and families experiencing the effects of family violence. The Women's Outreach Program is offered to individuals who have been or who have not been connected to Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society services. The Women's Outreach Worker provides one-on-one support, education, advocacy, community referral, crisis intervention, resources information, safety planning and emotional support to women and families experiencing family violence. Through the support from The Women's Outreach Worker, women and families achieve empowerment, encouragement and independence.

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 there were 28 participants signed onto The Women's Outreach Program. On average, clients met with the Women's Outreach Worker once every two weeks. Of the 28 individuals signed onto the program 3 individuals have been discharged from the program within this timeframe. Twenty-five (25) out of the twenty-eight (28) individuals currently remain on the program receiving support on a regular basis. Since March 31, 2007 (the cut off for fiscal year report), there have been three (3) additional intakes completed. There are currently twenty-eight (28) women signed on to The Women's Outreach caseload as Case-load clients. There are a total of 15 contracted spaces for one outreach worker to maintain.

The Women's Outreach Worker also provides services to individuals (on a short term basis) who are not signed onto The Women's Outreach Program. Short term basis means 3 appointments or less. These individuals are referred to as Non-Caseload Clients. These appointments include an initial assessment of the individuals immediate needs, safety planning, information on services offered through Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society, emotional support, information on community referrals and if necessary crisis intervention.

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 The Women's Outreach Worker scheduled approximately two hundred and three (203) meetings with Non-Caseload Clients. There has been a steady increase in Non-Caseload Clients accessing Outreach services. During this time The Women's Outreach Worker provided approximately three hundred and five (305) hours of client contact to Non-Caseload Clients either through face to face contact or telephone contact (approximation based on one and one half hours per session per client).

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 The Women's Outreach Worker received two hundred and thirty-nine (239) Departure Interviews as women left the emergency shelter.

Seventy-six (76) women requested follow up services at time of departure, as indicated on the Departure Interview.

As the numbers clearly indicate, there has been a steady increase in referrals and individuals accessing The Women's Outreach Program. As the services of Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society expand, it can be predicted that The Women's Outreach Program will need to expand to meet the needs of the community.

Submitted by
Jannay Douville
Women's Outreach Worker

Note to reader:

The writer assumed the position of Women's Outreach Worker effective June 25th, 2007. Prior to that, Nicole Hieb acted as Women's Outreach Worker and will be returning to the position at the end of her maternity leave in July 2008.

Weekly Support Groups

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society Support Groups are designed to facilitate the healing process by providing a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere that fosters self-reflection, mutual support and empowerment to women and their children who are experiencing or who have experienced family violence.

The following report is a review of the groups offered through the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society for the fiscal period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

Thursday Morning Support Group

At the end of this fiscal year, there were a total of 13 women registered in the Thursday morning Women's Weekly Support Group. A total of 29 women completed intake interviews/packages and were registered into the Thursday morning group at some point during the last fiscal year. Women discontinued group attendance for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, changes in work schedules or other personal circumstances, moving, and choosing to access other community or personal supports available to them.

Women identified different types of abuse occurring in their relationships. All 27 women who completed intakes into the Thursday group identified emotional abuse by an intimate partner. The next most common type of abuse experienced was financial abuse at 19 women, then physical abuse at 16, property destruction at 14, and sexual abuse at 12 women. Other types of abuse identified by group members were cultural (3 women), social (10 women), spiritual (4 women) and stalking or criminal harassment (8 women).

The Thursday morning group completed a total of 39 sessions. The group was provided with information on the cycle of abuse, identifying abusive behaviors in self and others, starting over after an abusive relationship, patterns of codependency, and creating healthy relationships. As well, the group engaged in a series of self-reflection exercises throughout the year on topics such as anger, guilt, loneliness, and self-care.

Tuesday Evening Support Group

At the end of the fiscal year, there were a total of 8 women registered in the Tuesday Evening Support Group. Over the course of the year, a total of 19 women completed intake interviews/packages and were registered in the Tuesday evening group. Women who discontinued the group stated work conflicts, issues with childcare, no longer interested, and change of personal circumstances.

The Tuesday evening support group completed a total of 39 sessions in the fiscal year. The group was provided with information on cycle of abuse, abusive patterns, starting over after abuse, and healthy relationships. The group participated in self care exercises, made collages, team building, art therapy, and self exploration. Discussions on anger, loneliness, guilt, empowerment, positive energy, dealing with ex partner and coping strategies took place throughout the group sessions.

The Tuesday evening group ranges in age from 20 years old to 55 years old. They are extremely dedicated and supportive of each other, welcoming new members and providing them with encouragement. The women of the Tuesday evening group empower each other to stand strong. They laugh together, cry together and are there for each other inside and outside of the group environment.

Children's Support Group

A total of 23 children completed intakes into the Children's Support Group in the fiscal year from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008. The Children's Support Group provides information and education about abuse which is presented in two modules during the group year. In total, there were 7 sessions per module and a range of topics were covered including expression of feelings, family violence, safety, separation, friendship, anger management, and conflict resolution. Each session was conducted with a combination of learning activities and play.

Children also had an opportunity to take part in community outings and crafts to assist in developing the children's social and fine motor skills, combined with fun for healthier development. The Children's Support Group continued to incorporate new resources such as videos and games as they became available to shelter staff. These were enjoyed by the children and assisted them in talking more openly about their experiences.

Nursery Program

During the past fiscal year, MHWSS also offered a nursery program which corresponded with each of the Women's Weekly Support Groups. The Nursery Program was offered to women who were registered in either one of the Women's Support Groups and who had children less than 5 years of age. The Nursery Program is run by volunteers and supervised by the Child Support Coordinator. The purpose of the Nursery Program is to provide free, supervised childcare to women who might otherwise be unable to attend group. There were a total of 14 children enrolled in the Nursery Program at some point in the last year. Some children who were not officially enrolled in the Nursery program also attended a number of times when their regular childcare options were unavailable.

Women of Strength

The MHWSS partners with AADAC to offer "Women of Strength", an on-going support network for women who have experienced trauma in their lives and are experiencing addiction-related issues. The Women of Strength group provides individuals with a unique opportunity to share their experiences with their peers regarding addictions and trauma.

Over the last year there have been a total of 16 women who have completed intake packages for the Women of Strength group. All of these women have been registered for the group. Not all of these women attend the group on a regular basis, which is common for drop-in groups. On average the group has between 2-4 participants, with the largest group having 5 participants. Some of the women discontinued group attendance due to moving out of town, changes in work/school schedules, and choosing other community or personal support available to them. Some of the feedback received from the group members indicated that having the group on

Monday's caused the group to be disrupted by statutory holidays. As a way of working around this issue the Women of Strength group will be run on Thursday afternoons starting in September of 2008 so that groups are not being missed due to statutory holidays.

The Women of Strength group completed a total of 16 sessions between the months of September 2007 to April 2008. Members were provided with information on differences between males and females and the physical effects of substances, and the correlation between addiction and trauma. As well the group members engaged in self-reflection exercises throughout the year on topics such as self-esteem, relaxation, and self-care.

Women's Courage to Change

The MHWSS partners with Medicine Hat Family Services to offer "Women's Courage to Change", an educational group geared to assist women in pursuing healthy choices to protect the emotional wellness and safety of their family. Emphasis is placed on changing destructive relationship patterns while promoting self-awareness.

Two sessions of Women's Courage to Change were offered during the fiscal year from April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008. The fall session ran from September 5 to November 14, 2007. A total of 12 women completed the intake process while seven women completed the program. The spring session ran from February 6 to April 9, 2008. A total of 11 women completed the intake process while eight women completed the program.

Submitted by:

Jamie Evans
Public Education Coordinator

Jannay Douville
Women's Outreach Worker

Jennifer Dickenson
Phoenix Safe House Program Manager

Vanessa Klaudt
Musasa House Family Support Worker

Mirna Avelar
Child Support Coordinator

Community Kitchen

The fledgling community kitchen at Musasa House was infused with fresh resources April 1, 2007 when the Sunrise Rotary Club of Medicine Hat became a sponsor. The Sunrise Rotary Community Kitchen of Musasa House has successfully completed the first full year of partnering with Palliser Health Region to provide this valuable program.

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 Musasa House had eleven planning and eleven cooking days. The women cooked four or five dishes each session, divided them in to family size portions and took them home for their families. On average, 14.5 mouths were fed per month. In total, eight hundred forty one (841) servings of food were prepared, an average of 76 servings per month.

Palliser Health Region partnered with Musasa House to facilitate each of these Community Kitchen sessions and in addition they facilitated a Food Fundamentals Course in which participants learned safe food handling practices, nutrition, budgeting, shopping and cooking skills.

Submitted by
Catherine Ohama
Program Manager, Musasa House

Public Education and Awareness

The Public Education Program as an integral component in the programs and services offered by the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society. This program offers the larger community an opportunity to learn more about issues related to family violence and the services available in their community. Presentations will often reach individuals who otherwise would not have known about the shelter. Additionally, it invites individuals to get involved and to become part of the solution to breaking the cycle of violence in our community.

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 the Public Education Coordinator provided a total of 52 community presentations to over 1,100 participants. During this period, the Public Education Coordinator spent 3,654 minutes or 60.9 hours of direct presentation time. Presentations were provided to a variety of community groups including various high schools, Medicine Hat College programs, Girl Guides of Canada groups, Saamis Immigration Services, and the general public.

An important piece to the Public Education Program is to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the presentation and/or presenter, the legitimacy of the information provided and a venue for participants to ask questions anonymously and confidentially. The following are some of the comments from evaluation forms for the past fiscal year:

- *I thought the presentation was very effective and I liked all the discussion – High School student*
- *I learned that there are different kinds of abuse beside verbal and physical. And I also learned that sexual abuse/assault can also be in marriage. – High school student*
- *I learned that I did the right thing in separating from my spouse. He is not abusive physically but I recognized the other types. – MHC Career Advantage student*
- *Fantastic! Truly a touching presentation and very informative as a child and an adult of abuse situation. Excellent!! – MHC student*
- *I didn't realize how many programs there actually are to help women/children in need of help. I can now share my information with people who need help. – MHC Daycare Orientation student*
- *I think the presentation should be shown to everyone in order to educate and prevent these events from happening in the future. – MHC student*
- *It was really good. I gathered lots of information. When I was abused as a child, I never knew what was going on. Now I can see and notice signs in kids in my centre. – MHC Daycare Orientation student*

From April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008 the Public Education Coordinator arranged a total of eight information displays for public viewing for a total of 59.5 hours. Other displays were also put up throughout the fiscal year by other agencies and community members. These parties included Military Family Resource Centre, Victim's Services, and the Veiner Centre.

November 2007 marked the 21st anniversary of Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta. The campaign's theme for the month was *"End the Silence. Stop the Violence."* The provincial government developed a number of resources made available on their Alberta Children's Services Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying website. On a local level, activities included an official proclamation signing by Mayor Norm Boucher, Breakfast with the Guys event with guest M.C Willie DeJardins, awareness presentations for professionals, various information displays, and a candlelit ceremony to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Submitted by
Jamie Evans
Public Education Coordinator

Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Program at the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society provides a way for members of our community to reach out and to make a difference in the lives of abused women and children. Our volunteers go through a screening process consisting of an interview, Police Information Check, Child Intervention Check, reference checks and sign an oath of confidentiality prior to beginning their volunteer time within the shelter.

From April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008 the MHWSS had approximately 80 volunteers assisting in various areas. Below is a break down of hours volunteered and the areas volunteer time was spent.

Area of Volunteer time spent	Number of Hours
Childcare	801.5
Client Assistance	4.5
Committees/Board of Directors	127.5
Cooking/Baking	530
Donations	118.5
Fundraising/Special Events	269
Housekeeping	60.5
Reception	601
Other	333.5
Total Volunteer Hours	2846

In comparison to last years volunteer hours, we have seen an increase in both the need for volunteers and in the hours contributed. The areas that are still in greatest need are child care volunteers mostly during the weekday mornings for the Musasa House nursery program and in the area of reception.

“Adopt a Family” Program

This year due to staff changes, the Volunteer Coordinator temporarily took over the “Adopt-a-Family” Christmas hamper program. This program matches shelter clients to a sponsor (business or other community members) and in turn, the sponsor provides Christmas gifts for the family in need. In 2007, the Adopt-a-Family program matched 55 women and 106 children. Each year we see the program growing, both the number of clients accessing the program but also community interest is growing. We have also seen sponsors getting more involved than just buying gifts, many want to supply the family with a food hamper or Christmas stockings for the children to open Christmas morning, while others have come up with creative ways to make their adopted family's Christmas special. Many of the families and their sponsors never meet due to clients wanting their identity to remain confidential; however, we make every effort to ensure the sponsor

receives feedback on the difference that their contribution has made to their adopted family.

Fundraising Events

Scotiabank Group Charity Golf Tournament (September 6, 2007)

2007 marked the 5th year of the Scotiabank Group Charity Golf Tournament with MHWSS as the recipient of the proceeds. Last year's tournament raised \$17,000 for the shelter. Volunteers from MHWSS assist as hole spotters, BBQ flippers and hosts/hostesses.

Medicine Hat City Police Ball Silent Auction (October 13, 2007)

This was the first year the Police Ball has had a charity auction available. MHWSS was responsible for arranging the silent auction; we raised approx. \$5000 through the auction of items donated from local businesses, individuals and artists.

Fall Into Christmas Craft Sale (October 20-21, 2007)

Last year was the second time we have been involved with the Fall Into Christmas event. The turn out has been phenomenal. MHWSS provides volunteers for the exhibitor lounge, to provide booth relief and to man a raffle table. The raffle table held approximately 50 items last year and brought in close to \$5000 for MHWSS. All the raffle items were donated from exhibitors at the craft show.

Casino (Jan 19 & 20, 2008)

Approx every 18 months, we are able to run a casino to generate funds for MHWSS. We provide volunteers for the two-day event and the money earned throughout the quarter is divided equally between all the charitable groups who worked casinos during that quarter. Our share of the proceeds for this year was \$20,000.

Curves Food Drive (March 2008)

Each year we have been fortunate enough to be the recipient of the Curves Food Drive. During the month of March, both Curves locations in town compete against each other as to who can bring in the most amount of food (based on weight). In turn, the food collected is donated to MHWSS and utilized both in shelter and distributed to clients accessing our services. In March of 2008 the food drive collected 2741.1 pounds!

Submitted by
Jennifer Ottenbreit
Volunteer Coordinator

Donors \$100 and Over

Beverly's Home FX
Big K Pressure Testing
BMO Fountain of Hope
Buffalo United Church
Burns, Valkenberg & Associates
C.A.W. Local 4050
Cancarb
Canadian Union of Postal Workers
Central Park Lodge
Cereal United Church Women
Computalog Staff Fund
Crestwood Dental Clinic
Deluxe Central Taxi
Eagle Butte Student Council
EnCana Cares Foundation
Hargrave Ranching Co. Inc.
Heavenly Scents Aromatherapy
Herbal Magic
Historic Clay District
Holy Family CWL
HSB Sports
Ken Blair Professional Corp.
MacKenzie Drugs
Medicine Hat High School
Medicine Hat John Howard Society
Oilwives Club of Medicine Hat
Order of the Royal Purple #206
Perfect Palette
Pharaoh Engineering
Pyramid Corporation
Ronco Oilfield Hauling Ltd.
Royal LePage Community Realty
Shaw Charitable Donation Committee
Solstice Studio
Southeast AB Child & Family Services
Stark's Plumbing, Heating & Electrical
TELUS

The Bay
The Body Shop
The Toronto-Dominion Bank
Tiny Tots Playroom
TM & D Adjusters Staff
TOPS AB 3340
United Way of Regina
Xi Alpha Theta

Beverley McComb
Dale Schneider
David & Carol Hicks
Devin DeClercq
E.L.W Grace Lutheran Church
Women
Frank & Irene Dal Collo
Gerald & Elaine Freedman
Harvey & Loretta Fix
Janet Keen
Jeanette Wheeler
Kathleen Wilson
Kelly Buckley
Kent Hocevar
Leigh Smythe
Leona Neubauer
Lynne Ayers
Marlene Balser
Mary Christopher
Mary Rushworth
Mary Townsend
Mike Muminovic
Pat Barbier
Patricia Hauck
Richard Hammel

Donors \$500 and Over

Art's Excavating
Atco Midstream Ltd.
Betty Brilz
BMO Fountain of Hope
BP Canada Energy Company
Christ the King Assembly
Cindy Murray
Crawford Keith
CUPE #46
Denise Yeast
G P Baptist Missionary
Gold K Kiwanis of Medicine Hat
Halliburton
HBC Foundation
Hendrik & Cidnee Wind
Jane Laidlaw Estate
Ken Tanigami
Kendee-K Hammel
Kim Leitch
Life Line Safety Service

Louise & Darrell Brusky
Lutheran Foundation of Medicine Hat
Maria Dominioni
McCoy High School
Media & Communications Workers
of Alberta
Modelo Holdings Ltd.
Park City Toyota
Paul & Louise Aussant
Pharaoh Engineering Ltd.
Rod and Terry Lerner
Roger Sabourin
Ross & Phyllis Strobel
St. Patricks Catholic Women's
League
Starks Plumbing and Heating Ltd.
Sunrise Rotary Club
Too Good Café
United Rentals of Canada

Donors \$5,000 and Over

Anonymous Donor
Canadian Women's Foundation
Catholic Charities
CIBC World Markets Children's
Foundation
Community Incentive Fund
Clara Jane Mitchell
Mary Kay Ash Foundation
Scotiabank
Sons of Abraham Congregation
Stan and Robin Krause
TD Canada Trust
TELUS Corporation
Wildrose Foundation

Core Funding

Core funding for the operation of **Phoenix Safe House** is provided by **Alberta Children and Youth Services**.

Adopt a Family Sponsors 2007 - 2008

Alberta Physical Therapy	Medicine Hat Police Services
Medicine Hat College Social Work Group	Myers Norris Penny
Bank of Montreal	Medicine Hat College, Business Administration Students
BJ Services	Mortgages to Go
The McLaren Family	Oil Wives Club of Medicine Hat
Canadian Fertilizers Staff	Pritchard and Company
Crescent Heights High School SADD	The Blyth Family
Club Sierra	The Profeta Family
Community Savings	The Kehn Family
The Bruin Family	Sandalz Spa
The Heimark Family	The Bartoli Family
The Rice Family	Scotia Bank 3 rd Street Branch
Eagles	Scotia Bank Carry Drive Branch
Hanson School of Dance	The Olivier Family
Hillcrest Church	South Rock Ltd.
CHRSC Prairie Suffield	The Jacques Family
Kinette Club of Medicine Hat	Thomsen Fisher Insurance
The Hankel Family	Transco Energy
The Lawn Shop	Value Village
London Drugs	The Trollope Family
M & M Meats	The WalMart Night Crew
The Stigant Family	