



Our Vision

Women and children have access to resources that empower them to live a life free of family violence.

Our Mission

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society supports women and children who are experiencing family violence by providing them with safe shelter, education and access to community resources.

Our Values

- Compassion
- Respect & Dignity
- Courage
- Integrity
- Dedication
- Spirit & Passion

Goals of the Board of Directors

- Ensure that resources are available to implement quality programs that support women and children who are experiencing family violence.
- Develop funding strategies to sustain ongoing programming of The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society
- Increase community awareness about The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society and issues of family violence.
- Recognize the value of our staff and ensure the carefully considered recruitment, training, evaluation and recognition of all employees.
- Ensure the proper maintenance, security and efficient use of our land and buildings.
- Commit to a defined purpose and maintain stability and diversity amongst board members.

Staff of the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society

Executive Director Natasha Carvalho
Program Manager, Phoenix Safe House..... Catherine Ohama
Program Manager, Musasa House..... Cathy Barnes
Administration Manager Dianne Finch
Child Support Coordinator, Phoenix Safe House Mirna Avelar
Child Support Worker, Phoenix Safe House Kyla Zimbowski
Outreach Worker, Phoenix Safe House Jannay Douville
Household Worker, Phoenix Safe House Ineke deVries
Household Worker, Phoenix Safe House Christine Robins
Public Education and Awareness Jamie Evans
Administration Assistant Vivian Young
Resource Development Coordinator Mary DeWolfe
Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Ottenbreit

Full Time Crisis Intervention Workers, Phoenix Safe House

Shannon Gaetz
Minota Kennell
Joy Metz
Tracy Poisson
Tracey Robinson

Relief Crisis Intervention Workers, Phoenix Safe House

Brigit Aman
Jennifer Dickinson
Jaime Feeney
Alma Garbe
Hope Hamerston
Tara Jones
Carrie Klatt
Chelsey Schell
Sue Shafer

Family Support Worker, Musasa House

Laura Berner
Nicole Hieb
Kelsey Hilsendager
Vanessa Klautt

Child Care Worker, Musasa House

Patti Knibbs

Board of Directors

President: Sandra Redden
Vice President: Kambi Heywood
Secretary: Wanda Simmons
Treasurer: Donna-Lee Sheardown
Director: Andrea Dolan

Director: Andy McGrogan
Director: Dean Milne
Director: Hilary Munro
Director: Darlene O'Reilly

Annual General Meeting

June 25th, 2009 12:00 PM

Agenda

1. Welcome: Sandra Redden
2. Woodsworth Grace *: Mary DeWolfe
3. Lunch
4. AGM Meeting - Call to Order
5. Guest Speaker: Chief of Police, Andy McGrogan
6. Adoption of Agenda
7. Adoption of Minutes of AGM June 2008
8. Greetings from Executive Director: Natasha Carvalho
9. Recognition of Corporate Partners: Natasha Carvalho
10. Auditor's Report: Burns Valkenburg & Associates: Lauren Bueckert
11. Appointment of Auditor for 2010 – Donna-Lee
12. Election of Board of Directors: Dean Milne
13. Recognition of Outgoing Board President, Sandy Redden: Dean Milne
14. Presentation to Outgoing Board Members: Kambi Heywood
15. Closing Remarks & Adjournment: Sandra Redden & Natasha Carvalho

* *Grace*

"We are thankful for these and all the good things of life. We recognize that they are a part of our common heritage and come to us through the efforts of our brothers and sisters the world over. What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. To this end, may we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles."

J.S. Woodsworth



MEDICINE HAT WOMEN'S SHELTER SOCIETY

MINUTES of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 18, 2008

1. **LUNCHEON:** Served at 12:15. Dianne Finch said the blessing.
2. **GUEST SPEAKER:** His Worship, Mayor Norm Boucher.
3. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by the President at 12:40 P.M.
4. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:** Moved by Kambi Heywood, seconded by Hilary Munro that the agenda be adopted. Carried.
5. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF 2007:** Moved by Ken Marran, seconded by Holly Stadnicki that the minutes be adopted as distributed. Carried.
6. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Sandra Redden welcomed all members and guests to the 2008 Annual General Meeting.
Motion: To accept the President's Report to the Annual General Meeting. Moved by Elaine Freedman, Seconded by Dean Milne. Carried.
7. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Natasha welcomed all members and guests and introduced her staff.
Motion: To accept the Executive Director's Report to the Annual General Meeting. Moved by Lois Bourassa, Seconded by Elaine Freedman. Carried.
8. **AUDITOR'S REPORT:** Remi Poissant of Burns, Valenburg & Associates presented the year end financial statements for 2008.
Motion: To accept the Auditor's Report to the Annual General Meeting. Moved by Ken Marran, Seconded by Wanda Simmons. Carried.
9. **ELECTION of OFFICERS:** Dean advised that the following board members would be continuing on in the second year of a two year term: Darlene O'Reilly, Hilary Munro, Sandra Redden and Wanda Simmons. Dean Milne advised that Kambi Heywood, Donna-Lee Sheardown and Dean Milne had agreed to let their names stand for another two year term. He also advised that he had one new nominee for election to the board of directors: Andrea Dolan.

Motion: Moved by Dean Milne, Seconded by Holly Stadnicki that the slate of officers be elected to the board of directors by acclamation. Carried.

10. PRESENTATION TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS: Sandra Redden and Natasha Carvalho presented awards to Ken Marran and Bert Mahura in recognition for their years of service to the board of directors. Natasha was pleased to advise that Ken and Bert would continue on in their capacity as members of the Facilities Committee.

11. ADJOURNMENT: 1:00 P.M.

12. NEXT MEETING: June 2009-

President and Executive Director Report

“Ordinary people do extraordinary things.”

This is the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society. Each and every day our dedicated staff and volunteers work hard to make a real and often profound difference in each of the families affected by family violence whom we serve.

It has been another busy year here at the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society. Every year seems to bring so many changes. This year at Phoenix Safe House we expanded our bed count from 18 to 24 in response to the increasing need for our services. This was good news in the sense that we are now able to accommodate more women and children suffering from family violence - with far few being turned away - and to provide more services. The increase in beds required the hiring of more staff, and now between the two shelters we have 22 full-time and 10 part-time staff. We have come a long way since the one 11-bed shelter with which we started.

Thank you to everyone for their dedication and hard work! Phoenix Safe House and Musasa House facilities have both run smoothly this year and we are working toward our goal of being 'Rock Solid'. Securing funding in all forms is critical for the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society, and to that end we are working diligently to achieve our fiscal goals.

The Board of Directors and management staff met for a weekend at the beginning of April for a very successful strategic planning session. Our vision, mission statement, values and goals were all revised to incorporate both facilities under the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society and to reflect our evolving goals and objectives. Thank you to the board members and management staff for your commitment of time and energy!

The staff of the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society continues to recognize the importance of being very involved in this community. They contribute in various ways, not the least of which is to participate on the many non-profit boards and community committees. Natasha has just completed her last term on the Medicine Hat Family Services Board, where she also served as Chair of the Program and Services Committee. As well, this will be her last year as Chair of the Sexual Assault Response Committee. She also serves on the Crisis Assistance Network and the Outreach Program Committee for the Medicine Hat Housing Committee.

Catherine Ohama, our Phoenix Safe House Program Manager, serves on the Regional Family Violence Committee, as well as on the pre and post disposition teams related to the Domestic Violence Court. Cathy Barnes, our Musasa House Program Manager, serves on the FOOD Connections Board as well as the Housing Sub-committee of the Crisis Assistance Network. Dianne Finch, our Administrative Manager, serves on the Provincial Information Systems Committee for the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

It is not only management staff who is involved in the community. Front-line staff also recognize the importance of the opportunity to network and to make connections which enhance the work that we currently do. Jamie Evans, our Public Education and Awareness

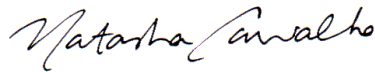
Coordinator, serves on various committees. She sits on the CRANE Executive as Chair, the Alberta Elder Abuse Network, the Education and Employment Interagency and on the Sexual Assault Response Committee education sub-committee. Mary DeWolfe is party of the recently formed Medicine Hat Fundraising Professionals group and is a newly appointed member of the L.E.A.R.N. Board of Directors. Mirna Avelar, Phoenix Safe House Child Support Program Coordinator, was on the planning committee for the Diversity conference sponsored by the Regional Family Violence Committee. We continue to value and foster the partnerships with other community agencies in our collaborative work to end family violence in our community.

This has been a difficult year for family violence. We continue to see increases in numbers of women and children presenting at emergency and second stage shelters province wide and locally. We continue to hope that with awareness comes prevention and that we will break the cycle of violence someday soon.

Submitted by,



Sandy Redden
President, Board of Directors



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

Musasa House

Statistics - Residential Program

The total number of families who resided at Musasa House during this fiscal year was twenty seven with a total of 59 children. Seventeen families discharged during this time having spent an average of one hundred and twenty nine days in the program. The shortest stay was thirty eight days. Four of the thirteen families were ready to reintegrate into the community after four months of participation, four families after eight or nine months and two families completed a full year at Musasa House before successfully moving on. Seven families found the program did not fit for them and moved out after two and three months. Ten families were resident at the end of March, 2009. The total number of hours dedicated to the intake of each of the 27 families was approximately 226.

Most of the families who come to Musasa House are leaving high risk situations that require distance from abusers and therefore these families tend to come from outside of our community. Where the risk is deemed high enough, families from the immediate area also access this program.

Six of the ten families' resident here at the end of March, 2009 were from Southern Alberta, and the remainder from elsewhere in Alberta. About half of these families were First Nations. The second stage program takes referrals nationwide.

Women's Groups

- Parenting Group: Effects of Domestic Violence on Children
- Life Skills Group
- Community Kitchen/Nutrition Group
- Self Esteem and Boundaries Group

The women's groups run four times a week and are mandatory for the first 6 months. We had a total of 27 women participate during the past year. The total number of hours for groups provided to the women was 1213. These groups are facilitated by the Family Support Workers and other Community Agencies/Partners. Upon completion of the first six months the women are given group evaluations to complete.

Children's Programs

Child Care Program

The child care program runs in conjunction with the women's mandatory group sessions. In this budget year there was a total of 1, 126 hours of support provided in the child care room. There were a total of 24 preschool children (aging from 3 months old to 5 years of age) that received support in the child care room over the past year. When a child exits the child care room permanently we ask the mom to complete an evaluation.

Child Support Group

The Child Support Group is a weekly group that children from the ages of 6-12 participate in. In the past year there have been 22 children who have participated in the group. The total amount of hours for this group was 204. This number does not include the children's participation in the Summer Recreation program.

Youth Support Group

The youth support group is a weekly group that youth ages 13-17 participate in. In the past year there have been 4 youth participate. The total number of hours for this group was 50.

Family Activities

Musasa House provides many family based activities throughout the year. Some of these activities include: Echo Dale, BBQ's, swimming, Trick or treating at the Mall, Family suppers, and Christmas activities. This year we provided a total of approximately 182.5 hours of Family Activities.

Musasa House Outreach

Musasa House provides Outreach services to women and children who have exited the program and are now living within the community. This service is provided on a request basis and consists of home, office, phone or community visits by program staff. The content of this continued support tends to consist of reviewing safety plans, advocating for community resources to meet the needs of the family, emotional support and problem solving discussions. During this year we have supported 10 women and 4 children. At year end there were 6 women and no children on the Outreach caseload. Approximately 70 hours of support was provided throughout the year. Of the 4 families that discharged this year from the Outreach the average number of days they participated in the program were 155. We currently have two women who have been on the caseload since they discharged 2 years ago. The shortest time we have served a family is 4 months.

Submitted by

Cathy Barnes
Program Manager, Musasa House

Phoenix Safe House

Statistics - Residential Program

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, two hundred ninety one women (291) and one hundred seventy-nine (179) children accessed Phoenix Safe House Residential services. This total of four hundred and seventy people represents an increase of 15% over the previous year.

One of the challenges (and opportunities) faced by the Residential program this year was the increase from 18 funded to 24 funded beds beginning September 1, 2008. Following are the occupancy reports for both time periods.

April 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008: 18 beds available; 73% occupancy during this 5 month period of time.

September 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009: 24 beds available; 58% occupancy. It is important to note that during this time frame, there were two periods when PSH accommodated up to 27 persons at one time. This was in excess of the number of funded beds, but, due to the arrangement of the bedrooms and the size of families, this was possible. PSH at those times was over 100% occupied.

Women who accessed residential services varied in age from 17 years to 78 years. The age range for the children was newborn to seventeen years; the average age was eight years. The average length of stay was 9.68 days.

Statistics - Crisis Line

659 phone calls or drop in client contacts totaling approximately 27,322 minutes (455 hours, 36 minutes) for crisis intervention, emotional support, information or referral to services.

322 phone calls or drop in client contacts to request bed space at PSH. Of these:

- 234 were accepted for admission,
- 37 turned away, due to other reason,
- 24 turned away, service would exceed funded capacity,
- 19 turned away due to no available bedrooms,
- 8 turned away, does not meet priority level established by shelter.

The shelter is able to accommodate women and children who are escaping family violence, but may not at times (due to space) be able to house those who ask for bed space for other reasons (homelessness, transience, other). However, PSH does deny admission to some women who have demonstrated in past stays at the shelter that they themselves present a high risk of harm to other residents or staff.

Statistics - Exit Surveys

Results from the Women's Shelter Exit Survey during this reporting period reveal:

- 43% of the women stated this was their first time in a shelter,
- 46% of the women stated they had accessed a shelter between two to five times
- 11% reported accessing a shelter more than 5 times.
- 90% of the women who completed the survey reported they felt safer from their abuser while at Phoenix Safe House.
- Women also reported they had more knowledge of legal information and support and community services and supports than when they first came to Phoenix Safe House.

In addition, women stated the following as a result of their residential stay:

- 91% of women reported they know more about the signs of an abusive relationship.
- 95% report they know more about the effect the abuse has on them.
- 94% state they know more about the effect abuse has on their children.
- 95% stated they are now more able to keep themselves and the children in their care safer from abuse.

Of the women who identified they stayed at a shelter previously, 58% stated they had returned to the same relationship. Of those:

- 10% said they returned due to lack of affordable housing,
- 7% because of their family,
- 15% because they still had hope for the relationship,
- 10% because of lack of money
- 11% because of fear.

13% of all women surveyed this year said they were returning to the same relationship after this stay at the shelter.

Security Upgrade Project

This year MHWSS completed significant upgrades to the security system

- New cameras and an improved monitoring system were installed which make possible clearer visibility of the exterior and interior of the facility.
- Improvements were made to the door access system which decreased the number of failures experienced with the old system.
- Crisis staff are now equipped with a "panic button" which, when activated, summons immediate police assistance. The panic button has been used during emergent situations and has performed ideally.
- Slats in the fence were removed to improve visibility of the rear of Musasa House

Danger Assessment Research Project

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society was chosen as one of 9 shelters across Alberta to participate in an important research project with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) and Dr. Jacqueline Campbell of John Hopkins University School of Nursing. This research project looked at the use of the "Danger Assessment", a lethality risk assessment tool used in shelters for women fleeing their abusive intimate partners. In layman's terms, this tool is used to assess the risk that a woman's intimate partner will murder her.

Over 500 women from women's shelters across Alberta participated in this important research, and the information flowing from the project is astounding.

The Danger Assessment research is being presented on June 15th in London Ontario at the 1st Annual Canadian Conference on the Prevention of Domestic Homicides and again at the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters annual general meeting on June 19th in Edmonton.

Our participation in this important research has given us a voice on the world stage and has given us the opportunity to contribute to improved services for abused women and children in shelters across Canada and potentially around the world.

Submitted by

Catherine Ohama
Program Manager, Phoenix Safe House

Phoenix Safe House Child Support Program

The Child Support Program at The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society (MHWSS) strives toward offering children that have been exposed to family violence a safe and nurturing environment to share their feelings on the issues occurring in their home, and enjoy healthy experiences. The program also provides emotional support, information and links to community resources for the mothers. The Child Support Program accomplished these goals through four key areas of service: residential support, group support, community drop-in services and summer recreation.

In September 2008 the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society received more funding that allowed the residential program to increase bed space from 18 beds to 24 beds. The Child Support Program then hired another Child Support Worker to assist the moms and their children. The program still 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 around 123 children received support services through the Child Support Program

Residential Support

This change brought many challenges to the program such as training the new worker and providing assistance for the increase in needs. The Child Support Coordinator and the Child Support Worker became a team that is working 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.

With the addition of another Child Support Worker joining the team, support for moms and children is available on weekday evenings and extra support on Wednesday mornings. While in residence the Child Support Team 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 Team assists mothers with parenting skills such as nurturing, child interactions, and behavior management. Together, the Child Support Team and mothers develop strategies to make the families' stay as comforting as possible. More often the Child Support Team assists the mothers by attending appointments in the community. In addition, the Child Support Team makes referrals to other agencies when children have special needs and will work closely with the agencies in specific cases where the language is another barrier for the mothers.

For the past year, the Child Support Program had a male complete his practicum from the Child and Youth Care Program. The male children had the opportunity to interact with a male role model that provided a positive influence during their stay at the shelter.

The Child Support Team 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 Team 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 Team 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. For the last two years the program has hired 2 employees one being male to work with the children. The addition of a male to the Summer Recreation Program has made a positive impact on the male children involved in this program.

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 out of town attractions, water parks, and bowling. Past participants enjoyed visits to the Dream Centre, Praxis Dinosaur Dig, strawberry picking, and the Drumming Circle.

Submitted by,

Mirna Avelar,
Child Support Coordinator

Kyla Zimbowski
Child Support Worker

Phoenix Safe House Women's Outreach Program

Statistics - Outreach Program

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 there were 41 participants signed onto the Outreach Program. On average, clients met with the Family Outreach Worker once every two weeks. Twenty-one (21) out of the forty-one (41) individuals currently remain on the program receiving support on a regular basis. During the fiscal year, the Outreach Worker scheduled approximately three hundred and five (305) appointments with Case Load clients. During this time the Outreach Worker provided approximately four hundred and fifty seven point five (457.5) hours of client contact to Case Load clients (approximation base on allotting one and a half hours per appointment).

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the Outreach Worker scheduled approximately two hundred and sixty-nine (269) meetings with Non-Caseload Clients. There has been a steady increase in Non-Caseload Clients accessing Outreach services. During this time the Outreach Worker provided approximately four hundred and three (403) 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, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the Outreach Worker received forty-eight (48) requests for the Outreach Worker to follow up with women discharging from Phoenix Safe House Residential Program. The Outreach Worker was successful in connecting with twelve (12) of these women.

Adopt a Family Program

This year the Volunteer Coordinator along with the Outreach Worker ran the Christmas hamper program "Adopt-a-Family". 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 2008, the Adopt-a-Family program matched 63 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.

Submitted by

Jannay Douville
Outreach Worker

Weekly Support Groups

Thursday Morning Support Group

There were a total of 15 women registered in the Thursday morning Women's Weekly Support Group (WSG) at the end of the past fiscal year. This group completed a total of 37 sessions in the past fiscal year. The group was provided with information on the cycle of abuse, identifying abusive behaviors in self and others, starting over after an abusive relationship 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 and completed self-esteem collages and personality dimensions. Guest speakers were invited at various points in the year to provide information on other community resources/services including the Medicine Hat College and Good Food Box, or to complete self-care exercises, such as yoga and art therapy.

Tuesday Evening Support Group

As of March 31, 2009 there were a total of 15 women registered in the Tuesday Evening Support Group. This group completed a total of 39 sessions in the fiscal year. The group was provided with information on the cycle of abuse, types of abuse, starting over after abuse, abusive patterns and healthy relationships. The group participated in self care exercises (Yoga), team building, art therapy, and self exploration. Discussions on anger, grief, guilt, empowerment, dealing with ex partner and coping strategies took place throughout the group sessions.

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 Team 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.

Women of Strength

The Women of Strength group is a drop in group so individuals can start the group at any time. Once individuals have filled out an intake package and have attended their first group they are registered in the group. The individual is then registered in the group for the entire year because the group is offered on a drop in basis. At the end of this fiscal year, there were a total of 11 women who were registered members. Of those 11 members there were 2 individuals that attended the group on a regular basis.

The Women of Strength group completed a total of 31 sessions in the fiscal year. The group was provided with information on issues unique to women which included setting boundaries, self-esteem, relationships, and anger management.

Women's Courage to Change

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society partners with Medicine Hat Family Services to offer the Women's Courage to Change group. Three sessions of Women's Courage to Change

overlapped in the fiscal year from April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009. The Spring 2008 session ended on April 9/08 and had 8 of the 11 women registered complete the program. The Fall 2008 session ran from September 17 to November 26/08. A total of 11 women completed the intake process while six women completed the program. The Spring 2009 began on March 4/09 with a total of 10 women completing the intake process. This session is still in progress.

Women are asked to complete evaluations following each session as well as a general one at the end of the Courage to Change Program. Following are a sampling of comments taken from those evaluations collected during the past fiscal year:

“[I learned] that I am not alone and I am not fighting the unfightable.”
“[I learned] it’s not my fault, there are other women who have been through it too.”
“[I learned] how the cycle of abuse applies to me, the different phases – his actions.”
“I have really enjoyed this group, yourselves, the other women. Thank you once again for your time in running it.”
“[I learned] I’m not alone and there are people that can help.”

Submitted by:

Jamie Evans
Public Education Coordinator

Jannay Douville
Outreach Worker

Catherine Ohama
Phoenix Safe House Program Manager

Vanessa Klaudt
Musasa House Family Support Worker

Mirna Avelar
Child Support Coordinator

Kyla Zimbowski
Child Support Worker

Public Education and Awareness Program

Statistics - Public Education and Awareness Program

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the Public Education Coordinator provided a total of 65 community presentations to over 1,600 participants. During this fiscal year, the Public Education Coordinator spent 3,686 minutes or 61.4 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.

It is important for the Public Education Program to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the presentation, the legitimacy of the information provided and a venue for participants to ask questions anonymously and confidentially. This feedback is used to help the Public Education Coordinator to learn new ways of presenting information, to become more aware of the presentations' effectiveness, and to provide necessary follow-up information. Evaluation forms are completed by participants, depending on the audience and venue and sent to the group to address questions as a result of the presentation or to provide clarification on issues arising from the presentation. Following are comments from evaluation forms for the past year:

- *"Thanks for taking the time to come in and talk to us. It really helped me out."* – High School Student
- *"I learned that there is more abuse than one, that you don't have to be pushed or kicked to be abused."* – High School Student
- *"Everything in depth about abuse. I used to be in a relationship like that and now I know it was abuse."* – High School Student

From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the Public Education Coordinator arranged a total of twelve information displays for public viewing for a total of 409.5 hours.

Family Violence Prevention Month

November 2008 marked the 22nd 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, 2nd Annual Breakfast with the Guys event with guest M.C. Poncho Parker of Rock 105.3, awareness presentations for professionals, Silent Witness Exhibit for public viewing, and a candlelit ceremony to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The Society was also involved in bringing the performance *"speak"* by the Stony Plain Multi-Youth Production Company to Medicine Hat. Approximately 2000 students grades 5-8 attended the daytime performances. There were also 200 people in attendance at two evening performances for the general public.

Submitted by
Jamie Evans, Public Education Coordinator

Volunteer Program

Statistics - Volunteer Program

From April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009 the MHWSS had approximately 80 volunteers assisting in various areas. Below is a break down of hours volunteered.

Area	Number of Hours
Childcare	704
Client Services	76.5
Committees/Board of Directors	101.5
Cooking/Baking	357
Donations	145.5
Fundraising/Special Events	166.5
Housekeeping	38
Reception	620.5
Other	304.5
Total Volunteer Hours	2514.5

In comparison to last years volunteer hours; we have seen a decrease in the number of hours given by volunteers. The reason for this decline in childcare hours, cooking, and housekeeping may be due to our staff increase and having more staff available to look after jobs in these areas. Hours spent on special events/fundraising were down from last year because there was not a casino during the last fiscal year. Hours in the areas of client support, reception and donations saw increases in the hours given. However, there are hours where volunteers were requested but we were unable to fill the shifts with volunteers. Those hours are broken down in the chart below.

Volunteer positions	Number of Hours Not Filled
Childcare	287
Cooking/Baking	385
Fundraising/Special Events	10.5
Reception	234.5
Total Volunteer Hours Requested	917

Volunteer Interest & Registration

Last year nearly 80 people expressed interest in volunteering for the MHWSS. Of those, 30 actually registered and contributed volunteer hours. Four of those who expressed interest in volunteering did not meet the requirements to volunteer i.e. had a criminal record, were under the age of 18, etc. The remainder of those who expressed interest but were not registered did not follow through on the screening process. Some were lost after initial contact and follow up, others came for the interview but never followed through on completing the security clearances.

Submitted by
Jennifer Ottenbreit, Volunteer Coordinator

Resource Development Program

Resource Development Coordinator Report

Background to the Position:

Musasa House, our 10-unit second-stage shelter for women with children recovering from the traumatic effects of family violence, opened in July 2006. While the Society was thrilled that they were now able to provide this vital service, with no secure funding in place for Musasa House operations, they also had the responsibility of raising over \$350,000 annually.

Faced with that daunting task the Board of Directors, in the Spring of 2008, held a consultation session with various community stakeholders and financial experts. As a result of that session, the Board of Directors made the decision to hire a Resource Development Coordinator. The position was advertised in the summer, and I was hired to commence work on September 2nd.

Resource Development Coordinator Duties:

- Researching and applying for grants
- Writing and submitting reports for acquired grants
- Logging donations and issuing charitable tax receipts
- Writing thank you letters for donations
- Working with third party fundraising events
- Develop protocol for third party fundraising events
- Organizing fundraising events and activities
- Media relations, public relations and publicity
- Endowment Building
- Newsletter

The first few weeks were spent in orientation, including familiarizing myself with the Shelters; reading policy manuals, grant proposals, history of the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society; and getting to know the Staff at both Phoenix Safe House and Musasa House.

Fund Development Committee: I met with the newly formed Fund Development Sub-Committee, comprising Committee Chair, Darlene O'Reilly; Board President, Sandi Redden; Executive Director, Natasha Carvalho; and Board Members Hilary Munro and Wanda Simmons several times. Terms of reference for the Resource Development Coordinator were established, as well as short term and longer term goals and objectives.

Donor Software: On the recommendation of the Board, I researched donor software, and after testing several options, presented the Board with a proposal to purchase @EASE software. This software, created and sold by the Batsch Group, an Edmonton company, is very efficient and the Batsch Group is very helpful. The Board concurred and the software was purchased by early October. Later that month Dianne Finch and I

attended @EASE training sessions in Edmonton, and the program was implemented shortly thereafter – in time for our Fall Mail Campaign.

Mail Campaign: In November, addressed direct appeal letters were sent to 1,931 previous donors and 3,145 unaddressed appeals were sent out to selected postal walk areas in Medicine Hat. The campaign was quite successful, bringing in \$41,783. We also realized a substantial increase in our ‘unsolicited’ donations.

‘Wish Upon a Star’: I completed the Christmas wish book – ‘Wish Upon a Star’ – which was initiated by Jennifer Ottenbreit, our Volunteer Coordinator. Approximately 35 books were distributed to various Medicine Hat businesses. As a new and unique way for supporters to donate, ‘Wish Upon a Star’ offered 7 designated items for ‘purchase’. These included Women’s and Children’s Personal Care Kits, Diaper Supplies, Gift Certificates for family recreational purposes and for other necessary items for our families, our annual Year End Picnic and Christmas Party. ‘Wish Upon a Star’ also contained beautiful photographs donated by the Medicine Hat Photography Club and information on our services and programs.

Fundraising Events:

- Scotiabank Golf Tournament, which took place on my third day on the job. This was a tremendous success, raising \$25,000 for the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society. I am pleased to represent the Society on the planning committee for the 2009 golf tournament.
- I worked with Jennifer Ottenbreit, our Volunteer Coordinator and Jamie Evans, our Public Educator and Awareness Coordinator on the Fall Into Christmas Craft Fair raffle and the Medicine Hat Police Association Ball silent auction. Both events were successful, and a lot of fun. Each event raised approximately \$4,000.
- I attended the Maverick Group Tree Tackling Contest at Christmas time. It was a very interesting and lively event!
- In January I started working with Lydia Burger to organize her Ladies Morning Spring Tea, as the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society was designated as the charity of choice for this year’s tea.
- Also in January, I started working with Royal LePage staff to organize their first annual Gala. Medicine Hat Royal LePage, under the umbrella of the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, has committed to ongoing support of our Shelters.

Grant Applications: I have applied for eight grants and have submitted funding proposals to several service clubs and community organizations.

One of the successful grants is from Alberta Children and Youth Services for the ‘Musasa Tree House Childcare Program’. This program enables us to create specialized child care spaces to provide quality child care programming to children exposed to family violence, through the new Women’s Shelter Child Care Program.

Endowment Fund: Another recommendation of the Spring ‘think tank’ was that the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society develop an endowment fund. After careful research and discussion with others in the community with endowment fund experience, discussion at the Fund Development Committee, and then the Board of Directors levels, it was decided that the Resource Development Coordinator would assume responsibility for initiating the process. The Fund Development Committee will begin developing the necessary marketing tools over the coming summer months.

Fundraising Network: A small group of Medicine Hat professional fundraisers started meeting in November, and have continued to meet monthly since then. This has proven to be a very supportive and useful network. We are working toward forming a charter chapter of the Alberta Association of Fundraising Executives (AAFRE). If we are successful, we will have access to many resources through that association.

It has been very rewarding to return to the Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter, where I started work in the shelter movement in 1981, as a founding staff member. These first months as Resource Development Coordinator have been exciting and challenging. I am looking forward to a very productive year.

Submitted by

Mary DeWolfe
Resource Development Coordinator

Core Funding

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

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our many supporters who give so generously to help women and children escaping from family violence.

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