

From the Executive Director

It's spring! It's raining and the tulips are up! It's time to think of new beginnings and new challenges that lie ahead.

This past year has been a year of change, growth, and challenge for the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society and an amazing 4 months for me in the position of Executive Director. I am truly impressed by the dedication and commitment of the staff and volunteers as they have risen to the challenge presented by staff shortages and turnover, a change in our management team, lack of funding, an increased demand for our services within the community and the demands of this profession. Everyone has pulled together through all of these transitions, often at a personal cost, to provide the highest level of service to our clients.

But as they say, the only constant is change!! Thank you to each and every one of you for the work you do everyday to help us empower women to make the right choices for themselves and their children.

One of the many reasons women say they return to an abusive relationship is that they have hope for the relationship. I admire these women who believe in their relationships and hope for things to be better and that the violence will end. It is this tenacity that astonishes yet humbles me. These women only want what everyone else wants; happiness, security, trust and safety in our family settings, whatever that configuration might be. I think it is this belief in change and hope for the future that motivates us all to continue and persevere in times of adversity. We can only hope for the future that "home" will be a safer place for all women and children.

Musasa House, our second stage housing program, is nearing the end of it's first year of operation. To date we have had 9 families living in this program and it has been a year of growing and learning not only for these families but for the staff as well. Thank you Musasa staff and volunteers for your commitment to getting the program running and operational this year. We continue to hope

for funding from government in order to provide these services for women and their children who come to us from all parts of Alberta. We want to continue to provide a safe place and temporary shelter (as the word Musasa means) for these women and their children to heal and rebuild their violence free lives.

April is volunteer appreciation month and I want to take this opportunity to thank whole heartedly our dedicated team of volunteers who enable us to provide so many of our programs. Without your time and energy and selfless giving we would not be able to provide so many services to those who need them. Thank you for the time you give us.

Natasha Carvalho
Executive Director



Public Education and Awareness

April 22 – 28, 2007 commemorates National Victims of Crime Awareness Week in Canada. This year's theme is "It's Time to Listen."

What would you hear if you listened to a victim of family violence speak about her experience? Would you jump in to provide answers to her questions and solutions to her problems? Perhaps you would try to make her feel better by reminding her of happier times or that it could be worse. Would you be uncomfortable in the situation and try to think of something else to talk about? Or would you be able to really listen to what they are saying, not just to what you want to hear or to what you want them to say?

Beneath What I Say

Will I ever be alright?
Please look beyond the damage and offer
Your unconditional acceptance.

Will I ever stop feeling afraid?
Please hold my hand in the dark, but only until
I can stand alone.

Will I ever get rid of the anger and hate?
Please remind me that these emotions are not the
Real me, just a part of the load on my back.

Will I always feel so helpless?
Please don't tell me what I should do. Instead, help
Me explore the alternatives so I can decide for myself.

Will I ever be able to trust again?
Please encourage me to take risks,
One small step at a time.

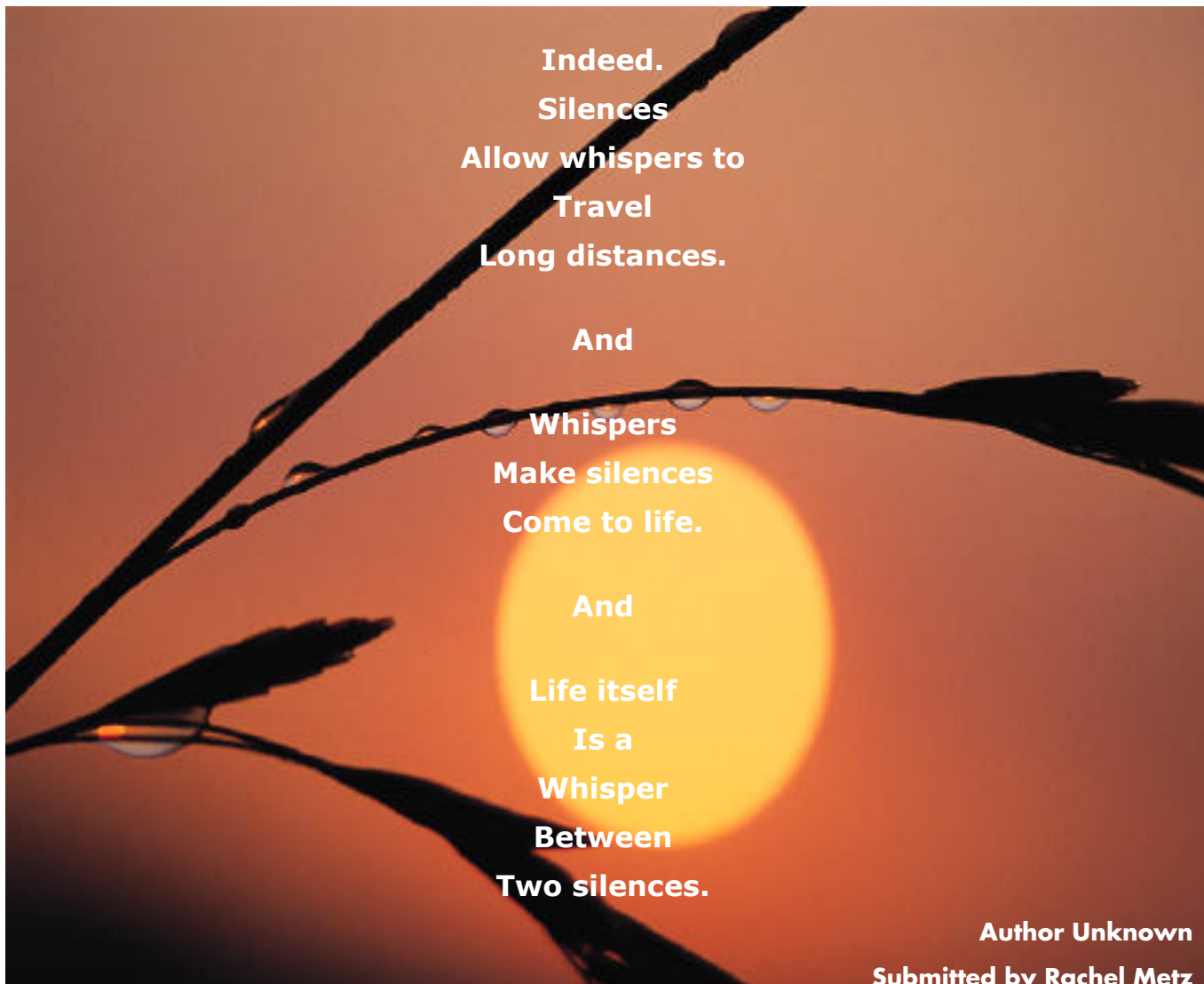
Will I ever be healed?
Please help me see my own progress,
As some days
It feels as if there's none.

Will I ever regain control of my life?
Please don't do things for me
That I can do for myself.

Will I always feel so alone?
Please don't try to solve it. Just be here to listen.

- Author Unknown
Submitted by Jamie Evans
Public Education and Awareness Coordinator

Silences



Indeed.
Silences
Allow whispers to
Travel
Long distances.

And

Whispers
Make silences
Come to life.

And

Life itself
Is a
Whisper
Between
Two silences.

Author Unknown

Submitted by Rachel Metz

Spring 2007 Edition
Published April 2007

Deadline for submissions
for Summer Newsletter
is June 30, 2007.
Please email your
proposed articles to:
info@psh-medhat.com

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society
Annual General Meeting

June 26th, 2007

12:00 Noon

at

Chinook Village
(details to follow)



Musasa House

Spring has arrived, and with it all the outdoor activities that families love. At Musasa House we are excited to see the families organizing community nights that include barbeques, soccer games and lots of fun for everyone. The playground is full of children playing, laughing and once again enjoying the outside every chance they get. Spring is a transition into the lovely summer months, and for many of the families of Musasa House, another type of transition has also begun. Many of the families are now entering the second phase of the program, where they begin to re-enter the work force and prepare to return to independent living within the community. This time is truly as exciting as awaiting those May flowers.



The big holiday of Easter is just around the corner, and at Musasa House the Easter Bunny is preparing a great Easter Egg Hunt. We hope not to miss any of those eggs - I am sure all the children and youth will easily find them.

Along with May flowers comes Mother's Day! As this is our first year of operation, we are hoping to ensure a special treat for those moms who work so hard at providing a safe, violence free home for their children. This is the one day of the year that Mom truly deserves to be treated like royalty.

Submitted by Cathy Barnes,
Musasa House Program Manager

Shelter Wish List

- Basic Cleaning Supplies
- Grocery Vouchers
- Passes for outings for children (i.e. Movie & Bowling passes, etc)
- Laundry baskets
- Tea towels & dish cloths
- Kitchen items (dishes, glasses, pans, small appliances, etc.)
- Journals (children's or women's)
- Hygiene Items such as:
 - Shampoo & Conditioner (regular sized bottles please)
 - Deodorant
 - Body Wash
 - Body Poufs
 - Hair Brushes
 - Hair elastics/scrunchies
 - Tampons
 - Women's slippers
- Back packs & duffle bags
- Dressers (that can be delivered)



From Ineke's Kitchen

KRISPIES LEMON CHIFFON

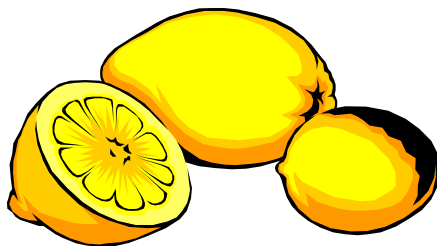
3 cups Kellogg's Rice Krispies cereal
1/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
1/3 cup butter, melted
1 package Sherriff lemon pie filling and dessert mix
2 eggs, separated
1/3 cup cold water
1 3/4 cup boiling water
1 Tbsp butter
1/4 cup sugar

- Crush cereal to 1 cup. Combine with brown sugar and 1/3 cup butter, mixing well.
- Reserve cup crumbs.
- Press remainder evenly into bottom of 8-inch springform pan or 9-inch pie plate.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 7 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool.

- Prepare dessert according to package directions, except reduce boiling water to 1 3/4 cups.
- Cool 3 minutes, stirring twice.

- Beat egg whites until soft peaks form; gradually add sugar, beating until peaks are stiff but not dry.

- Pour half of the filling onto crust. Gently fold remainder into egg whites. Spread over first layer; sprinkle with reserved crumbs.
- Chill about 3 hours. Refrigerate leftovers.



From the Crisis Team

Violence against women is a persistent and ongoing problem in Canada and around the world. *Woman Abuse is any threat, act or physical force that is used to create fear, control or intimidate you.* With all abuse, the abuser uses power over those they are abusing. Abusers tend to use alcohol or drugs as an excuse. But the abuser is responsible for his or her behaviour.

The effects of abuse don't stop once the hitting, yelling or put-downs stop. Here are some of the results of woman abuse:

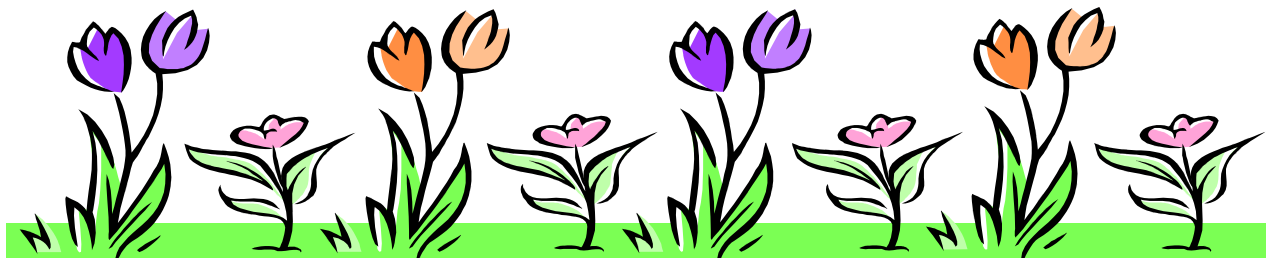
- low self-esteem
- feelings of helplessness
- self blame and guilt
- depression
- anger
- self-destructive behaviour
- anxiety / stress
- difficulty sleeping or eating

If you are in an abusive relationship or know someone that is in an abusive relationship and would like information or just someone to talk to call the Phoenix Safe House at 529-1091 or toll free at 1-800-661-7949.

The crisis lines also provide support, information and referrals to all callers in need of assistance. Trained crisis intervention workers will offer emotional support and guidance, assist callers in exploring their options, provide information on family violence and abuse, complete safety planning with victims, and direct callers to resources and services available in the community.

Spring is known as a time of new beginnings and new life, a time for change.

Submitted by: Rachel Metz
Phoenix Safe House
Crisis Intervention Worker



To Everything There is a Season

Artist: The Byrds

To everything
There is a season
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep

To everything
There is a season
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together

To everything
There is a season
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time of war, a time of peace
A time of love, a time of hate
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing

To everything
There is a season
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time to love, a time to hate
A time of peace, I swear it's not too late!



From the Volunteer Coordinator

Everyday our volunteers give of themselves to help others. As a nation, once a year we join to recognize the importance of volunteers during National Volunteer Week. This year's week to celebrate was April 15-21. Thank you to the Volunteer Centre, Veiner Centre & Esplanade for putting on a Volunteer Appreciation night April 16 at the Esplanade! I hope some of our volunteers had the opportunity to take advantage of this fantastic event.

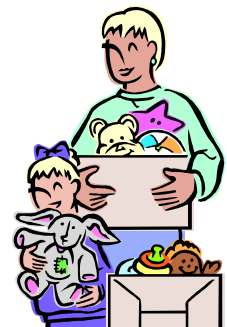
We will be holding our own appreciation event just for our volunteers come June. The tentative date set is June 28, so if you are one of our volunteers, keep your eyes open for an invitation in the mail or e-mail!

For anyone who is interested in volunteering, I really encourage you to stop by the Volunteer Centre and see what they have to offer. We always are looking for volunteers ourselves in certain areas but if you are looking for something more than we can offer, the Volunteer Centre has started a new website where you can browse current volunteer opportunities throughout all of Southeastern Alberta. It is a fantastic site where not only can you find volunteer opportunities but you can also check out current events happening in our community. Check out the Virtual Volunteer Centre at: www.volunteerseab.ca

Submitted by
Jennifer Ottenbreit
Volunteer Co-ordinator

Ode to Volunteers

Many will be shocked to find
When the Day of Judgement nears
That there's a special place in
Heaven set aside for volunteers.
Furnished with big recliners,
Satin couches and footstools -
Where there's no committee chair,
No group leaders for carpools.
Telephone lists will be outlawed,
But a finger snap will bring
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners,
And rare treats fit for a king.
You ask, who'll serve the privileged few
And work for all they're worth?
Why, those who reaped the benefits
And not once volunteered on earth.



Family Outreach Program

Hands on learning or learning through doing is the best opportunity for any student to develop practice skills in preparing them to enter their chosen profession. Every year we are eager to enhance students learning through a practicum setting. We have had numerous students from the Medicine Hat College complete their practicum placement within our agency. Students from Social Work, Child & Youth Care and the Addictions program have completed their practicum within our agency in one capacity or another.

Currently, Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society has 16 full time and 9 relief employees and of these 25 employees 15 staff members have graduated from the Medicine Hat College from various programs 4 of which completed there practicum placements within our agency. Under the guidance and supervision from an assigned staff personnel within the agency, the practicum student is provided with the opportunity to gain hands on experience in dealing with real life situations.

I have had the opportunity from January to April 2007 to supervise Medicine Hat College Social Work student Mindy Genereux. As a registered social worker is has been a great learning experience for myself as a mentor to be able to pass on skills and knowledge within the social work practice framework and our agency as a whole. Mindy has been a wonderful addition to our team. When called upon for support and assistance Mindy is open and willing to learn. I would like to thank Mindy for all she has contributed to Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society in the past four months. I would like to wish her all the best in her future to come. Mindy is a great addition to the social work team. Congratulations Mindy!!



Congratulations
Mindy

Submitted by
Nicole Hieb BSW RSW
Family Outreach Worker

From the Child Support Coordinator

Hello everyone,

It's so good to see spring coming again. The beginning of the green grass sprouting everywhere resembles the season "of life as a gift" and the children are getting excited to play outdoors more freely and for a longer time. Everybody seems happier and planning to start gardens or planting flowers.

At Phoenix Safe House, the women and children are still looking for a clear path in their lives but the good thing is that when they come they have the courage to begin a new season. The past year had many challenges with many changes; however, hope is never lost and it is always rewarding to see more lives able to leave with a new light. The Children's group currently has 12 children. Every year there are more boys coming that learn to express feelings without hitting. The group has discussions, games, music, crafts, and also prizes. The children also have a great Christmas party and during the next period there's more outings planned to enjoy the weather. Every year in June there's a BBQ that celebrates the end of the journey.

I would especially like to thank Redcliff Lionettes who for 6 years have been donating goodie bags to the children's Christmas party. Their generosity is overwhelming! Also, I would like to thank all the organizations and individuals that allow the children to have a positive experience. We always have donations for Halloween, Easter, and Christmas. Our community is so good to us.

I would like to end with the following quote:

"Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in"

Leonard Cohen
Stranger music



Hasta la proxima
Mirna Avelar

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society

Staff Members

Administration:

Executive Director: Natasha Carvalho
Administration Manager: Dianne Finch
Public Ed & Awareness: Jamie Evans
Receptionist: Vivian Young
Volunteer Coordinator: Jennifer Ottenbreit

Phoenix Safe House:

Acting Program Manager: Catherine Ohama
Child Support Coordinator: Mirna Avelar
Family Outreach Worker: Nicole Hieb
Household Manager: Ineke deVries

Crisis Intervention Workers:

Jannay Douville	Lily Laurent
Rachel Metz	Joy Metz
Tracey Robinson	Taryn Parkinson
Hope Hamerston	Christine Robins
Janelle Hazel	Vikki Stegen
Kelsey Hilsendager	Amy Toews

Musasa House:

Program Manager: Cathy Barnes
Family Support Workers:
Vanessa Klaudt
Jeanette Collier
Laura Berner

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society

Board Members

President: Robin Krause
Vice President: Elaine Freedman
Secretary: Sandy Redden
Treasurer: Donna-Lee Sheardown

Directors:

Kambi Heywood
Bert Mahura
Ken Marran
Dean Milne
Blaine Poberznick

We're on the Web!

www.psh-medhat.com

MEMBERSHIP IN THE MEDICINE HAT WOMEN'S SHELTER SOCIETY SHOWS SUPPORT FOR THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY AND GIVES VOTING PRIVILEGES AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM, CLIP, AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. MEMBERSHIP COST IS \$10.00.

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society
Box 2500
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8G8

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (home) _____ (work) _____

EMAIL: _____



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