



The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters



ANNUAL
REPORT
2005

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ABOUT ACWS



The *vision statement* of ACWS is:

We believe in a world free from violence and abuse.

Our *mission statement* is:

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is a province-wide, voluntary organization supporting women's shelters and their partners through education, research and services for the benefit of abused women and their children.



We *believe*:

- In empowerment for women and equal worth of all persons.
- In strength of numbers together for a common mission.
- That the issues of violence and abuse are the responsibilities of the entire community including legal, social and political structures.



Thus, the *areas of concern* for ACWS are:

- Issues of family violence
- Breaking the cycle of inter-generational violence

The *focus* of ACWS is:

Abused women and their families



To work towards our vision, mission, and beliefs ACWS:

- serves as the collective unified voice of member organizations
- fosters networking and information sharing
- assists in acquiring adequate resources for member shelters and ACWS
- influences public policy and systems
- increases public awareness of issues related to family violence
- fosters professional development within Alberta's sheltering movement

Message from the President, by Carolyn Goard

Four years ago the membership of ACWS, after serious consideration, chose to undertake a transformational organizational process that has propelled us into regaining a significant leadership position on issues of family violence in the province.

Who would have dreamt four years ago that ACWS, in just a short period of time, would not only influence the establishment of the 2004 Premier's Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying, but also have a significant impact through our participation in Regional Roundtables across the province? The following ACWS initiatives and positions can be found in the recommendations of the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying report, entitled *Finding Solutions Together* :

- Province wide family violence awareness campaign
- Establishment of a single, cross-sector entity for province-wide leadership (family violence commission or similar structure)
- Cross sectoral training
- Intervention programs for batterers
- Recognition of the need to screen for family violence in custody and access cases
- Provision of additional support to families escaping violence
- Initiation of a plan to deal with the turn-away rates and lack of second stage housing options
- Expansion of the availability and access to safe visitation and access sites
- Ensure longer term, sustainable funding and support is in place for shelters and other family violence programs

How have we achieved such great outcomes in such a short period of time? I think in part it relates to the tremendous visionary leadership and political savvy of our Provincial Coordinator, Jan Reimer. As importantly, though it relates to our transformation over the last four years from an organization designed to meet the needs of nine shelters, to one capable of addressing the complex membership needs of 42 member shelters and 2 associate members.

Four years ago at our Annual General Meeting the membership of ACWS, Shelter Executive Directors and local Shelter Board representatives, engaged in a planning process that saw our ACWS Board of Directors shrink from an unwieldy total of 40 members, where every shelter in the province was represented on the ACWS Board by a local shelter board member, to a board of 11 members, where 2 Board members from each of 5 regions are elected to the ACWS Board. From each of five regions, one local shelter director and one local shelter board member are elected in alternating years. The 11th member of the ACWS Board is the President, who is elected at large for a two-year period. The President can be a paid manager or a local shelter board member from anywhere in the province.

The result today is that ACWS has emerged from this process of transformation as a leader on issues of family violence. We have become increasingly proficient at engaging the strength of our membership through active committee work led by members of the Board and supported through the ACWS office.

This AGM marks another exponential opportunity for change with the recommendation coming forward to the general membership that the number of Board members be expanded to include two new positions designated for Shelters On-Reserve. We believe that this will allow us be more effective with respect to the unique and complex issues faced by First Nations Shelters On-Reserve in the province and that this change will result in improved services to Aboriginal women and children accessing shelter services in all shelters across the province.

It has been an exciting year, where we have inched that much closer to our goal of a "world free from violence". Together we are making a difference in ensuring that the voices of children like Cole Harder and Alex Fekete are heard before it is too late.

Message from the Provincial Coordinator, by Jan Reimer

2004-05 saw many ACWS initiatives take hold. This is due in no small part to the strong efforts of our Board, member shelters, our volunteers, partnering organizations and our dedicated ACWS staff members.

Thanks to the financial support from the Government of Alberta and the skills of ACWS Communications and Partnership Specialist, Patricia Poochachoff, we were able to extend the reach of Family Violence Prevention Month considerably. In the space of one year we saw an increase in over 74 events across the province with an additional 43 media occasions. We were also able to leverage over \$50,000 in radio and TV advertising during the month. The well-received Hands are Not for Hitting project was widely disseminated and partnering organizations provided valuable resources that were shared across the province with shelters, other family violence service providers and related agencies.

Our Children Exposed to Family Violence II Training Seminar was another big hit, with over 150 participants. In addition, over 500 shelter workers and community members to date were trained in Children Exposed to Family Violence I regional training. Another highlight for the year was the signing of an agreement with Portage College to deliver specialized training for Crisis Intervention workers. Shelter Directors were able to participate in a training seminar with Ellen Pence, from Duluth, Minnesota, on collaborative community response.

We explored the funding issues facing First Nations Shelters on reserve, comparing them with provincially funded shelters. The results showed severe under-funding of First Nations Shelters. The brief was presented to the Deputy Prime Minister at a meeting in early February, and disseminated widely. The Chiefs of Treaty Six, Seven and Eight supported our recommendations.

One of the benefits of ACWS membership is our ability to explore group purchases and rates. This year we went to market for the employee benefit plan. We realized a savings of over \$40,000 per year for the group of shelters participating in the plan. This translated into over \$30/month average for each eligible employee on the benefit plan. We are currently exploring the possibility of a group purchase for shelter liability insurance.

We received over 240 submissions for our book project, *STANDING TOGETHER*. Our editor, Linda Goyette, is current pulling together these unforgettable stories and poems that honour the bravery in a woman's heart.

With the continuing support from an anonymous donor, fourteen shelters were able to obtain assistance from the Shelter Emergency Fund for such emergency repairs and replacements as appliances, security equipment, plumbing and heating. Thanks to the same donor, fourteen women were able to receive assistance from our Ray of Hope Fund for such necessary supports as damage deposits, rent, telephone and utility costs, child care costs, and a crib purchase.

I would like to acknowledge the strong leadership and support of Carolyn Goard, who is stepping down as President. She has worked tirelessly on behalf of the membership, and we deeply appreciate her commitment to ACWS and women's shelters across the province. Although her presence will be missed, her legacy will live on by ensuring that the momentum for change for shelters and the women and children they serve, continues.

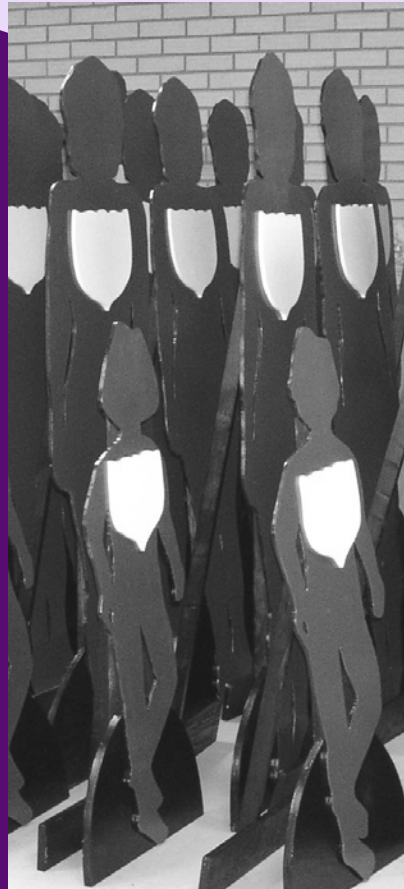
A Year in Review



It's *Your* Business.

November is
Family Violence
Prevention Month

For more information visit www.acws.ca.



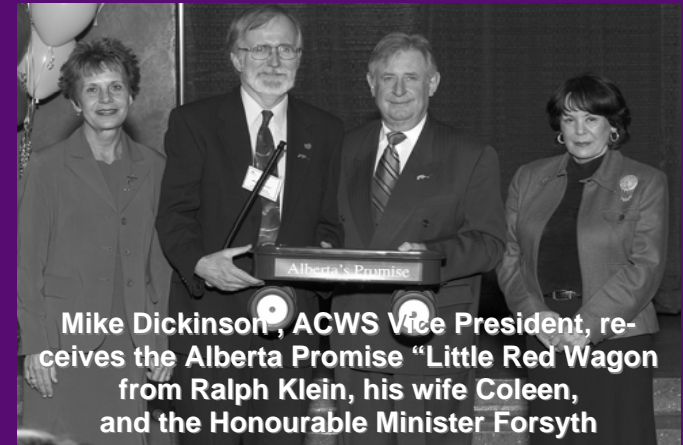
Alberta Silent Witness
Project launched in
November, 2004



Hugh Campbell from the Edmonton Eskimos and Jay McNeil from the Calgary Stampeders lend their support and speak out against family violence.



Jan Reimer, speaks about the history of family violence in Canada at the City of Edmonton's Family Violence Prevention Month launch.



Mike Dickinson, ACWS Vice President, receives the Alberta Promise "Little Red Wagon" from Ralph Klein, his wife Coleen, and the Honourable Minister Forsyth



Hands are **NOT** for hitting!

"Hands Are Not For Hitting" paintings—a popular family violence prevention month learning activity for young children

Committees - Aboriginal Advisory Prepared by Ed Borchert, Chair

First Nations Shelters came together in January to establish a workplan and develop a strategy to deal with severe funding issues as well as address the jurisdictional issues that aboriginal women face. A brief was prepared for presentation to Federal Ministers. Members of the committee first met with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Anne McClellan and then the provincial minister responsible for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, the Hon. Pearl Calahasen. Committee members also outlined their concerns to members of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The Chiefs from treaty areas 6,7 and 8 passed a unanimous resolution supporting increased funding for First Nations Shelters.

Recommendations were also developed to establish the First Nations Shelters On-Reserve Committee and to change the ACWS bylaws to guarantee a Board designate and Paid Manager position from First Nations Shelters On-Reserve, on the ACWS Board of Directors. These proposed changes will be submitted to the membership at the upcoming AGM.

A grant submission to the Community Incentive Fund was developed to establish an emergency transportation fund and a funding proposal to support First Nations Shelters was also prepared for a corporate donor. First Nations Shelters also applied for assistance from Aboriginal and Indian Affairs.

It has been a busy year and we are hopeful that the serious concerns we have identified will be addressed in the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted

Ed Borchert, Chair
Aboriginal Advisory Committee

Committees – Board Governance Prepared by Pat Garrett, Chair

The Board Governance Committee has been very active this year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for all their hard work and to the ACWS staff for all their assistance.

The Board of ACWS has approved the following recommendations of the Governance Committee. That Section 3: Foundation Policies, Mission Statement F 1 & F 2 be merged into one policy with incorporated changes. The vision statement of ACWS is: We believe in a world free from violence and abuse. The mission statement of ACWS is : The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is a province-wide, voluntary organization supporting women's shelters and their partners through education, research and services for the benefit of abused woman and their children.

Committee Members

**Ed Borchert, Chair
Janet Gladue
Dorothy Sam
Sandra Ermineskin
Kathy Bellerose**

Committee Members

**Pat Garrett, Chair
Pat Carter
Sr. Lucinda May Paterson
Mary Ann Sanderson
Gerry Carter**

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- In strength of numbers together for a common mission.
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The other important recommendations of the Governance Committee which were approved by the ACWS Board include: That there be a time set to review policy at each board meeting starting with code of ethics and Board member responsibilities; and that each new Board member be mentored by a longer serving member. The Provincial Coordinator may assign staff or engage consultants to provide support to committees based on the committee work plan. Assigned staff will be identified when the committee meets to update their objectives and work plan. The Governance Committee is also reviewing board evaluation tools and has chosen the Board Member Manual, Aspen Publishers, Inc. as a tool for the ACWS Board to use to measure their effectiveness. The Board recently revised the geographic areas to accommodate the growth in membership. The Board of ACWS has requested that the Governance Committee develop an extra-ordinary resolution to provide one paid manager and one board designate from First Nation's On-Reserve shelters.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Garrett, Chair
Board Governance Committee

Committees—Ethics Review

Prepared by Sister Lucinda May Patterson, Chair

The Ethics Review Committee members including staff members Jan Reimer and Patricia Poohachoff developed a challenging workplan for itself. Sister Lucinda May Patterson agreed to act as Chair ;Carolyn Goard agreed to serve in the Board Liaison Position.

The Ethics Review Committee met via Teleconferences and Face to Face Meetings. The workplan included:

Goal	MET	NOT MET
Review Terms of Reference	x	
Prepare Budget	x	
Determine research priorities for HOMES reporting. <i>On-going</i>	x	
Develop and implement standards that reflect the ethical moral framework		x
Completed framework circulated to membership	x	
Silent Witness	x	
Possible workshops	x	
Assist in establishment of ethical practice advisors		x
Structure of practice advisors		x

The Ethics Review Committee's tasks have proven to be quite challenging. Developing and implementing standards that reflect the ethical moral framework is under construction. A sub-committee has been working diligently to develop the aspirational standards for ACWS' s members. Revisions continue to occur as the draft is reviewed by the Committee.

A discussion occurred for the Silent Witness Project to ensure the project was carried out in an ethical fashion. The Committee determined the Project was implemented in an ethical manner.

Dr. Jean Pettifor will be facilitating a workshop for ACWS members on June 18, 2005 for Board Representatives and Paid Managers to work through ethical dilemmas which shelters may experience.

Dr. Jean Pettifor and Carolyn Goard have made presentations about ACWS's Ethical Moral Framework.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sister Lucinda May Patterson, S.A., Chair
Ethics Committee

Committee Members

Carolyn Goard, Chair
Sr. Lucinda May Patterson,
Co-Chair
Marta Burns
Kristine Cassie
Pat Garrett
Dr. Nancy Gibson
Dr. Jean Pettifor
Liz Reed
Mary Jean Thompson

Committees—Shelter Programs

Prepared by Joie Dery, Chair

For the most part, the Shelter Programs Committee continued to address previously identified goals over the past months.

Staffing models have been determined for both emergency and second-stage shelters based on program admission requirements, service delivery procedures, and the types of programming provided. The emergency staff model has been submitted to the Ministry along with the rationale involved in determining these models.

Funding/staffing models have also been presented that will address the growing need for services to the senior population who are affected by family violence; we are working closely with the appropriate Government Ministry to realize this goal.

A position statement has been completed and presented to the government regarding core funding for all shelters. This statement also expresses the high need for shelters to receive support to adequately address the growing demand for services to persons affected by family violence who are not residential clients of the shelters, or unable to access shelter services. Children's Services personnel has just recently met with all provincially funded shelters to announce the funding and addition of one position. The position will definitely assist shelters to increase their capacity to provide family violence education at their community level and to enhance the out reach and follow-up services they provide.

This committee monitors the shelter emergency fund that is available to all member shelters. The emergency fund is made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor. This fund provides assistance to shelters that experience an unexpected breakdown of equipment or systems essential to the day to day operation of their facilities.

Together with the ACWS Ethics Committee, we continue to work through our existing standards to ensure they all meet the criteria set out in the ethical and moral framework adopted by ACWS. We want to ensure that every standard of service delivery not only meets but surpasses current expectations.

Almost one year has elapsed since the shelter benefits plan was shifted to a new broker and carrier and we will evaluate the effectiveness and staff satisfaction of the new system with member shelters shortly. At the provincial level, the change has resulted in a much-needed decrease in workload for the ACWS support staff and an overall cost decrease to both ACWS and member shelters.

We continue to address the need for increased resources to fund benefits to shelter staff beyond the legislated requirements. Committee members surveyed several other Alberta human service providers to determine their provision of benefits to staff. It was determined that shelter staff fell short of publicly funded benefits.

We are continuing to address best practices in shelters to meet OHS guidelines and legislation. While some information has been forwarded to shelters, more work needs to be done in the area of policy, procedure and best practice to ensure both client and staff safety.

The enormous strides achieved by ACWS and the shelters over the past few years have resulted in a "Director's Manual". The Committee recognizes that this manual is an essential tool to use in shelters but recognizes that the current book is out dated. We would like to redo the book and realize that this will be an extensive project. We have received commitment from a former shelter staff member to work on this project now that she will have some extra time. We will be seeking input from all directors as to what information will be of value to include in the manual.

The Work of the Shelter Programs Committee is ongoing and will never be completed. As best practices are established and service gaps are identified, ways to incorporate these changes must be addressed. We often request input from shelters on issues and appreciate the feedback we receive.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joie Dery, Chair

Committee Members

Joie Dery, Chair

Kathy Bellerose

Brenda Brochu

Gerry Carter

Pat Hagemann

Marg Luger

Kathleen Nakagawa

Mary Ann Sanderson

Committees – Education & Training

Prepared by Mike Dickinson, Chair

Children Exposed to Violence Training

Centralized training was held for the last two years in Edmonton for Children Exposed to Family Violence 1 & 2. From the training, ACWS and partners were able to mobilize “train the trainers” sessions for ten individuals. Today, through the trainers and ACWS, additional regional training has been made available around the province. Most of the training has taken place in the north east part of the province. It is hoped that more areas will become involved with this training in the next year.

Crisis Intervention Training Workers Package

The crisis intervention worker curriculum is finished. Three modules have gone through the pilot phase and two have now been offered on-line. The rest will be coming shortly. Staff register directly with Portage College. ACWS is exploring ways of subsidizing staff that complete the modules.

Family Violence Prevention Month – November

Again, the theme was “It’s Your Business”. With increased dollars, this has been the most extensive campaign launched by ACWS. A mail out was distributed by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, which encouraged communities, organizations and officials to take part in Family Violence Prevention Month. Hugh Campbell from the Eskimos and Jay McNeil from the Stampeders have helped immensely by speaking out through two public service announcements featuring the sports celebrities. One of these was shown on the jumbotron at the CFL Western Final in Edmonton. Two other TV PSA’s were used, including a new one which was created through a volunteer PSA competition hosted by the Woman in Film and Television Association. The PSA’s were formatted for television and radio and were aired during November on Global TV and Corus Radio Stations across the Province. Together these partners donated over \$60,000 in air time. A print campaign was implemented provincially through the Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association. Resource materials were posted on our website and the site was the main source of information throughout the campaign. The media attention was extensive and included stories in print, and both TV and Radio occasions across the province. Over 150 events were held throughout the province during the month of November to bring the issue of family violence to the forefront.

Standing Together Book Project

ACWS has encouraged women who have survived adversity in their lives to contribute to a book of stories which is to be released later this year. This book should serve to help educate and will also be an inspiration to all who suffer through the adversity of family violence. The book will be published in the fall, with a launch planned at the end of October. The launch will coincide with Alberta’s Centennial, the World Conference of Family Violence, and Family Violence Prevention Month activities. The books sales will go to ACWS and assist with their fundraising endeavours.

Committee Members

Mike Dickinson, Chair
Jean Dunbar
Tess Gordey
Tracey Hartnett
Sue Languedoc
Lynnette Hoskins
Karen Pease
Pat Vargas
Louise Wall

Silent Witness Project

This project, which originated in Minnesota over ten years ago and has spread all over the United States, has been brought to Alberta through ACWS. A group from the Northwood Lions Senior Citizen Action Centre in Edmonton volunteered over 500 hours of their time to construct the life-sized silhouettes that travel around the province. The figures represent women killed in Alberta by their partners, ex-partners or acquaintances in acts of family violence where the perpetrator was charged and convicted, or the women were killed in documented cases of domestic murder/suicide. Victims of triangulation will also be represented in this display (children, boyfriends, other family members). To date, Silent Witness has been exhibited six times in a variety of locations across the province since last November.

Other Items being Studied by ACWS

ACWS continues to research best practices and has recommended changes to RCMP training. ACWS is encouraging joint training of protocols with Children's Services. The committee strives to ensure that all training has the element of diversity present. The study of ethical standards in relation to training about children is being explored. Training for the Board is also being discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Dickinson, Chair
Education & Training Committee

Committees - Social & Legal Issues

Prepared by Lise Blanchette, Chair

It is my pleasure as the Chairperson for the ACWS Social and Legal Issues committee to present the highlights of our efforts for the 2004-2005 Board year. We have continued as in the past to seek input from our member shelters in responding to government requests on issues through policy briefs, research, position statements and action plans.

Social Change

ACWS sought member shelters' participation and feedback to obtain accountability from outside Ministries by initiating an Environmental Scan with regard to programs available to children who are in shelter during the school term.

The Social and Legal Issues Committee continued to monitor and respond to Legislative amendments to the Family and Youth Enhancement Act. In addition, one of our committee members advised on proposed amendments to the Family Law Act.

Gun Control remains a concern in the Family Violence Sector and ACWS continues to be involved. We continue to voice our concerns in writing and in person to elected officials and government representatives such as MP's, MLA's, women MP'S, the Minister of Justice, Public Security and the Prime Minister's office.

Services and supports

ACWS monitored SFI rates (now termed Alberta Works), responded to government requests for input on the regulations, and were pleased to see the announcement of the Escaping Violence Benefit. The Committee identified gaps in the implementation of the benefit and worked to address them. We were unable to obtain information from government on the number of women who were refused the benefit, however, we do know that on average four women are helped every day.

A collaborative, coordinated community response

With the assistance of a social work practicum student, a review was conducted of the RCMP Memorandum of Understanding and local working agreements with the Shelters. Using the method of trend analysis ACWS was able to look at the experiences of women in shelter who had contacted the police.

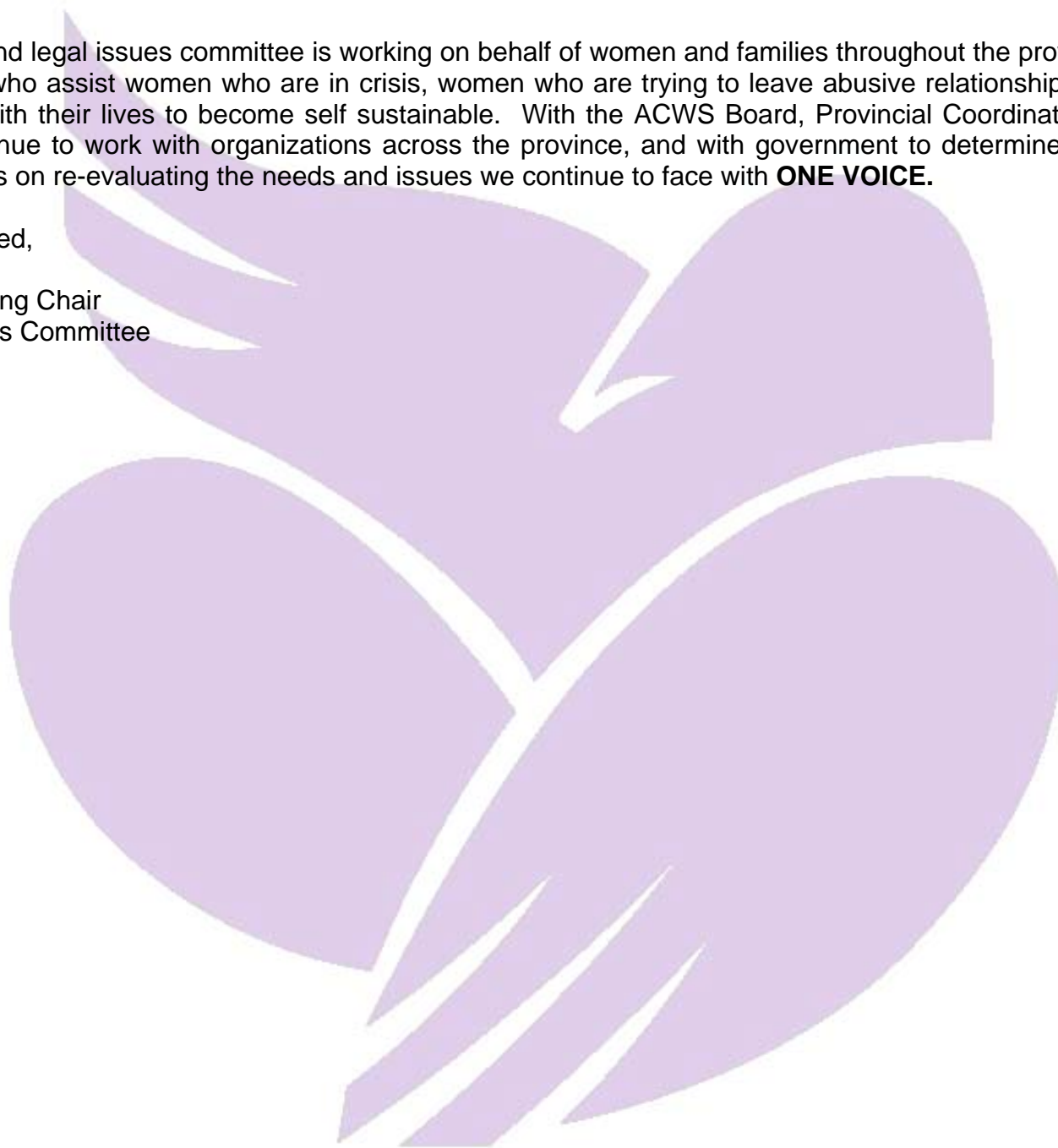
Committee Members

Lori Phillips, Chair
Lise Blanchette
Kristine Cassie
Marty Cheliak
Heike Degraff
Jamie Evans
Jean McBean
Candace Oppen
Mary Jean Thompson
Louise Wall
Pat Vargas

The ACWS Social and legal issues committee is working on behalf of women and families throughout the province, and more specifically our members who assist women who are in crisis, women who are trying to leave abusive relationships, and women who are trying to move on with their lives to become self sustainable. With the ACWS Board, Provincial Coordinator and the members of ACWS we will continue to work with organizations across the province, and with government to determine how to best serve our client base and focus on re-evaluating the needs and issues we continue to face with **ONE VOICE**.

Respectfully submitted,

Lise Blanchette, Acting Chair
Social & Legal Issues Committee





Financial Statements Attached

ACWS Membership

A Safe Place
Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter
Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter,
Brenda Strafford Centre
Brigantia Place
Brooks & District Women's Safe Shelter Society
Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter
Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
Columbus House of Hope
Community Crisis Society
Crossroads Resource Centre
Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society
Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter
Eagle Women's Emergency Shelter
Edmonton Senior Safe Housing
Edmonton Women's Shelter
Ermineskin Women's Shelter
Grande Cache Transition House
Hope Haven Society
Kerby Centre
La Salle Residence
Lloydminster Interval Home
Lurana Shelter
Mikisew Cree First Nation (Paspew House)
Mountain Rose Women's Shelter
Odyssey House
Peace River Regional Women's Shelter
Phoenix Safe House
Pincher Creek Women's Emergency Shelter
Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre
Safe Home
Sheriff King Home
Sonshine Community Services
Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter
Taber & District Family Crisis Intervention Society (Safe Haven)
Unity House
Wellspring Family Resource & Crisis Centre
Wings of Providence
Yellowhead Emergency Shelter
YWCA of Banff
YWCA Harbour House

Associate Members

Edmonton John Howard Society
Inner City Mission Centre—Women's Dream Centre

Sherwood Park
Calgary
Wabasca
Calgary
Camrose
Brooks
Calgary
Red Deer
St. Paul
Strathmore
Fairview
Calgary
Morley
Black Diamond
Edmonton
Edmonton
Maskwaci
Grande Cache
Lac La Biche
Calgary
Edmonton
Lloydminster
Edmonton
Fort Chipewyan
Rocky Mountain House
Grande Prairie
Peace River
Medicine Hat
Pincher Creek
Cold Lake
High Level
Calgary
Calgary
Enilda
Taber
Fort McMurray
Whitcourt
Edmonton
Hinton
Banff
Lethbridge

Edmonton
Edmonton

ACWS — Board of Directors

Carolyn Goard, President
Mike Dickinson, Vice President
Sybil Lewis, Treasurer
Pat Garrett, Secretary
Ed Borchert
Gerry Carter
Joié Dery
Lori Phillips
Kathy Shepard
Stephen Thibodeau (September 04—March 05)

ACWS — Funders

Alberta Children's Services
Status of Women
Wild Rose Foundation
Alberta Human Resources & Employment
IODE
& an Anonymous Donor