



**MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 23, 2008
Northern United Place Auditorium**

Present: Liz Wyman, Chair
Karen Hamre, Secretary
Andy Wong, Trustee
Pawan Chugh, Trustee
Leone Erasmus, Trustee
Kay Lewis, CEO
Ruth Robertson, Director, Community Health
Les Harrison, Director, Social Programs
Ewan Affleck, Medical Director
Grant Rice, A/Director, Finance & Admin.
Tammy Brenton, EA (Recorder)

Regrets: Kevin Mcleod, Vice- Chair
Florence Catholique,
Trustee
Robert Sayine, Trustee
Paul Gard, Director,
Finance & Admin.

Guest: Curtis & Nicole Naphan
Karen Rawson
Dale & Marcel Bouchard
Tammy Krivda
Barbara Rabesca-Krivda
Charity Darku
Jude Billard

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

The meeting was called to order by Liz Wyman at 7:10 pm. The Chair welcomed everyone present and asked the Board Members to introduce themselves.

2. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

Leone Erasmus

3. APPROVAL OF 2007 AGM MINUTES

MOTION: To accept the 2007 Minutes as presented.
MOVED BY: Karen Hamre
SECONDED BY: Andy Wong

ALL IN AGREEMENT - CARRIED

4. APPROVAL OF 2008 AGM AGENDA

MOTION: To revise the agenda by moving item five to six and
six to five.

MOVED BY: Karen Hamre

SECONDED BY: Leone Erasmus

ALL IN AGREEMENT - CARRIED

5. PRESENTATION OF 2007-2008 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2007-2008 Annual Report was presented by Kay Lewis.

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1 FACTS ON FOSTERING: Les Harrison delivered a presentation on Fostering highlighting the fact that the need for foster families have increased significantly, but the actual number of families has not kept up with that need. This was followed by a short photo presentation of foster children in YHSSA.

6.2 INTRODUCTION OF FOSTER FAMILY PANEL MEMBERS: Les introduced the members of the panel. Kay Lewis then proceeded with questions.

Question: What prompted you to become a foster parent?

Dale - When I was young, my mother fostered, so I've grown up with foster care. The main reason we started is the empty nest syndrome. There are kids who need a good home, we talked about it and have been fostering for five years.

Nicole – We met another young couple who were fostering. She seemed so excited about it and when we met her foster child, he was amazing. When we moved to Yellowknife, we took the Foster Family Orientation and PRIDE training and got a two bedroom apartment in order to accommodate a foster child. We started with one little boy and after purchasing a house, now we have two to three in our care.

Tammy – I decided to stay at home with my children and saw an ad in the paper, which prompted us to look into it. We have been fostering ever since.

Question: What are the things that need to happen for a placement to be successful?

Jude – The child needs to be a good match.

Charity – There needs to be good communication between the foster parents and social worker. Foster parents need to be supported by the community, schools, professionals and other foster parents. They need support from the office, from other social workers.

Question: What do you see as rewards?

Karen - Many, some are huge, some are small. Just seeing the difference from the first day a child comes into your home. They are grieving, you really see progress. Seeing their self confidence grow. It feels good to be a part of that.

Dale - Seeing kids with no structure, have structure in their lives. To see them want to spend time with you.

Tammy – As you see with all of us, there are different types of families providing different things for different children. We have long term placements, so we are lucky to be able to mould them from an early age. Helping them sort out why they don't live with their families and move on.

Question: What is the role of a foster family?

Charity - To provide a safe and stable home to prepare the child to go back to their family or move on to a permanent home.

Tammy – To me a foster parent is like a filler person. Sometimes the birth family cannot provide anything for the child, sometimes they provide a certain portion of it. It is an ever changing role.

Karen - Often they've been through several homes, so to help them find stability, learn trust and build basic skills that you learn in your family growing up.

Question: What do you see as the key challenges?

Curtis - Maintaining a positive outlook. The daily reactions from people, relatives and friends. Explaining to our families. Just the routines and logistics of having three kids.

Tammy - Understanding the plan for the child, accepting that your hands are tied. You have a routine, then things are changed. Having new social workers and keeping consistency in our lives. Just being a large family is a challenge.

Question: In your experience as a foster child, what did you expect and what was helpful?

Barbara - I was a foster child since I was seven. What I needed was a safe home, someone to show they cared. I needed to keep in touch with my birth parents. I needed a family who loved me.

Question: What type of children are coming into foster care?

Charity/Jude - All types. There are various ages. Five years ago kids were coming into foster care mainly because of alcohol, now we're seeing crack cocaine. It is frustrating, kids want to go home, but because of the issues in the family, they can't. There are kids with FASD, attachment issues and addicted to drugs from the womb.

Question: Would you like to add any additional comments about your experience as a foster parent?

Karen - There are a lot of good experiences. I urge anyone out there to consider being a foster parent. To see a child come into you home and change. Please think about being a foster parent.

Are there any comments or questions from the audience?

This question is about the foster parenting system. Children in care have increased radically between 2001 and 2008, I am concerned about the huge effort and resources going into the foster care system.

Les – Most referrals are from the extended family, schools or professionals in the community. What's happening now is that when we are getting reports, they are being investigated. Family resources are one of the challenges we are facing. Another is the change in the system, we are moving to a court based system so that parents can have a rapid opportunity to go to court. What is really happening is that cases are getting stuck in the court system.

I am a previous foster parent and would like to share something that happened to me today. I received an email from someone I had fostered when he was five; he is now 36 and just sent me a photo of my new grandchild. We have kept in touch all these years. These are the bouquets which stay with you.

I am a parent of children in care and am concerned about the accountability of foster parents and the system in place for taking children into care.

Response: Foster families are as accountable for children in their care as birth parents are. There are visits and a system of accountability in place. The intent is to provide safe care for children and the objective is that children return to their birth families.

We cannot discuss specific cases, but if you would like to set up an appointment to come into the office to discuss your concerns, we are more than happy to accommodate you.

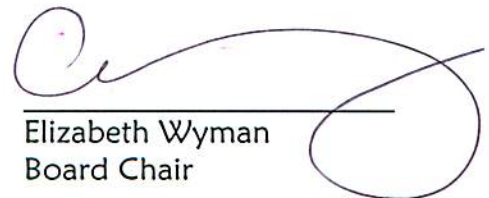
We would like to thank our foster parents for coming tonight and sharing your stories. Raising children takes more than one or two individuals, it takes a community. I challenge all of us to play our role, whether it is becoming a foster parent or supporting foster parents.

6.3 PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE: Liz – We want to celebrate all the work that is being done by the foster parents. On behalf of the Board, we would like to present the Yellowknife Foster Parent Association with this plaque. I invite all those who have been foster parents to accept this award.

8. ADJOURNMENT @ 9:10 pm



Tammy Brenton
Recording Secretary



Elizabeth Wyman
Board Chair