



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

**REPORT TO THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
APRIL 1, 2014 – MARCH 31, 2015**

MISSION STATEMENT

Women will live with dignity and respect, free
from violence and abuse.



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JUNE 23, 2015**

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Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JUNE 23, 2015

AGENDA

1. Declaration of a Quorum and call to order.
2. Introduction of Board Members
3. Adoption of Agenda – ***June 23, 2015***
4. Adoption of Previous AGM Minutes – ***June 24, 2014***
5. Treasurer's Report
Auditor re: **Annual Audit Report** (BDO Canada)
6. **Appointment of Auditors** for 2015/2016 Fiscal Year
7. Board President's Report
8. Executive Director's Report
9. **Election of Directors**
10. Notification of the next **Regular** Board Meeting – **September 28, 2015**
11. Adjournment to **Special Board Meeting** – Election of Officers.



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES
June 24, 2014**

Number of Society Members Present: **9**
Number of Non-Members Present: **3**

Directors Present: Deanna Jinjoe, Roger Perry, Deborah Williamson, Myrna Young, Carolyn Hladik, Jamie Hinton, Karen Nelson, and Suzanne Robert

Regrets: Jodi Tung

Guest: Paul Guerette – Auditor (BDO Canada LLP)

Others Present: Ninke Beeksma (E.D.) and Marg Simons (Exec. Admin. Assist.) and Judith Perry (Soc. Member)

1. Declaration of quorum and call to order:

*The **June 24, 2014** Annual General Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Deanna Jinjoe Chaired the meeting and Marg Simons recorded the minutes.*

2. Introduction of Board Members:

There was a brief introduction of the Board of Directors.

3. Adoption of Agenda – June 24, 2014 – Additions/Deletions:

There were no additions/deletions noted to the June 24, 2014 AGM Agenda.

MOTION

M/S

R. Perry / J. Hinton

To adopt the June 24, 2014 Annual General Meeting Agenda as presented.

Motion Carried

4. Adoption of previous AGM Minutes/Motions – June 26, 2013 – Errors/Omissions:

There were no errors/omissions noted to the June 26, 2013 AGM Minutes/Motions.

MOTION **M/S** **M. Young / K. Nelson**

To adopt the June 26, 2013 Annual General Meeting Minutes/Motions as presented.

Motion Carried

5. Treasurer's Report:

a) **Annual Audit Report – BDO Canada LLP – Paul Guerette**

Paul referred to the Auditor's Independent Report and explained the Audited Financial Statements. He noted that the Audit process went well and that Management and Staff were well prepared for the Audit. The Society ended the 2013/2014 Fiscal Year with a small surplus, and therefore is in a good financial position.

MOTION **M/S** **J. Hinton / C. Hladik**

Move to adopt the Auditor's Report and the 2013/2014 Audited Financial Statements as presented.

Motion Carried

6. Appointment of Auditors for 2014/2015 Fiscal Year:

MOTION **M/S** **J. Hinton / K. Nelson**

To appoint BDO Canada LLP as Auditors for 2014/2015 Fiscal Year.

Motion Carried

7. Board President's AGM Report: Deanna Jinjoe

Deanna referred to her written AGM Report, where she highlighted the many programs offered by VVTHS and thanked the staff for their efforts regarding fundraising on behalf of the Society. She also thanked Ninke Beeksma for her hard work over the past year.

MOTION **M/S** **D. Williamson / R. Perry**

To adopt the President's Annual Report as presented.

Motion Carried

6:40 p.m. – S. Robert entered the meeting

8. **Executive Director's AGM Report:** Ninke Beeksma

Ninke referred to her written AGM Report. She explained some of the necessary changes over the past year with regards to organizational processes. The existing excellent relationship with our funders and community partners are being maintained and the community at large continues to support our Society with their donations and Society Memberships.

Ninke noted that she is impressed with the dedication of our amazing staff that are very committed and passionate about the work that they do to assist the people we serve. She also thanked the devoted volunteers who complement our programs and services in a way that we could not do through staff hours.

MOTION **M/S** **M. Young / D. Williamson**

To adopt the Executive Director's AGM Report as presented.

Motion Carried

9. **Election of Directors:**

Roger Perry requested a motion to re-elect Deanna Jinjoe for another 2 year term.

MOTION **M/S** **R. Perry / K. Nelson**

Move to re-elect Deanna Jinjoe to begin serving the first year of her third 2 year term.

Motion Carried

Deanna Jinjoe requested a motion to re-elect Myrna Young for another 2 year term.

MOTION **M/S** **D. Jinjoe / S. Robert**

Move to re-elect Myrna Young to begin serving the first year of her second 2 year term.

Motion Carried

Deanna Jinjoe read a statement from Jeanne Byron expressing her wishes to become a Director, as she was not able to attend the AGM.

MOTION

M/S

D. Jinjoe / D. Williamson

Move to elect Jeanne Byron to begin serving the first year of her first 2 year term.

Motion Carried

Any nominations from the floor must be a Society Member in good standing for at least 30 days.

No further nominations. All Nominations Closed.

10. Notification of the next Regular Board Meeting:

The next Regular Board Meeting is confirmed to be held on **September 22, 2014**.

11. Adjournment:

MOTION

Moved by K. Nelson

To adjourn the June 24, 2014 Annual General Meeting to a Special Board Meeting.

Meeting Adjourned to a Special Meeting at 6:45 p.m.



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 1, 2014 – MARCH 31, 2015

Name	Position	Business Phone
Deanna Jinjoe	Board President	250-549-6833
Roger Perry	Board Vice-President	250-542-5428
James Hinton	Board Treasurer	250-275-3054
Deborah Williamson	Board Secretary	250-545-7275
Myrna Young	Director	778-475-1367
Carolyn Hladik	Director	250-542-3059
Karen Nelson	Director	250-307-0487
Suzanne Robert	Director	250-309-4796



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we move to the end of another Fiscal Year (2014/2015) for the Vernon Women's Transition House Society I am amazed at how fast a year can go by. This last year saw less change than the year before with a continued strengthening and building of the programs and services offered by the agency. We have had a temporary change in management as our Executive Director Ninke Beeksma is away on a long term leave, but we are very happy to have someone on staff with the skills to step in and fill this vacancy in Brooke McLardy who is acting as Executive Director until Ninke's return.

With over 4000 night stays by women and their children seeking refuge from abuse, the Society continues to provide a very necessary role in our community. The Transition House itself may be what comes to mind when most people think about the Society, but I would also like to highlight some of the other programs providing vital services through this Society. Our Casimir Court facility houses our Support to Young Parents Program. This is an 8 suite apartment building owned by VWTHS. The residents are young women aged 15-24 who are either pregnant or parenting. The Children Who Witness Abuse Program (in Vernon and Armstrong) provides counselling to children who have been witness to abuse. Our Outreach Services and Stopping The Violence Women's Counselling Services provide support and counselling for women whether or not they are currently residing at the Transition House. We also offer community support through the Legal Advocacy Program, Free Legal Clinics and Specialized Victim Services. Our Society also acts as an umbrella agency for the Equine Therapy Program – Helping Women and Children experience themselves through the eyes of a horse. The beneficiaries of these types of programs are ultimately some of the most vulnerable victims of our community.

I had the privilege last month of attending the annual Elizabeth Fry Society of Canada Convention in Saskatoon on behalf of the Society. The topic of the conference was **A Canadian Crisis: Criminalization & Imprisonment of Indigenous Women & those with Disabling Mental Health Issues**. The presentations, workshops and personal stories presented at this convention were amazing. I came away with a profound shift in my thoughts and attitudes with regards to these issues that I hope will enable me to serve the agency and the community in a greater capacity in the future.

With the coming board year we will begin the process of developing a new strategic plan for the agency. This is always an exciting and insightful process as

it allows us to look at what we have achieved and then set our sights to the future by setting goals and plans for the future. This will be a facilitated process for the Society and will involve staff, management, board and outside stakeholders.

As this board year ends we are sad to be losing a number of board members. We will sincerely miss Roger Perry who has been a board member for 8 years now, his experience and knowledge have been an asset to this agency. We are also sad to be losing long time board member Debra Williamson, we wish her all the best as she moves to Edmonton. During the board term we also lost Karen Nelson, who moved to Victoria and Jamie Hinton. We will miss the insights brought by each of these individuals around the board table and wish them all well in the future. At this point in time the Society has a need for a few more volunteer board members, if anyone would like to look into helping us out in this capacity the details for application are on our website under the Board tab.

As always it has been an interesting and exciting year for the Vernon Women's Transition House Society. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank our Executive Director Ninke Beeksmā, our current acting Executive Director Brooke McLardy, as well as all the staff and volunteers for their time and dedication to the Society.

Sincerely,

Deanna Jinjoe
Board President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT June 23, 2015

The Vernon Women's Transition House Society began operation as a refuge for women and children in the manse of the old United Church, mostly staffed by dedicated volunteers.

Today, 34 years later, with a group of approximately 36 qualified staff, we continue to provide services to women and children in need of safe shelter, and also offer a range of counselling and advocacy services to the community of Greater Vernon. The original woman-centered approach still forms an important part of our overall mission and philosophy.

Our Mission Statement "**Women will live with dignity and respect, free from violence and abuse**" is the key to the delivery of our programs and services and is reflected in the values we hold as an organization.

In the past year, we have continued to focus on sustainability and stability. After several years of development and growth and a year of structural change within the organization, we concentrated on ensuring that we were performing at our best within the programs and projects we hold.

Ninke Beeksma began her second year as Executive Director and emphasized our need to remain strong financially. To this end we continued the process of maintaining strong relationships with our funders and community partners. These connections are crucial to the continuity and improvement of the Society's programs particularly with the current changes in funding structures that we are seeing in the province.

2014 was a record-breaking year for domestic homicides in British Columbia. Our community was one of several that lost a member last year. The incredible risk of domestic violence for women and children is always at the forefront of our minds when providing service.

Our staff is an amazing group of women (and one man) who are committed to and passionate about the work that they do. Client need is always put first and the staff do their utmost to ensure that every woman, man and child served by our agency receives the best possible service and support.

In addition, we are fortunate to have devoted volunteers who complement our programs and services in a way that we cannot do

through staff hours. We are extremely grateful for what our volunteers bring to our organization.

Our services have been well utilized over the course of the year. Although the number of clients fluctuates year to year we are seeing that client needs steadily increase. Due to the high need for service in this community we are dedicated to increasing our skills so that we can better serve clients with multiple issues such as poverty, violence, mental ill health and substance misuse. Trying to assist client with the multiple challenges they face means that at times our services, residential and community based, are seeing people for longer periods than they were in the past.

In the past year we have been successful in retaining all our programs at the same level of service, including projects that address emerging issues. We have continued to develop the project once called the North Okanagan Child Advocacy Response Service (NOCARS). The goal of this project is to open a child and youth advocacy centre for children that have been abused or sexually assaulted and has thus been renamed the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Project. This project partnership has now completed a year of development and is prepared to open a Centre once pilot funding is approved.

In September 2014 our Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT) was thrilled to accept the regional Premier's Award for Promoting Innovation and Excellent in the area of Partnerships. This committee is a partnership of community agencies that we have co-chaired since its inception in 2009 and is seen as a provincial best practice for responding to high risk domestic violence cases.

We added a new program in the past year: The Homelessness Prevention Outreach Program. This program works with women who are at risk of homelessness and violence to ensure that they can access and maintain stable housing. This is an incredibly important concept to assist women to further their recovery from trauma and to provide stability for their children.

Prevention and Awareness is another important component of the work that we do to expose the root causes of and encourage action against violence and abuse. In the past year we have coupled special events, workshops, and presentations relating to violence against women in relationships and women's issues with fundraising events. Through active participation of our staff in these events, we have raised awareness and funds for specific projects that are not funded through our regular funding. We were very pleased to be named the Village Green Mall's charity of choice for the year 2015 and have already seen the significant benefit of this partnership.

Ninke Beeksma led the organization as the Executive Director for the entire fiscal year and is now on a planned personal leave of absence which is why I am presenting this report. Ninke has guided the Society to a place of financial stability and organizational strength and we look forward to her return.

Our Society continues to strive to be a best practice service provider to women, men and children impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault and poverty issues. I want to acknowledge that we could not do the work that we do without our Society members, Directors, Staff members, Volunteers, Donors and Funders.

My gratitude goes out to all of you and I look forward to continue to serve you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Brooke McLardy
Acting Executive Director

BOARD MEMBER TERMS OF OFFICE 2014 – 2015

TERMS OF OFFICE ACCORDING TO VWTHS BYLAWS:

0.1 Consecutive Terms

Directors may be elected for consecutive terms.

0.2 Term Limit

A Director may serve for no more than four consecutive terms.

EXISTING MEMBERS:

Directors requiring re-election:

Suzanne Robert Has completed the **second year** of her **first 2 year term** and will require re-election for a second 2 year term.

Carolyn Hladik Has completed the **second year** of her **first 2 year term** and will require re-election for a second 2 year term

Directors not requiring re-election:

Deanna Jinjoe Has completed the **first year** of her **third 2 year term** and may stand for another year without re-election.

Myrna Young Has completed the **first year** of her **second 2 year term** and may stand for another year without re-election..

Directors Leaving:

Roger Perry Has completed the **second year** of his **third 2 year term** and will not stand for another year.

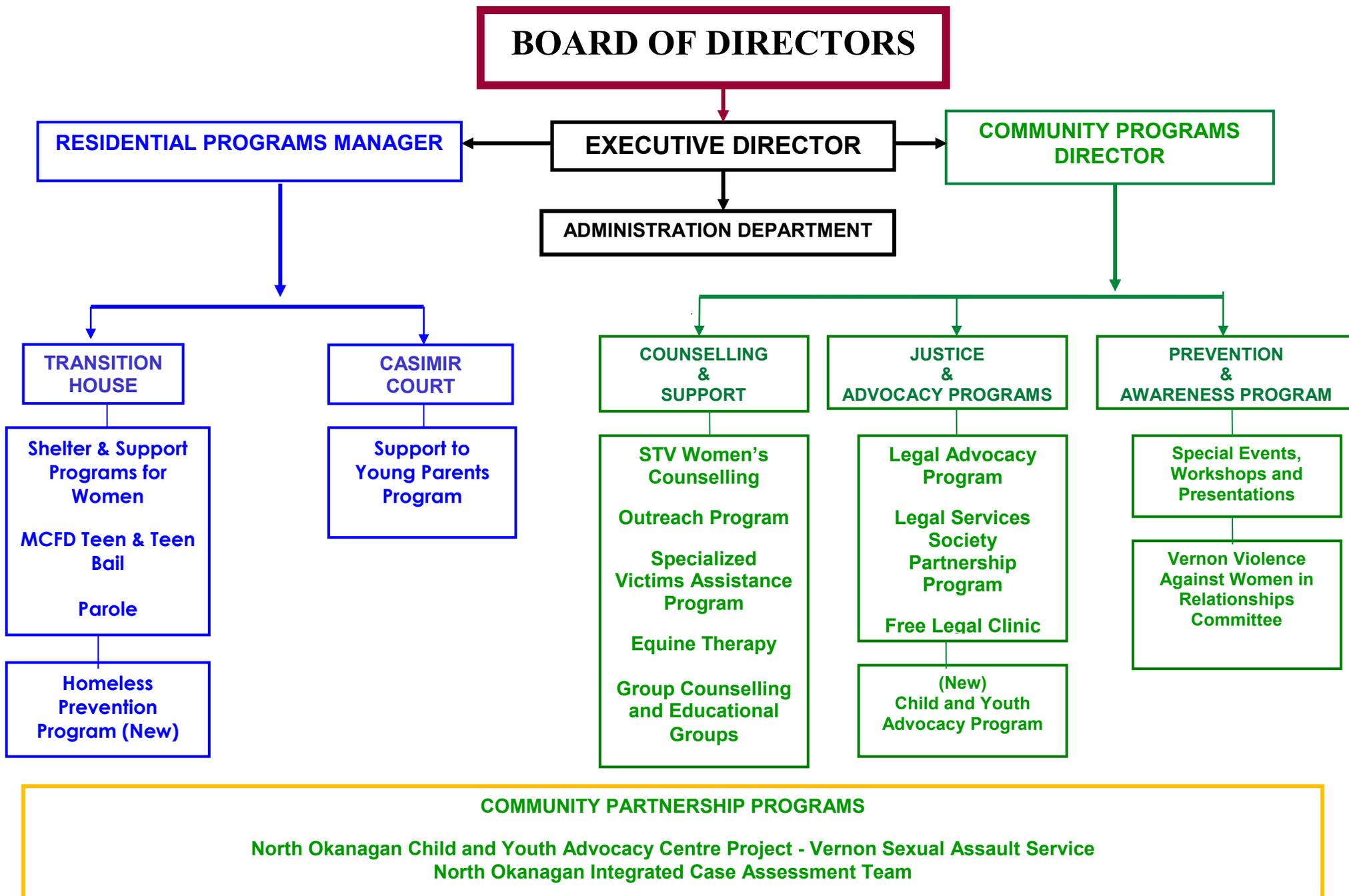
Deborah Williamson Has completed the **second year** of her **second 2 year term** and will not stand for another year.

Election of new Directors:

In accordance with the **Bylaws – 5.3; *The number of Directors will be no less than three (3) nor more than nine (9).***

We presently have openings for up to 5 Directors.

VWTHS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – 2015



HISTORY

The concept of Vernon Women's Transition House arose January 16th, 1975 when a group of local women got together to plan an International Women's Year celebration. A women's centre was subsequently opened in early July of that year, with funding from Secretary of State and Canadian Mental Health Association. Activities such as consciousness raising groups, women's health groups, yoga, massage, macramé and ageing workshops were held. Lobbying for a transition house began to take place.

As more women in the community were coming forth about being abused by their husbands and having nowhere to go for safety it became increasingly apparent that a Transition House was needed in the Vernon area. Lobbying accelerated and the effort was successful and Vernon Women's Transition House's initial funding was in place in 1976 and was opened in the old United Church Manse on 27th Street. . The community rallied to provide furnishing and household items. Service groups were approached for donations and gradually the house was equipped.

Casimir Court was acquired by the Society through a CMHC mortgage and was operated as Second Stage Housing for women leaving the Transition House; the Specialized Victim Assistance Program was added and then Vernon Girls' Residential Attendance Program rounded out the services offered to women and girls.

The location of the Transition House changed from the Manse to the original house on 26th Street. This location became inadequate for the need and the community raised over \$750,000 in 1993 to build a new Transition House on the existing lot. This present Transition House is one of the finest facilities of its kind in Canada. As well, in the early 1990's provincial funding became available to offer an independent counselling program for women (Stopping the Violence) and Children Who Witness Abuse Counselling for children.

Since the year 2000, the services have responded to community need by focusing Second Stage toward serving pregnant and parenting teen mums in the Support to Young Parents Program. As well, the Vernon Girls' Residential Attendance Program was discontinued, due to ongoing conflict with other programs residing in the Transition House.

A dramatic step toward the way services are organized, delivered and planned came when the Society's first strategic plan was developed in 2001. In 2005, several additions to services were made; The Children Who Witness Abuse

program expanded to Armstrong, the Outreach Services Program which responds to the needs of women not needing or wanting to stay at the transition house was started; a Child and Youth Worker joined the team at the Transition House; the Prevention and Awareness Program was added and a licensed child care centre was added for the young parents at Casimir Court.

In 2006, the Society engaged with Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC) to conduct a thorough organizational review. Noteworthy recommendations were to increase the leadership capacity of the organization, clarify Board and staff roles by adopting Policy Governance and increase services and staff available to families staying in the Transition House. These recommendations have been addressed through the hiring of Residential and Community Programs Managers, fully adopting the Carver Model of Board Governance at the Annual General Meeting in June 2008, and implementing increased staffing and programming in the Transition House.

Also in 2006, efforts to create and provide affordable housing to women leaving abuse and their children were complicated by a downturn in the economy and reduction in government funding for housing projects.

Partnerships and collaboration are a way of doing non-profit business, with a reduction in available resources and a willingness to work together to solve community problems. Some significant partnerships for the Vernon Women's Transition House Society are with the *RCMP, North Okanagan Youth and Family Services, Interior Health Authority, Vernon Jubilee Hospital, Splatsi'n Indian Band, First Nations Friendship Centre and Regional Transition Houses*. 2009 saw an increase in partnerships and collaborations with the beginning of *Sexual Assault Services Team, and Integrated Case Assessment Team*.

Justice related services were added to our complement in 2010, when The Legal Advocacy Program (*funded by the Law Foundation*) and the Legal Services Society Outreach Program (*funded by Legal Services Society*) were initiated.

Further, 2010 was the start of the North Okanagan Child Advocacy Response Service, a partnership with service providers to increase the safety and support for child victims of physical and sexual abuse.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies granted VWTSH membership in their national association in 2011. CAEFS mandate is to address issues that cause criminalized behaviour and to support women and girls who have come into conflict with the law. In 2012 VWTSH and Correctional Services Canada contracted to provide support services to women who had finished their prison sentences. Until this, there were no services like this in the Okanagan.

Plans to collaborate with other agencies to provide administrative services were attempted in 2012, but due to the complexity of the administration process, this was not a feasible solution.

In 2013, after leading the organization for 12 years, Debby Hamilton moved on and Ninke Beeksma was hired as the new Executive Director for Vernon Women's Transition House Society.

Over the past several years, as a Society we have experienced more pressure as it relates to our financial resources. However, we are very fortunate to receive generous support in this area from our community which greatly affects our ability to continue to serve the women and children in need of our help. We are continuously working with our funders, regional partners and various levels of government to communicate the needs of our clients and the resources we require in order to meet those needs.

In 2014-2015 we were awarded federal funding to develop a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre with our community partners. We have created a Partnership Agreement, protocols for service, a site plan and hired a Child and Youth Advocate. We plan to open the Centre in 2015 with the support of federal, provincial and community funds.

In 2015 BC Housing awarded us a five year contract to start a new program: Homelessness Prevention Outreach. This program works with women who are at risk of violence and homelessness and the objective is to assist the clients to access and maintain stable housing. Already we are seeing positive movement in this area for our clients.

The Vernon Women's Transition House continues to evolve. Staff is becoming more qualified and professional, and services are becoming more specific to providing shelter and support to women leaving violence in their intimate relationships. As we become more focused with our service, we strive to retain the grassroots kind of atmosphere of women helping women that initiated the conception of the Vernon Women's Transition House Society more than 30 years ago.

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

PHILOSOPHY

- ▶ We recognize the right of all people to live their lives free from violence and abuse, and to be treated with respect and dignity.
- ▶ We value self-determination and we believe that every woman has the power to make decisions that will lead to positive change in her life.
- ▶ We are committed to working in an ethical, responsible manner while providing caring, confidential services in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
- ▶ We are committed to building relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To provide temporary shelter and support for women and their children who are undergoing transition in their family life.
- ▶ To provide services such as short term supportive counselling, referral to appropriate agencies, assistance in attending appointments, and in finding housing, for the women and children in Transition House and to follow up with after they leave the Transition House where requested.
- ▶ To offer services such as short term supportive counselling, self help groups, information or referral to women and their children who may be undergoing or considering transition in their family life but who are not residents of Transition House. This does not include intensive counselling services, although we may help families to find this kind of service when requested.
- ▶ To provide information to groups and organizations on the needs of women in transition. We will attempt to give priority to those organizations most likely to be dealing with women in transition.
- ▶ To provide the above noted services, except shelter and housing, to males who have experienced abuse in their relationship, criminal harassment or sexual assault.
- ▶ To provide awareness and prevention of violence against women and children.



Vernon Women's **Transition House** Society

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS June 2015

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMING:

The Vernon Women's Transition House is contracted to provide **25** beds to women and children who are seeking refuge from relationship violence. The program is permanently staffed throughout the year. There is supportive counselling available and advocacy and accompaniment to appointments where necessary and possible. Women can stay for up to 30 days. They can stay longer, but this is not usually necessary.

Women who stay need to be able to care for themselves and their children and to participate in household tasks, such as cooking and light cleaning. If they are unable to be physically independent they are able to stay here with a caregiver. There are laundry facilities. Women are supplied with basic toiletries and nightclothes if necessary. There may be household supplies and furniture for the residents if they are setting up a new household. If women need transportation to the house from a reasonable distance, a taxi ride is provided.

Referrals can be made by anyone, service is free of charge.

The Emergency Teen Shelter Program (MCFD Teen) and Youth Bail Shelter (Teen Bail) accommodates up to 2 teen girls referred by the Ministry of Child and Family Development. The teens are able to stay up to 10 days and longer with an extension agreed upon by MCFD and Vernon Women's Transition House. This is a useful program to allow social workers time to plan for a more permanent placement or a return to home. The teens in this program do not typically have serious behaviour or drug and alcohol issues. They must be able to fit in well with an adult woman milieu. Many teens thrive from the flexible atmosphere at the Vernon Women's Transition House.

Referrals must be made by a social worker from the Ministry of Child & Family Development.

Donations Program – The Donations Program accepts donations such as gently used household items (i.e. couches, beds, dishes) etc. The donations are sorted and residents who are setting up a new household are given the opportunity to select items that they can utilize prior to exiting the Transition House. Please access our website <http://vwts.ca> for our complete Wish List.
250-542-1122

Women's Parole Beds: Correctional Services Canada contracted with VWTSH to provide support services to women who finished their prison sentences. The Transition House has up to 2 Parole client beds available for women exiting the prison system, who require some assistance integrating back into the community. We are the only service of this kind in the North Okanagan.

The Support to Young Parents Program is an 8-suite apartment building owned by the Vernon Women's Transition House Society. The program is staffed 70 hours per week. The residents are young women aged 15-24 who are either pregnant or parenting. The staff offer help with parenting skills, life skills, social skills and referrals.

Advocacy and supportive counselling is available to the young moms. The program works closely with other community services. The young families stay in an affordable apartment for a year or longer. The suites are furnished and the rent includes all utilities as well as cable and the use of laundry facilities.

Open referral. Admittance to program is dependent on the outcome of 2-week assessment stay at Vernon Women's Transition House.

The Homelessness Prevention Outreach Program works with women who are at risk of violence and risk of homelessness. The Coordinator assesses client safety and housing needs and works with the clients to address issues, access and maintain stable housing. The program follows-u with clients and provides referrals for supports that will assist with maintaining stable housing.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING:

The Prevention and Awareness Program is funded through grants and donations. This Program works to bring together justice system and community support agencies to increase predictable responses to instances of violence against women. This program coordinates the local Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) committee which looks at systemic issues that perpetuate violence against women and works to reduce these issues.

The Awareness and Special Events Coordinator is responsible for coordinating special events, workshops and presentations relating to violence against women in relationships and women's issues. The Coordinator also works on Society fundraising initiatives.

The Specialized Victim Assistance Program Provides justice system related support to women, children and men who have experienced relationship violence, sexual assault or criminal harassment. Services include court orientation and accompaniment at trial, assistance with Crime Victim Assistance Program applications, risk assessment and safety planning and referral to other services. Services can be provided on an outreach basis to nearby communities. The office is located in the Vernon Courthouse - Room 210 and open for service Monday through Friday from 8:30 am. to 4:30 p.m.

Open referral, service is free of charge.

The Free Legal Assistance Clinic Volunteer lawyers provide basic advice on legal issues to people with a low income. These clinics are held most Thursday evenings at the People Place, room 302. Access to this clinic is by appointment only and is booked on a first come first served basis.

The Outreach Services Program provides mobile service to women and their dependent children who have experienced violence, abuse or threats from their intimate partner. Services include emotional support, information and referral, accompaniment to appointments and advocacy. These services are provided to women who are housed outside the Transition House and who are isolated or lived rurally.

Open referral, service is free of charge

The Legal Services Community Partnership assists with the access to, and use of, Public Legal Education and information resources and other Legal Services Society services including Legal Aid.

Stopping the Violence Women's Counselling Service is offered to provide medium-term counselling to women who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault or criminal harassment. Groups and individual counselling are offered.

Open referral, service is free of charge.

The Children Who Witness Abuse Program provides counselling for children who have witnessed family violence. The goal of this program is to reduce trauma in affected children and to prevent the children as adults perpetrating the cycle of violence. The kids are usually school aged. There is group and individual counselling provided. There are programs in both Vernon and Armstrong.

Open referral, service is free of charge.

The Legal Advocacy Program is contract through the Law Foundation of BC. This program is focused in the area of poverty law – “issues that impact a person’s ability to feed themselves, clothe themselves, maintain health and maintain housing” (Legal Services Society). Areas of service include Income Assistance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Disability Benefits, Employment Standards, Employment Insurance, as well as Rental/Tenancy issues. The Legal Advocacy Program also provides legal information and referrals.

Group Counselling and Educational Groups are offered to women and children at different times throughout the year.

The Equine Therapy Program is an experiential therapeutic form where horses participate as co-counsellors. The model applied at The Equine Connection uses a combination of the concepts of natural horsemanship, play therapy, story-telling, and problem-solving exercises.

Community Partnership Programs

North Okanagan Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT) uses an innovative, collaborative approach for information sharing, within legal parameters, to review the risk of serious bodily harm or death to victims of domestic violence or stalking. The same collaborative approach is used to provide an enhanced safety and support system to the victim and proactive interventions to the alleged offender.

North Okanagan Sexual Assault Services is a confidential hospital and community based emergency service which provides medical and emotional supportive care for anyone 13 and over who has been sexually assaulted. Children under 13 are assessed and referred appropriately.

The North Okanagan Child Advocacy Response Service was established to help child victims of physical and sexual abuse. By partnering with the necessary service providers, this service increases the safety, support and promotes healing to children and their families. The goal of this project and partnership is to open a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre in Vernon.

TRANSITION HOUSE FISCAL YEAR END STATS 2013/2014

This includes Thouse, MCFD Teen and Teen Bail

	2013/2014	2014/2015
Women	161	156
Children	73	60
Teens	11	8
Nights Stayed	4004	4477

Although the number of clients have dropped slightly, they have required longer stays.

