

North East Outreach and Support Services

NEOSS at a Glance

Celebrating 40 Years 1984-2024

1984

2024



North East Outreach & Support Services

124 McKendry Avenue West
Melfort, SK S0E1A0

Phone: 306-752-9464
Fax: 306-752-3122
Email: adm@neoss.ca
www.neoss.ca





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am privileged to and honored to live, work, and gather on Treaty 6 land. Ancestral and traditional Indigenous territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene, and Homeland of the Metis.

Given the task of writing this memoir has certainly been a journey. I would like to thank the NEOSS “Knowledge Keepers”. To those who took the time to collect all the information, news paper clippings, photos, AGM meeting reports, it has been truly amazing to step back in time and collectively put this together. My hope is that this book will be kept in with the knowledge that has been gathered in the past.

To be part of this amazing journey with NEOSS has been one of the most life altering experiences imaginable. From being the very first person who accessed the new shelter in 2016 (April 6, 2016, to be exact) when it was not even officially open to the public yet, gaining employment with the shelter in December of the same year, then becoming a full-time shelter worker for 8 years, transitioning over to the Administration Building and working with all departments has been memorable, to say the least.

I can say with certainty, I had no clue what DV/IPV was. I did not know how many forms there are, what the residual effects are, what vicarious trauma entails, what actually happens in a shelter. While I am certainly not an expert on the subject, I do have a much better understanding of what the entire staff at North East Outreach & Support Services does! The journey of compiling all the information has been enjoyable to say the least. I hope that everyone enjoys reading this compilation of history as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Shelley Robertson, Administrative Assistant

**NORTH-EAST CRISIS
INTERVENTION CENTRE INC.**

BOX 2066
MELFORT, SASKATCHEWAN
S0E 1A0

**What Is The North-East Crisis
Intervention Centre?**

We are an organization that provides direct services related to family violence and sexual assault. As well we offer a variety of other services. We provide these services in a networking fashion with other agencies in the N.E.

The goals of the N.E.C.I.C.I. are the following:

1. To provide support services to victims of family and personal violence in the community of Melfort and surrounding area.
2. To promote positive social change.

If you wish to make use of any of our programs or services phone 752-9464 or write to Box 2066, Melfort, Sask. S0E 1A0.

*We wish to express a
sincere thank you to
BI-RITE DRUGS
for underwriting
the cost of this brochure*



**North-East
Crisis
Intervention
Centre
Inc.
1984**

*"24 Hour Crisis Line
752-9455"*

Phone 752-9464
100 Bemister Street East
Box 2066
Melfort, Sask.
S0E 1A0

**History Of The North-East Crisis
Intervention Centre**

The N.E.C.I.C.I. began as the Melfort Sexual Assault and Information Centre in February 1984. It was part of an Outreach project, operated by Saskatoon Sexual Assault Centre.

In December 1984, the government approved Melfort for a Safe Home Project. By March of 1985 the Safe Homes were in operation.

The rapid growth of the Centre from Sexual Assault Crisis Line, to Crisis Centre and Safe Home Project, necessitated expansion of our staff to four full-time positions. These positions are Executive Director, Shelter Worker, Crisis Worker and Office Secretary.

How The Centre Operates

- ★ The N.E.C.I.C.I. is partially funded through Saskatchewan Social Services as a non-governmental organization.
- ★ The Centre also receives funding through contributions from Service Clubs, the public and fundraising projects.
- ★ The Centre is registered as a non-profit organization under the Societies Act of the Province of Saskatchewan. Therefore all donations are tax deductible.
- ★ The Centre is administered by a board of directors elected at an Annual Meeting of its members.
- ★ The Staff and Board of the Centre are constantly examining the programs offered with the intent of improving services and consolidating programming.
- ★ The Centre operates under a strict code of confidentiality

**What Services Does
The Centre Provide?**

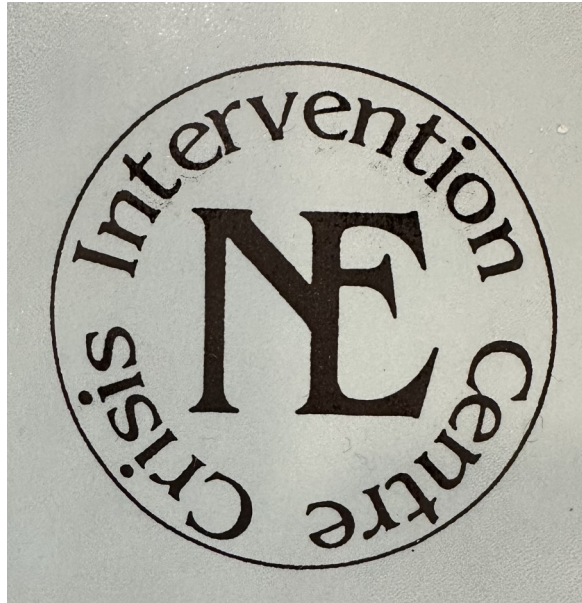
- ★ 24 hour telephone answering service utilizing a volunteer component.
- ★ Short term family and personal violence counselling focusing on information and referral services.
- ★ A Support Group program for battered women.
- ★ Information and referral services related to family and personal violence.
- ★ Recruitment, training and maintenance of volunteers to support the services of the centre.
- ★ Maintenance of a network of community services to provide services to victims of family and personal violence.
- ★ Maintenance of an information system to reflect the nature and volume of services provided.
- ★ A safe home program for battered women and their children.
- ★ The Centre offers programs or speakers to community groups or individuals in the North East area when requested.
- ★ The Centre makes use of trained volunteers, in outreach and safe home capacities as well as resource people throughout the N.E.

North East Crisis Intervention Centre Inc.

Name _____
Address _____
Phone Number _____

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN:

Becoming a Volunteer _____
Becoming a Board Member _____
Taking out a Membership (\$10) \$ _____
Other (please specify) _____

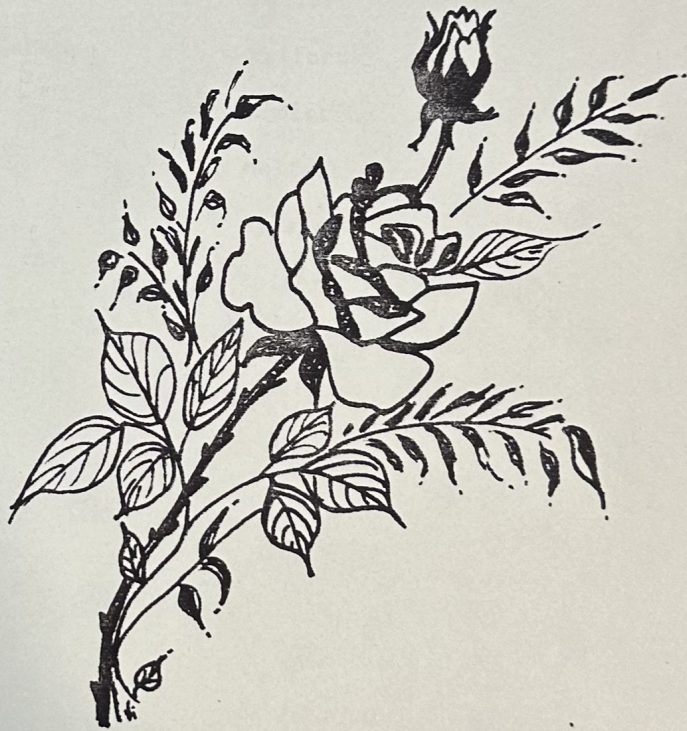


Melfort Sexual Assault Center opened on February 20th, 1984, in the lower level of the Medical Associates Clinic at the corner of Main Street and Crawford Avenue. The first two field workers were Judi Herrem and Gail Bilbrough. Once office space was acquired, the two women had the job of finding an array of 15-16 men and women willing to volunteer to work the Crisis Line and make field visits. Volunteers had to attend six weeks of training before they would be able to assist those who required help due to sexual assault. It was soon apparent that Domestic Violence was key in many of the calls and subsequent field investigations. This led to Melfort being approved for a *Safe Home* project in December of 1984. By March of 1985, the Safe Home was in operation. The rapid expansion of the Center from a Sexual Assault Crisis Line, to Crisis Center and Safe home made the hiring of 4 full_time staff a priority. The positions were Executive Director, Shelter Worker, Crisis Worker, and Office Secretary.

DON'T TAKE THE BLAME

Your partner blames you for the violence in your relationship. Abusive partners rarely take responsibility for their actions.

**NORTH EAST
CRISIS
INTERVENTION
CENTER**



ANNUAL REPORT

1985

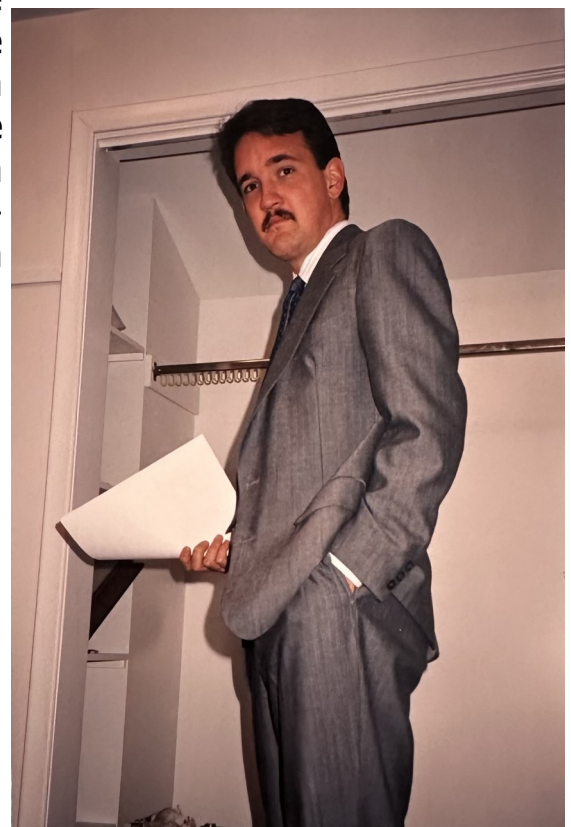
The name would soon be changed to the North-East Crisis Intervention Center, Inc. The scope of the initial project would take on a much larger need and cover a much larger area than the 25-mile radius it was intended to cover. North-East Crisis Center would learn that they would receive funding from the provincial government that would cover the employee salaries, but the Center would be responsible for raising money for operations. A few local clubs and rural municipalities stepped up and some of the operating expenses were covered, the amazing people of Melfort also helped out with donations "in kind".

Rick Peters became the first "Director of the Safe home Project" and was also appointed the Vice Chairman of the Board for the Provincial Association of Transition Houses. In September of 1985, Mr. Peters reported that since March of that year, the safe home had provided safety and shelter to 14 women and their children. Until the home on McKendry East was purchased, most clients and children accessed the crisis center during the day and would stay in a safe home in the evenings, nights and early mornings. During the day staff would assist with providing transportation to Interval and Transition houses in larger communities as Melfort did not provide this. Safe homes would provide meals and a safe environment for women and children for a short-term stay. The "Safe home Program" would see 10 homes used in the community for women and children fleeing domestic violence in 1987.

Break the cycle

If you're in an abusive situation, you might recognize this pattern:

- Your abuser threatens violence.
- Your abuser strikes.
- Your abuser apologizes, promises to change and offers gifts.
- The cycle repeats itself.



RICK PETERS

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Fall 1990



Nancy Candace Adelle Raeleen
George Carmen
Norine



North-East Crisis Intervention Center would see the start of many self-help groups ranging from Women's Support Groups for Domestic Violence to groups for addictions. The crisis line would bloom in the number of calls it received. Ranging from those who are fleeing domestic violence, farmers who are in crisis due to plummeting crop/livestock prices, addiction struggles, sexually based traumatic incidents, and suicide. Workers who volunteered their time carried pagers and would often receive calls at home after 6:00 pm and could receive calls at any time of the night.



Create a safety plan

Leaving an abuser can be dangerous. Consider taking these precautions:

- **Call a women's shelter or domestic violence hotline for advice. Make the call at a safe time — when the abuser isn't around — or from a friend's house or other safe location.**
- **Pack an emergency bag that includes items you'll need when you leave, such as extra clothes and keys. Leave the bag in a safe place. Keep important personal papers, money and prescription medications handy so that you can take them with you on short notice.**
- **Know exactly where you'll go and how you'll get there.**

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- that NECIC's total contacts for 1995/96 was 1,269.
- that 1 in 2 girls and 1 in 4 boys will have been sexually abused before reaching the age of 18.
- wife assault is responsible for 60% of all female murders in Canada.
- Saskatchewan Shelters provided shelter and direct services to 3,978 women and children; 1,956 women and children were turned away during the year because a shelter was full.
- NECIC staff and volunteers travelled 7,452.2 km's.
- in 1971 the first transition house was opened for battered women in London, England; by 1987, 264 shelters were opened in Canada.

NECIC CLIENT FILES OPENED:

	93/94	94/95	95/96
Family Violence Program:	144	169	144
Sexual Assault Program:	56	75	56
General:	18	36	18
TOTAL	218	280	218

NECIC would soon collaborate with PA mobile crisis, having calls transferred to them during the night. Many referrals were sent to NECIC from Social Services, and the RCMP. Volunteers would attend court with clients and would do a significant amount of work with the court system, receiving commendations from the Crown Prosecutor's office for the work done by the organization.

In 1995/1996, NECIC would have contact with 1269 women and children and travel over 7400 km's. It was shown that there was a need for a more permanent way to house and work with those who are fleeing Domestic Violence. Some of the core programs offered were supportive counselling for victims of violence, Court preparation and support, Safe Shelter, 24-hour Crisis Line, and a full resource center. At this time, only a small portion of funding was received from the government for Outreach services.



Another milestone would be reached in 1995. The purchase of the house on McKendry Ave E. Renovations were started both inside and out in order to ensure that the home would be suitable for women and children fleeing Domestic Violence, the home would also house the offices for Executive and Outreach and the new program, Community Development. The Crisis Line had proven to be a valuable resource after 10 years, with the numbers of people using it increasing each year. With the number of people using the Crisis Line, it was evident, even back then, that this played a vital part in the community, and the hope was that it would continue for many years.

Role of Outreach and Support Services

We are here to listen...

not to work miracles.

We are here to discuss steps with you...

not to take those steps for you.

**We are here to help you discover your
strengths...**

not to rescue you and leave you still vulnerable.

**We are here to help you explore your feelings...
not to make your feelings go away.**

**We are here to help you discover what you can
do for yourself...**

not to take responsibility for you.

**We are here to help you learn to choose...
not to make it unnecessary for you to make
difficult choices.**



Mission

The mission of the North East Outreach and Support Services is to nurture personal growth and enhance wellness in people's lives and communities by providing a range of support services in north east Saskatchewan.

NECIC would continue to grow and partner with other communities growing our service area immensely. This continual growth would soon see the need for a much larger facility, all the while NECIC would continue to serve and thrive in Melfort. Rapid growth of NECIC would see the need for more employees, offering more services to the clients and children that were served at the time.

Philosophy

We believe in the welfare of all human beings and are concerned with human relationships as they affect the well being of the individual in society.

We believe in equality among people, regardless of race, age, gender or sexual orientation.

We believe that every individual has a right to a safe, enriching environment, which helps him/her grow and develop to his/her fullest potential.

We believe we have a responsibility to provide a supportive, non-judgmental, confidential environment for the client; and to demonstrate a compassionate and non-critical acceptance of the individual's situation while respecting his/her beliefs and value system.

We believe that by encouraging independent decision-making from within the individual, we are demonstrating our respect of the individual and the belief that people can help themselves when given the necessary resources to do so.

We believe that all people have the right to receive equal services from all resource systems.

We believe that changes in the attitudes and structure of our society can be hastened through public education.

Moving onto the later parts of the 1990's, discussions would move into building a brand-new shelter within the community, along with a name change. NECIC would now become North East Outreach and Support Services in 2009-2010. It was felt that a name change would be beneficial as it would reflect the much larger area it was serving. In 2011, plans would start for the construction of the new building. This, however, would not come without its own set of challenges. While the need was there, it would become problematic in

finding the perfect location for the new building.

RECEIVED
Aug 31 10

City of

P.O. Box 2230 • Melfort, Saskatchewan • S0E 1A0 • 202 Burrows Avenue West

August 23, 2010

North East Outreach and Support Services
Box 2066
Melfort, SK
S0E 1A0

Attention: Louise Schweitzer, Executive Director

Dear Ms. Schweitzer:

Re: Letter of Support

Thank you for meeting with us today. The information that you provided underlined the necessity of a 16-bed domestic violence shelter in Melfort to serve women and children of the northeast. As a result, the City of Melfort fully supports the North East Outreach and Support Services' application to the Government of Saskatchewan for funding to open a 16-bed domestic violence shelter for victims of abusive situations.

In addition, the City of Melfort offers to assist the project with any zoning challenges, licensing issues or public consultation and support that the new shelter may require.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Kevin Phillips,
Mayor

HOME OF THE 2006 SASKATCHEWAN WINTER GAMES

Phone (306) 752-5911 • Fax (306) 752-5556

E-Mail: city@cityofmelfort.ca • City Web Page: www.cityofmelfort.ca





Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Page 1 of 2

Security Classification/Désignation
Classification/désignation sécuritaire

NCO IC Hudson Bay Detachment
Box 98
Hudson Bay SK
S0E 0Y0

Your File Votre référence

Louise Schweitzer
Acting Director
NE Outreach Center
Melfort, SK

Our File Notre référence

2010-08-20

Dear Louise:

Women's Shelter

It is with great interest and with even stronger support that I compose this letter of support.

I have been a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for over 20 years and I have been involved with Victim Services for approximately 10 years. This includes positions of Volunteer, RCMP Liaison, Board Member, Vice President and President.

Through my time with the RCMP and with Victim Services I have worked with many Shelters and Community Support Groups. I was fortunate and honoured to have had the opportunity to work extensively and directly with the Tuktoyaktuk Women and Children's shelters in Tuktoyaktuk, NWT and Hope Haven Women's Shelter in Lac La Biche, AB.

One can not truly appreciate the need for a shelter until one has a shelter to utilize to provide support to ones clients. In addition there is nothing more frustrating than being use to having the ability to use a shelter to not having one readily available. It is my humble opinion that we as a society are doing ourselves and our communities an injustice by not expanding our present programs and ensuring that the shelters are available for our present needs and prepared for our future needs.

In Lac La Biche we began with a converted residence which immediately became inadequate. We were able to justify and subsequently build a large and appealing facility that had the needs of the clients, employees and community as its priorities.

Through this expansion the Shelter was able to provide more services to the community by supporting and developing a Family Violence Program, an Outreach Program and a Program for Men.

It is unfortunate we as a society look at what costs might be incurred when commencing an enterprise such as this before we look at the more important factors such as what the cost will be if we do not create a facility such as this in our service area. The costs financially, mentally and physically of not having such a facility are difficult if not impossible to measure however they are extremely relevant and can not be ignored.

Canada

NEOSS Safe Shelter project moving forward

➤ Part 2 of a three part series on NEOSS: their past, present and future

By Michael Oleksyn
Melfort Journal

Progress on the North East Outreach and Support Services Safe Shelter project for the northeast continues to progress. The project, which received provincial government support in the 2013 provincial budget, is moving ahead.

"We continue to work on that daily. We are hoping to

break ground this spring. It's looking very positive. We work on it diligently and it's part of our daily duties at this point," NEOSS executive director Louise Schweitzer said.

They expect to make announcements in the coming months regarding the building.

"There are certain processes that need to be followed that we as an organization are required to do," Schweitzer said.

The funding announcement came after three years of lobbying by the organization; Schweitzer believes that they have a fine partner in the government.

"It is supported by our government, as we work

though the processes, we know that together we can make this happen for victims of domestic violence in our region," Schweitzer said.

According to Schweitzer the protection of the safe shelter clients and employees is a key item as the project moves ahead. "The safety and security of the staff and the people that would be served by it is the most important item," she explained.

NEOSS continues to



work towards removing the shame of sexualized violence through education and awareness.

"We need to remove the stigma, we need to remove the shame for the victims of sexualized violence," Schweitzer said.

"With awareness comes knowledge and with knowledge comes informed decisions. I truly believe that, that awareness provides and knowledge gives people the ability to make an informed decision," she explained.

Domestic and sexualized violence can affect you no matter your station in life.

"Domestic violence and sexualized violence have no boundaries of religion, class, culture. They don't

care what colour your skin is, they don't care how much money you make. They are issues that cross every socioeconomic, cultural, racial, religious barrier," Schweitzer said.

The organization is already beginning to finalize planning for this year's Walk A Mile in Her Shoes fundraising walk in May 2014. They have begun planning for the event recently and hope it is as well supported as last year's version.

Through events such as Walk a Mile, their gala in January and other things they are able to spread the knowledge necessary.

michael.oleksyn@
sunmedia.ca
@melfortjournal

Site chosen for North East Outreach and Support Services shelter

May20,2011 The North East Outreach and Support Services is one step closer to having a women's shelter built in

At the Melfort city council meeting May 16, council unanimously in favor of granting 1 discretionary approval to Northeast Outreach and Support Services to operate a group care facility on . McKendry Ave. West.

"I would like to thank council for being proactive in their fight against domestic violence, to vote in approval of discretionary use in this property shows that they are informed of the issues and support our efforts to assist women and children in a time of crisis," Louise Schweitzer, the executive director of the North East Outreach and Support Services said after the decision was made. * * * * *

NEOSS and the city of Melfort would come to an agreement on a lot on McKendry Ave West, and the real work would soon begin. While the staff would continue working the front lines, assisting families fleeing Domestic Violence, the work behind the scenes would start. Grant writing, proposals and fund raising would play a large part in the construction of the new shelter, working with Provincial and Federal government entities to ensure that the new shelter would indeed become a reality.

November 21, 2022...

In 2022, Saskatchewan (730 victims per 100,000 population) and Manitoba (585) had the highest provincial rates of police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence (732 for Saskatchewan and 633 for Manitoba), similar to police-reported crime overall. (Statistics Canada)

Melfort women's shelter receives funding

CHARLENE TeBBUTT
FOR THE STARPHOENIX

MELFORT — The average woman will try eight times to get out of an abusive relationship before she finally succeeds. Many choose to stay rather than face the world on their own.

That statistic illustrates why a safe shelter is vital for women and children living in northeast Saskatchewan, says the co-ordinator of a Melfort-area outreach centre. Women who finally get the courage to leave an abusive relationship may change their mind once they realize they also have to leave their community — sometimes for weeks at a time.

Currently, there is no safe shelter for women in the northeast area. That means women leave their homes — and their children leave school — in order to get help at a safe shelter in a larger community, such as Prince Albert or Yorkton. When those shelters are full, the women must travel even further to get help.

"It's a very traumatic crisis situation for them at that point," said Louise Schweitzer, the executive director of North East Outreach and Support Services, which has been leading a campaign to build a 16-bed safe shelter for women in Melfort.

"To remove them to Yorkton or Fort Qu'Appelle, they then lose all their support systems they have in place. Some of them have never

lived in big cities, so it just becomes too scary."

The average stay at a women's shelter is between four and six weeks, Schweitzer said. Having a shelter in Melfort would mean women and their children could get help close to home, or they might only have to leave for a few days until a local shelter space opens up.

North East Outreach Support and Services provides services throughout northeast Saskatchewan, including Tisdale and Nipawin, and as far as the Manitoba border. The organization's services include awareness programs, referrals to other agencies and a 24-hour crisis support line taking calls from some 20 different communities.

The service has been working since 2009 to build a safe shelter for women. Last week, the province announced \$500,000 in long-term annual funding to cover operating costs.

Another \$1 million will come from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for construction of the new shelter.

The Melfort shelter, which will be known as Angel's Lighthouse, is still in the planning stages. A plot of land has been donated by the City of Melfort and Schweitzer is hoping construction can start soon.

Plans for the shelter met some resistance early on from residents who did not want the shelter in a residential neighbourhood. Melfort Mayor Rick Lang said resi-

dents were concerned about the location of the shelter, and not the shelter itself.

"We had a forum, a public forum, when we were looking at the other location and we had some women come forward who had been in an abusive relationship and had nowhere to go and their stories were kind of heart wrenching," Lang said.

"None of council were against a domestic violence shelter, it was just that particular location and the response of the residents in that location that caused us to look further, and I think we actually have come up with a better location."

Local MLA and former Melfort mayor Kevin Phillips said the northeast area has been in need of a women's shelter for some time.

"I think there's always been a need for it, but so often it flies under the radar," Phillips said.

"If the lady isn't the most vulnerable, the children certainly are."

The shelter is also supported by the RCMP, whose members routinely deal with domestic violence situations in the northeast area. Melfort detachment Staff Sgt. Darren Wouters said the women's shelter will be an important resource in the northeast area.

"We deal with it (domestic violence) on a weekly basis ... probably two to three times a week," Wouters said.

"I think it's a pretty important service to have in the community."

Public meeting on safe shelter very informative and opinionated

Dear Editor;

We the Board of Directors of North East Outreach and Support Services wish to pub-

licly thank all the individuals who attended the Town Hall Meeting on March 9, 2011 at the Kerry Vickar Centre.

The meeting was very informative and we are proud and pleased to be located in a community that will come out to voice their opinions and feel safe doing so. All the comments were listened to and taken into consideration; we are sure, by our City Council.

As for the City Council, we are pleased to see the diligence in research that they

have done to ensure that they are informed to make the best decision possible for their community; as they have been entrusted to do by their fellow neighbours. We are sure they have spent much time since then reviewing the comments and coming to a hard earned and thoughtful decision.

We look forward to hearing their decision on March 14, 2011 at the City Council meeting and will move forward with the Domestic Violence Shelter as is our chosen man-

date for the organization.

Once again, thank you to one and all, for and against the zoning change who came out and voiced their opinions, personal stories and challenges. Without each one of you sharing, the City Council would have missed an important part of information to assist with their decision.

We would also like to express a big thank you to all the individuals from the community who have voiced their support for the Domestic Violence Shelter in a variety

of formats from the newspaper, to phone calls of support, to discussions on coffee row or at home at your kitchen table. Awareness is being garnered and shared one person at a time, to make a difference in the lives of individuals who suffer from domestic violence.

Sincerely,
Board of Directors
North East Outreach and
Support Services

FUND RAISING



BRENDA IVES

A8 RURALROOTS - Thursday, May 16, 2013

Walk a Mile In Her Shoes: My Unforgettable Experience

When I arrived home from work on Thursday, May 9th, I had little time to get ready.

I walked in my door just after 5 o'clock.

Registration was already beginning at Memorial Garden for Walk a Mile in Her Shoes. The walk itself was to begin at 6.

I knew I needed to do something to prepare myself. "Should I stretch? What clothing would be appropriate for the occasion?", I thought.

I decided on sweat pants, and a workout sweater. I stretched out my legs for five minutes. I walked briskly to Memorial Gardens, to ensure I was energized.

I'll give you a clue for those of you who are trying the event next year. Attire, stretching and energy do almost nothing.

After arriving, I was given an important piece of advice. Tape up your ankles. After a heavy dose of tape wrapped my ankles in place, it was time to get my pair of red heels.

The high heels provided were four inches high. As I slipped my foot into the first shoe, I struggled. With other shoes, there's a space for your toes to slide into, gently. Then you lay the soles of your feet down.

I wiggled my toes, looking for this space for the front of the foot, and found nothing.

This was not what I envisioned when I started this quest.

After jamming my feet into both heels, I was ready to go. But, there were still several speeches to come before the walk actually began.



Now, I do have some relevant advice. Do NOT put the shoes on prior to beginning your walk.

This was my biggest mistake. I cringed and swiveled in discomfort from simply standing in these sharp

After twenty minutes of suffering without even taking a step, my CK750 group was off to the races.

There must be a hidden secret to grace when walking with heels. Many women I've seen do it so effortlessly. I was about as smooth as sandpaper.

There was a laundry list of problems for every walker you saw, such that you could categorize them. There were the swayers, the wobblers, the slow steps, and the high walkers.

I was a combination of all four.

Initially, you do nothing but take very slow steps, just for fear of breaking your ankles. Wobbliness is inevitable, especially around the rough surfaces of the sidewalk.

A production member

on our team could not stop wildly swaying from side to side (and he finished first out of our group, so all the power to him).

As I slowly got a feel for the march, the Walk a Mile team held no stops at taking a few shots at us walkers.

"This seemed like a good idea two months ago!" read one sign.

After the strenuous first quarter mile, I started to gain a little confidence.

Engaging conversations can distract you from the shooting pains in your toes.

The best technique though, was to stand tall as a 'high walker'. Strut with vigor, puff your chest out, and hold your head up high.

Sadly I only employed it towards the end. But standing tall and proud in your stride alleviates pain around the soles of your feet.

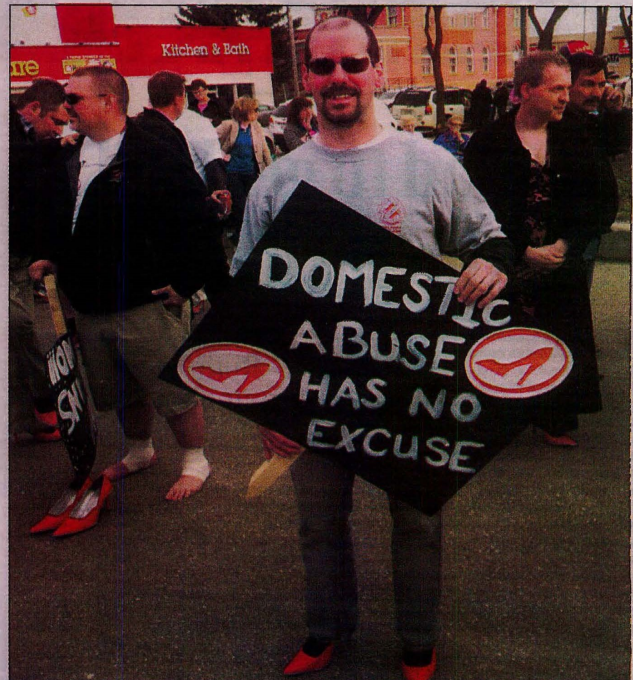
As we marched, the women laughed and cheered, marking for a great occasion.

But, in the back of everyone's mind, all of us knew why one participates in an event such as 'Walk A Mile'.

Not only is it for the known victims of domestic and sexual violence, a terrible crime that should not be a statistic; it is for those who are and continue to suffer in silence.

It is for those who are afraid to speak out for fears that most of us could not fathom.

Northeast Outreach and



Support Services were overwhelmed by the extraordinary efforts of the Melfort community at the event.

Over \$20,000 was raised, and will go towards a new women's shelter for the Northeast. That is a tremendous contribution.

Yet, what some of us may forget are those at NEOS who still return to work the following day. And they still take calls from women who are abused and victimized by men.

This was a terrific (and wobbly) first step for the community of Melfort and

the province of Saskatchewan.

We must all work together to make sure there are many more steps to come.

Ben Lewis is a news reporter for CJVR/CK750 Fabmar Communications





March 20, 2013

Ms. Louise Schweitzer
North East Outreach and Support Services Inc.
PO Box 2066
MELFORT SK S0E 1A0



Dear Ms. Schweitzer: *Louise*

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I am delighted to inform you and the Board of Directors of the North East Outreach and Support Services Inc. that the Government will support the building and operating of Angel's Lighthouse Shelter. The Government is delivering on a commitment in the *Plan for Growth* to invest in a higher quality of life for all citizens, including support for the most vulnerable residents.

The North East Outreach and Support Service Inc. should be proud of your accomplishment in establishing the first women's shelter in the province in many years. You have worked hard to represent the needs of women and children fleeing violence in your region with true passion and commitment. Your belief in the services you offer is inspiring and you have captivated the support and allegiance in your community. Thank you for your ongoing work and dedication to provide these important services for Saskatchewan citizens. Your efforts and continued perseverance remind us that fulfilling our social obligations makes for stronger communities and individuals.

Program staff with the Ministry will be in touch with you to discuss the next steps and prepare agreements for the new facility.

As you know I am planning to attend "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" on May 9, 2013. I am looking forward to the event and the opportunity to celebrate your achievement in Melfort.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Gordon S. Wyant, Q.C.





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April 11, 2014, would see the “Official Sod Turning” take place. The new shelter at 128 McKendry Ave West would start construction. Administration, Outreach, shelter staff would continue to work collectively to ensure that the community and the area it serviced still received the exemplary attention it so de-

served. As Melfort was still a small shelter, it relied on referrals to other shelters, along with transferring clients and children to shelters, the Crisis Line would still prove to be a much-needed resource for the region.

The new shelter would be the first shelter constructed in the province since 1989. Realizing that the IPV rates were not declining, and that there was no structure in place to house women and children fleeing violence, Melfort was the obvious choice for the build. The new shelter would have 7 suites, two with adjoining suites, to accommodate larger families. A total of 16 women and children would be able to be housed in this facility. It would boast a fully functional kitchen for families to prepare meals, a large living area, dining room, a fully stocked play area for the children. All while being completely secure with a state of the art security system in place, ensuring that families staying with NEOSS would have the sense of being safe and secure in their new surroundings. It was a very exciting time for North East Outreach and also for the city of Melfort.



Seeking Safety from Interpersonal Violence Stream

The Saskatchewan Housing Benefit - Seeking Safety from Interpersonal Violence (Seeking Safety) Stream provides a simple flat-rate monthly benefit to help individuals fleeing interpersonal violence cover their rent and utility costs.

The Saskatchewan Housing Benefit (SHB) is delivered by Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) and co-funded by the Government of Canada and Government of Saskatchewan under the National Housing Strategy.



CMHC REP



Kevin Phillips



Rick Lang

In DV, an abusive partner engages in a pattern of behaviors that give them control or power over the other partner. These behaviors can include physical and sexual assault, control over finances, verbal threats, coercion, manipulation of children or custody, and emotional abuse. (Betterhelp.com)



Left to Right GORD WYANT, CMHC REP, RICK LANG, LOUISE SCHWEITZER, JASON DEHAAN, CAM LEE, KEVIN PHILLIPS



Left to Right

KEVIN PHILLIPS, KAMA BAUER, GORD WYANT, RICK LANG, LOUISE SCHWEITZER, CMHC REP, CRYSTAL GUY

Staff and Administration would continue to be extremely busy during the building of the new shelter. Many fund raisers were held, donations from businesses, RM's, towns, and private citizens continued to come into NEOSS and were put towards the new shelter. It would also be during the construction of the new shelter that talks would begin with the Ministry of Social Services regarding an emergency receiving home that would become TreeHouse. It would be a busy time for NEOSS. However, tragedy would strike during the chilly night hours on November 30, 2014. A devastating fire would sweep through the nearly completed shelter, destroying it. The fire was ruled accidental, non-suspicious, and the work would begin all over again.





Destroyed NEOSS shelter will be rebuilt

By Greg Wiseman
Northeast Sun

The North East Outreach and Support Services (NEOSS) women's shelter which was being built in Melfort may have been destroyed by fire on Sunday, November 30, but it not gone forever.

"It is definitely a devastating set back, but a setback. I do know that we will regroup, reassess and rebuild. There is no other way to put it," said Louise Schweitzer, the executive director of NEOSS.

"That is the nature of the organization, the nature of our board, our staff or anybody that we work with. It is a setback, but the need has not gone away and we will rebuild."

Jason de Haan, the project manager, said the 7,350 square foot project was about 12 weeks from the finishing touches and said the loss will be felt throughout the northeast.

"There is a lot of immeasurable suffering that comes not just from a the loss of materials it is the people themselves," he said.

"It is not just one dwelling it is a

lot of clients, children, women from across the northeast."

NEOSS had recently started a capital campaign to fundraise for furnishings for the shelter.

After the fire it was decided to not start a new rebuilding fundraising campaign, but rather expand the capital campaign to include rebuilding.

"Our capital campaign is now

going to become more than a capital campaign, more than a Phase 2. It is going to help us rebuild Phase 1," Schweitzer said.

"We need people to help us man that campaign for donations. If people want to volunteer contact our office we will start a list."

Emergency services, including the fire department ambulance and RCMP, were called to the facility at about 4:45 a.m. on November 30.

Women's shelter restarting from the Ground Up

For the second time, work is well underway on a 16-bed shelter in Melfort for women and children who are victims of family violence. The shelter is owned by the North East Outreach Support Services (NEOSS) Inc.

Its construction originally began in the spring of 2014, and was about 70 per cent complete when it was destroyed by an accidental fire in November of 2014.

Most recently, construction crews have gotten up the roof's framing.

Prince Albert MP Randy Hoback was present Thursday for the second sodturning ceremony, as well as MLA Kevin Phillips, and Donna Harpauer, the minister of social services and minister responsible for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

This coincided with North East Outreach's third annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event. It involves sizing your foot into a pair of bright red high heels and walking to raise money for the shelter. More than 40 people registered for the march, to end sexualized, domestic and all forms of gender based violence.

The federal and provincial governments, through the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation and Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, are jointly contributing over \$1.6 million under the Canada-Saskatchewan Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-2019 agreement.

The City of Melfort has contributed \$188,000 for the land and NEOSS contributed \$111,000 in cash equity and about \$460,000 in mortgage financing.

The project is now scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2016.

— with files from Chelsea Laskowski

nmaxwell@panow.com

When they arrived the building had flames coming out of the south-west roof.

Melfort Fire chief John McDonald said the department used a direct attack on the flames.

"We knew there was nobody inside it was under construction. It is not safe to send anybody in when it is under construction," he said.

"It was just a matter of fighting it."

Fire crews spent about 13 hours there on Sunday before being called back to the scene later that evening.

They returned again on Monday for flare-ups.

"The cold weather affected the fighting of the fire as the water on surfaces turned to ice," McDonald said.

"It ices over so bad that the fire burns underneath other parts of the walls that have fallen in. That makes it harder to get into."

A team from the Saskatchewan Fire commissioner's office was on scene looking into the cause of the incident.



Firefighters came to the site of the North East Outreach Support Services Domestic Violence Shelter to ensure the remaining hotspots didn't set the remainder of the building alight again.

Review Photo/Sandra Dancy

A devastating setback for shelter

Devan C. Tasa

A nearly completed emergency shelter for women who face domestic violence in Melfort has been destroyed by fire.

The Melfort Fire Department was called to the scene of the North East Outreach and Support Services' Domestic Violence Shelter around 5 in the morning on Nov. 30. They battled the

blaze until 6 in the evening and then returned in the middle of the night to combat a flare-up caused by remaining hotspots.

The fire was still smouldering Dec. 1. The fire inspector came to the site in the afternoon and then fire crews were to start tearing up the place to extinguish the remainder of the blaze.

"It's a devastating setback in our ability to offer those services, but it's just that — a devastating

setback," said Louise Schweitzer, the Outreach and Support Services' executive director. "As an organization we will regroup, reassess and rebuild."

Rick Lang, Melfort's mayor, agreed with those sentiments.

"It's a setback for the entire northeast region because the domestic violence shelter was to serve the needs of the entire region and it's a set back for the City of Melfort," he said, "but

when you look at the people that make up the North East Outreach Services board and the people who have been connected to the shelter itself, you know that they aren't are going to give up."

Construction of the shelter began in April, the culmination of four years worth of lobbying by the Outreach and Support Services.

Brad Wall, the Premier of Saskatchewan, wrote on his Facebook page that his government would remain involved in the project.

...Continued from page 1
Saskatchewan, wrote on his Facebook page that his government would remain involved in the project.

"Our government was there to build it," he wrote. "We will be there to rebuild."

Tim Gross, the executive director of housing

development for the ministry of social services, said the government was assessing the situation.

"Right now we're in the process of talking to all of our partners on the project and seeing what the next steps need to be," he said.

Schweitzer said her organization had begun

the insurance process.

"We have more questions than answers as well," she said. "We are going to take our lead from the fire commissioner's investigation as well as the insurance investigation that are in the process. Once they have their findings, then we will be more prepared to set out a

plan of action."

Both Schweitzer and Lang praised the efforts of Melfort's volunteer fire department to contain the blaze.

Members of the public that want to help the Outreach and Support Services can donate either their website or by phone, Schweitzer said.



Review Photo/Sandra Dancy

Doug Walsh, Melfort's Assistant Fire Chief examines one of the hotspots remaining 36 hours after fire broke out in the almost completed North East Outreach Support Services Domestic Violence Shelter.

The shelter would open in June of 2016. Since the opening of the shelter, it has run to full capacity for the entire 8 years. The brand new staff started training in May of 2016. Since the shelter's opening, staff are required to have quite a bit more training than in 2016. Since Covid, staff has had to deal with so many more issues than just DV. The pandemic affected society in such a negative and broad way, that unless you are working within the DV industry the impact of what it has done will not be understood. Rates of DV increased vastly, addiction issues are at the fore front of many situations, staff has had to learn to adapt accordingly. The women and men who are working in the shelter, outreach, and treehouse need to be commended on the stand up job that they have done in response to this!

In June of 2016, the Ministry of Social Services would approach NEOSS and thus TreeHouse would come into existence in October of 2016. They would occupy the house on McKendry Ave E. Shortly thereafter, it would be discovered that the house did not have adequate ventilation for all the workers and the children who were residing there. The house on McKendry Ave East would be sold in 2017, and TreeHouse would move into the former Administration side of the shelter building which was completely renovated for them in December of 2017.

With each year, the need for the Crisis Line, shelter for women and children fleeing Domestic Violence, children needing safe secure placements, our Outreach department meant that NEOSS was growing at an alarming rate.

NEOSS would again see considerable growth in 2019, staffing had now reached to slightly over sixty, but the need for more workers was seen and there were new positions developing within the organization. April would also see the start of construction of the four-plex unit directly west of the Shelter/Treehouse building. This would be a second stage housing unit for clients from the shelter to transition to when they would leave the shelter but were still in need of supports from the organization, as the clients may not be quite ready to transition into a life with out Domestic Violence. TreeHouse would also be licensed to now house 12 children instead of 5.



Left to Right

UNKNOWN, UNKNOWN, LOUISE SCHWEITZER, RICK PETERS, RICK LANG, CAL GRATTON, BLAIR MICHALIEW, TODD GOUDY



Left to Right

CAL GRATTON, LOUISE SCHWEITZER, BLAIR MICHALIEW



With all this happening, it was soon realized that the growth of NEOSS was imminent, and that a long-term strategic plan would be needed to build programs and a new administrative building. The year 2019 would see the creation of a new branch of our tree, Melfort Youth Evolution. Kathryn Carswell took on the responsibility of this and remains at the head of this program today, doing amazing things with the youth in our community. Construction would start on the new administration building in 2019, with completion slated for completion in 2020/2021. Covid would hit in 2020, and things would take a dramatic turn. Executive, Administration, and Outreach would begin to work remotely from home, while the front-line workers at the Shelter and Tree-House would keep both of these operating as smoothly as possible. It certainly was a trying time for all staff.



MELFORT YOUTH EVOLUTION



NEOSS would again be highlighted in a pilot project funded through the Saskatchewan government in 2020/2021. Nipawin FIRST would become part of the NEOSS family. Our Family Intervention Rapid Support Team (FIRST) supports children and families in decreasing the amount of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and to help prevent violence in the home.



CHELSEA WANDLER & BECKY PICKERING

Left to Right

BECKY PICKERING, TRACEY ZWOZDESKY,
CHELSEA WANDLER



NEOSS Nipawin FIRST
Dec 20, 2023



NEOSS Nipawin FIRST



NEOSS Nipawin FIRST
Dec 18, 2023

The staff at FIRST offer advocacy, family violence education, individual and family case planning, safety planning, risk assessments, home visits, referral to other services, life skills training, budgeting and financial literacy, outreach, and supportive counseling. This has quickly become a very integral part of our organization.

Left to Right

CHELSEA WANDLER, BECKY PICKERING



NEOSS would face some struggles in the later part of 2022 and into 2023. A complete restructuring of the organization would take place after the retirement of Louise Schweitzer. We would see Wayne Helquist and Haley Kennedy become interim co-executive directors until a new one could be found. Joan Bear took over the reins in November of 2023. With Joan at the helm, we are all excited to see where NEOSS will go next.



Left to Right

BARB HUNTER, KATHRYN CARSWELL, MARY-ANN SAMBRANA, GAYLA DICKSON, JOAN BEAR, SHELLEY ROBERTSON, LAURA NEARING