

# 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT NEOSS



North East Outreach and Support Services, Inc.  
Inspiring healthy communities and healthy families since 1984.  
124 McKendry Avenue W, Melfort, SK



# About NEOSS

North East Outreach and Support Services is a community-based, non-profit registered charity. Community services are delivered with funds obtained from government grants, fundraising, and community donations. The agency is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and managed by an Executive Director.

North East Outreach and Support Services, initially named the Melfort Sexual Assault Centre, was born in 1984 due to the efforts of several concerned community members in response to the need for support services for victims of sexual assault. Soon, NEOSS began receiving many calls for support from victims of domestic violence, so the agency broadened its focus and expanded its programs to meet the needs of victims of all forms of interpersonal violence.

# Mission and Vision

North East Outreach and Support Services

- enhances the safety and wellness, and nurtures personal growth, of individuals and families in crisis in Saskatchewan
- envisions a safe and healthy community where all individuals are treated as equals



adm@neoss.ca



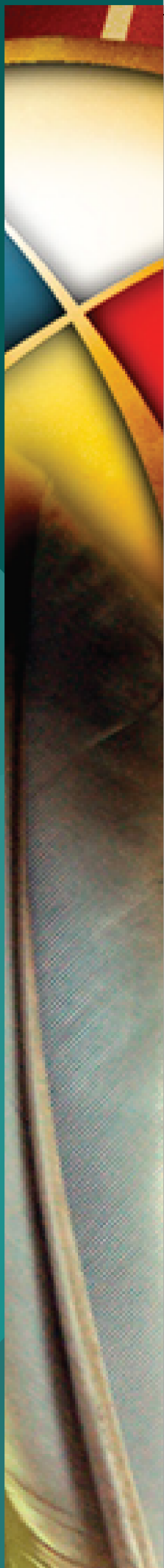
# Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge that we have the opportunity to come together on Treaty 6 territory and the traditional home land of the Metis Nation.

As we gather on the traditional grounds of First Nations and Metis, we pause to recognize and honour those who have walked this land before us.

We gratefully acknowledge the opportunity to live, learn, work and play on these sacred lands and pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present.

From those who came before for us, and with those who walk with us, we commit to learning more purposefully, listening to understand, and leading with our hearts in our ongoing commitment to reconciliation with all Treaty peoples as we steward this land together for future generations.



# Executive Director's Message

After 40 years, NEOSS has undergone positive change from top to bottom and there is a newness and fresh approach to the way we are managing staff, resources and program delivery. As seasons progress forward, so does an organization cycle through growth and maturity.

Very special thanks to all who have worked, served, contributed, funded, volunteered, and donated to work the soil, plant the seeds and nurture the organization over the past 40 years. Your heart felt gifts and contributions created the strong roots and foundation we have today as a leading charity in North East Saskatchewan. Well done.

2023-24 has been a year of transition and change for NEOSS. New staff, new accounting system, new payroll system, new look, new management, new ideas, you get the picture.

My journey with NEOSS began in November 2023 with an invitation from the Board to take the leadership helm. Positive relationships were quickly forged among staff, regional partners, donors, funding partners and fellow agencies.

The Board and Staff will meet for strategic planning to clearly focus and fine tune corporate direction for the coming years. I look forward to the next chapters of our legacy.



**Joan  
Bear**

“

Graduated with honors,  
University of Lethbridge,  
Bachelor of Management.  
Thirty years of administrative  
expertise bringing solid  
leadership to NEOSS.

“My passion is to empower  
people to heal and reach  
their greatest potential to  
become their very best.”

# Service Delivery

- Women's Safe Shelter 24/7
- 2nd Stage Transition Housing
- Outreach and Support Services
  - Family Violence Intervention
  - Nipawin FIRST (Family Intervention Rapid Support Team)
  - Melfort Youth Evolution (MYE)
  - 24/7 Crisis Line
  - Prevention/Educational Services
- Treehouse Children's Emergency Receiving Home (Ages 0-11) 24/7
- Corporate Support Services
  - Administrative Support
  - Building Management Support
  - Financial and Human Resources Support
  - Social Media and Public Relations Support
  - Leadership Support
  - Donor Relations and Fundraising Support



# Introducing Our Board

In recognition of the strong leadership, mentorship and guidance provided by our NEOSS Board Team.



**Blair Michaliew**  
Co-Chair



**Kristin Lee**  
Co-Chair



**Andrea Staples**  
Director



**Heather Wagner**  
Director



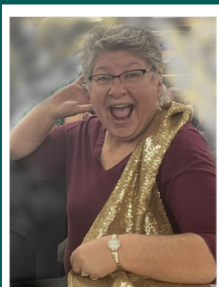
**Kristin Willerton**  
Director



**Rob Cay**  
Director



# Introducing Our Team



**Joan Bear**  
Executive Director

- Corporate Support Services
  - Building Manager - Rick Nordstrom
  - Administrative Assistant - Shelley Robertson
  - Finance/Human Resources Assistants
    - Amanda Danderfer
    - Meagan Poch
    - Laura Nearing
  - Social Media Designers/Specialists
    - Meagan Poch
    - Shelley Robertson
    - Kathryn Carswell
  - Finance/Leadership Support - Joan Bear
- Family Violence Intervention
  - 2 Personal Violence Counsellors
    - Jamie Bishop, Barb Hunter
- Nipawin FIRST (Family Intervention Rapid Support Team)
  - 2 Advocates - Chelsea Wandler, Becky Pickering
- Melfort Youth Evolution (MYE)
  - 1 Part Time Coordinator - Kathryn Carswell
- 24/7 Crisis Line - Managed by Outreach and Shelter Staff
- Outreach Prevention/Educational Services
  - Clinical and Supportive Counselling
  - Public Awareness
  - Adopt A Family Campaign
  - First Responder Training to Sexual Assault
  - Suicide ASIST Training
  - PART Training



**Tracey Zwozdesky**  
Outreach Manager



**Tawni Teiber**  
Shelter Manager

- Women's Safe Shelter - 16-21 Beds
  - 5 Shelter Workers plus 7 Casuals
  - 1 Early Years Coordinator/Lead hand
    - Kelsie Moorman/Meagan Poch
- 2nd Stage Transitional Housing
- Client Advocacy and Support Referrals
- Case Management Approach
- Training Services
  - Financial Literacy
  - Trauma Informed Care
  - Nobody's Perfect Parenting
  - Triple P Parenting

- Treehouse Emergency Children's Receiving Home
  - 1 Lead Hand/Assistant Manager
    - Mary Ann Sambrana
  - 1 Cook - Shelley Mills
  - Early Child Workers (8 FT, 6-20 Casual PT)
- Training Services
  - Trauma Informed Care
  - Back to Basics
  - PART Training



**Gayla Dickson**  
Treehouse Manager



# Outreach Manager's Report

## Areas of Responsibility

Outreach Family Violence Intervention (FVI) FIRST - Nipawin Crisis Line MYE

Respectfully Submitted by

Tracey Zwozdesky, BSW, RSW - Outreach Manager

## Staffing

Outreach Manager - Tracey Zwozdesky  
 Personal Violence Counsellors - Barb Hunter and Jamie Bishop  
 Family Intervention Advocates - Chelsea Wandler and Becky Pickering  
 Youth Evolution Coordinator - Kathryn Carswell  
 Administrative Assistant - Shelley Robertson  
 Financial Assistant - Amanda Danderfer

## Outreach FVI Program

### Service Delivery

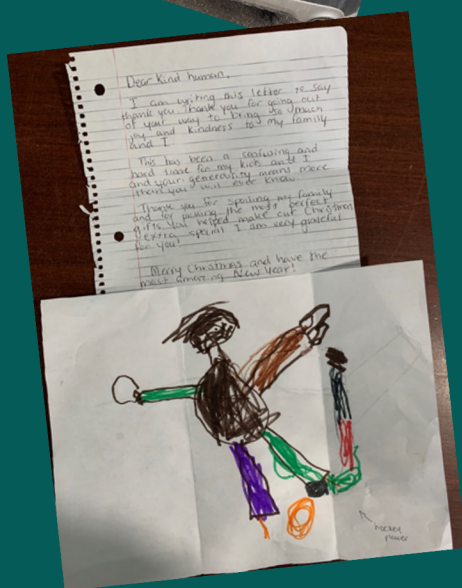
The Family Violence Intervention (FVI) outreach team provided support to individuals and families experiencing domestic violence and/or sexualized violence in the communities of the North East Region. The team increased the use of a hybrid approach which has allowed for clients to access services more easily. This included in-person services, phone services, and virtual services. This proved successful and helped create an inclusive approach for remote communities to access services. The team provides consistent, stable, and safe services for our clients to feel most at ease while accessing services.

With the discontinuation of the Rapid Access Counselling program through NEOSS last year, the team made some changes. The team was composed of 2 F/T Personal Violence Counsellors and 1 P/T Outreach Manager. This changed again late in the year when staff turnover happened. A new Outreach Manager was hired in January and 1 F/T Personal Violence Counsellor was also hired at the end of January. The team remained short staffed for the remainder of the year, missing another F/T Personal Violence Counsellor. The short staffing remained as applicants did not have required education for the position.

Despite staffing challenges at the end of the year, the team successfully built therapeutic relationships with the people we serve. Outcomes included safety planning, increased client knowledge on abuse and violence, enhanced client coping skills, advocacy support, emotional support and encouragement. The hybrid approach of virtual and in person services assisted restructuring and transition and resulted in steady use of services. The fewer barriers people face, means higher use of services resulting in successful outcomes.

The way communities and individuals receive information has changed. Adaptations included regular social media engagement. Advertising services in a variety of mediums is essential in providing communities current information on how to access services. The team created positive relationships with Addictions and Mental Health, Suncrest College, RCMP, Health Care Providers, Housing Authorities, Oasis Centre, Nipawin Harm Reduction, the Ministry of Social Services, and the Nipawin Family Resource Center, Marguerite Riel Centre, Salvation Army, and the Food Bank which has been helpful in service delivery through client referrals. FVI continues to hold strong partnerships with SASS, PATHS, and STOPS to Violence on a provincial level which has been helpful as it provides connection with service providers across the province creating growth and updated best practices.





## Team Professional Development

The Outreach Department continues to expand professional skills to meet the high needs of the diverse population being served by attending various training such as *Motivational Interviewing*, *First Responder to Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse* facilitator training (FRT). The Outreach team took training in *Trauma Informed Care*, *Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexualized Violence*, and *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)* training and facilitator training. The team is now equipped to deliver training modules to NEOSS staff at a reduced cost.

## Other Initiatives and Prevention Awareness

- *Adopt a Family* program is for families in need at Christmas. This provided exceptional support for 22 families (grand total of 76 individuals). It was deeply moving for staff to drop off hampers and bring holiday joy, tears, hugs and happiness. NEOSS received multiple thank you letters from recipients (pictured in the side bar). Funds for this initiative came from the Tim Horton's SMILE Cookie campaign and other generous donations from the North East Region.

Well-established community relationships allow staff to deliver public presentations on domestic violence and sexualized violence. These include:

- high schools, college students, parents, church groups and service providers. Upon request, staff provide presentations or information regarding the topics previously stated.
- frequent presentations on awareness for domestic violence in the communities of Tisdale and Melfort.
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) - part of a team that hung red dresses at Melfort's memorial garden to raise awareness.
- attended community meetings with *Partners to End Poverty*, *Melfort Homelessness Committee*, *Tisdale Food and Housing Insecurity*, and Tisdale Interagency.
- Pro-active weekly Melfort HUB participation. Melfort brought the HUB back in January.
- NEOSS also hosted an Interagency meeting for the service providers in the North East, which Outreach attended.

Formal programming was limited due to barriers for child care and transportation. The team brainstormed creative ways to bring back formal programming in the new year.

## 24/7 Crisis Line Support

The crisis line is managed by the Outreach Department. This resource is for clients unable to see counsellors in person or if they are in active crisis. Numerous callers access the crisis line who are not on the outreach client caseload. These callers phone in for a variety of reasons including general support, information gathering, referrals, and immediate crisis intervention. This essential service has provided access to mental health services for many people across the province. When Outreach workers are not available to take calls, the NEOSS Women's Shelter staff are an essential part of the crisis line team to answer the calls.



The Outreach team is a close knit, passionate, dedicated, and motivated team. This team is why the department is successful at reaching identified goals and objectives. There is a side to this work, often overlooked at times that include the emotional, mental and compassion fatigue faced by the people working in this field. Burnout is very real. Having to provide a variety of services that include counselling, advocacy, programming, awareness, promotions, education, group counselling, support work, and having to overcome hurdles, is a huge balancing act. We have had to take the appropriate steps to manage staff burnout which has been reflected in our utilization.

Outreach has successfully carried an average of 58 individual caseloads on a monthly basis. The Outreach team provided 6,297 services throughout the year which is an increase from 3,877 in the previous year.

Becoming a new Manager in January has been a learning experience. Going forward my goal is to have transparency with the Outreach staff involving all important information such as our budgets, strategic planning, and policy making. To avoid any confusion around the budget and where our funds are spent, moving forward we will have a tracking system so that everything is recorded. The team will have access to seeing budgets, knowing the balances, and where the funds have been spent. The Outreach program had a surplus of funds this year because the team did not have accurate, transparent knowledge of the budget, to be able to spend accordingly. Outreach was operating on the safe side, and was spending very little as we did not want to go over budget.

We would love to thank our funders and board members for your ongoing support of what we do, without any of you none of what we do to support vulnerable people would be possible. We look forward to continuing to provide consistent services and are happy to report that utilization of services is high and consistent. In the coming year Outreach is excited to be running programming both in schools and in house for women's and men's support groups. Outreach and FIRST will also work together in the next year to attend tradeshow within the communities of the Northeast. Following is a brief update of what our stats were for this period, as well as the crisis line stats.



## FVI Statistics

|                                |                             |                            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Advocacy: 738                  | Financial: 65               | Information/Referrals: 601 |
| Childcare: 18                  | Follow-up: 1,593            | Outreach: 975              |
| Cultural Ceremonies: 10        | Group Counselling: 1        | Transportation: 346        |
| Family Court: 6                | Case Conferencing: 237      | Other: 103                 |
| Family Violence Education: 818 | Individual Counselling: 786 |                            |

## Crisis Line Stats

| Crisis Line Stats               | YEAR: 2023-24 |     |      |      |      |      |        |      |       |       |       |      |       |        |       |  |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|------|------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|-------|--|
|                                 | Apr           | May | June | July | Aug  | Sept | Mid yr | Oct  | Nov   | Dec   | Jan   | Feb  | Mar   | Mid Yr | Total |  |
| CLIENTS SERVED                  |               |     |      |      |      |      |        |      |       |       |       |      |       |        |       |  |
| #Crisis Line contacts           | 50            | 58  | 17   | 42   | 50   | 37   | 254    | 41   | 44    | 57    | 62    | 31   | 19    | 254    | 508   |  |
| #hours crisis line contacts (h) | 7.6           | 13  | 3.5  | 8.08 | 9.48 | 3.26 | 44.92  | 9.42 | 12.74 | 14.67 | 12.32 | 5.45 | 11.31 | 65.91  | 110.8 |  |
| #female contacts                | 24            | 19  | 5    | 29   | 13   | 26   | 116    | 19   | 26    | 7     | 48    | 22   | 15    | 137    | 253   |  |
| # male contacts                 | 26            | 39  | 12   | 13   | 37   | 11   | 138    | 22   | 118   | 50    | 14    | 9    | 4     | 217    | 355   |  |

| Crisis Line Client Needs Stats |     |     |      |      |     |      |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |       |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|-------|
| Month                          | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Mid yr | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Mid Yr | Total |
| Emotional Support              | 15  | 26  | 10   | 14   | 20  | 9    | 94     | 12  | 19  | 18  | 27  | 9   | 15  | 100    | 194   |
| Awareness Personal Safety      | 5   | 13  | 0    | 5    | 5   | 2    | 30     | 4   | 2   | 7   | 6   | 4   | 0   | 23     | 53    |
| Suicide Intervention           | 2   | 3   | 1    | 3    | 3   | 5    | 17     | 6   | 3   | 4   | 4   | 2   | 0   | 19     | 36    |
| Knowledge re:resources         | 5   | 11  | 2    | 8    | 5   | 6    | 37     | 4   | 8   | 8   | 5   | 5   | 2   | 32     | 69    |
| Referral re:resources          | 6   | 4   | 1    | 6    | 7   | 4    | 28     | 5   | 3   | 7   | 3   | 3   | 0   | 21     | 49    |
| Supportive: Action Plan        | 7   | 6   | 2    | 7    | 3   | 5    | 30     | 6   | 2   | 9   | 5   | 5   | 0   | 27     | 57    |
| Assistance with shelter        | 5   | 3   | 1    | 2    | 5   | 6    | 22     | 3   | 5   | 2   | 6   | 3   | 2   | 21     | 43    |
| Assistance with sexual assa    | 5   | 2   | 0    | 2    | 2   | 0    | 11     | 1   | 4   | 2   | 5   | 0   | 0   | 12     | 23    |

| Crisis Line Client Referrals Stats |     |     |      |      |     |      |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |       |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|-------|
| Month                              | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Mid yr | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Mid Yr | Total |
| Crisis Line/Neoss services         | 11  | 14  | 5    | 10   | 6   | 10   | 56     | 10  | 7   | 12  | 18  | 8   | 11  | 66     | 122   |
| Social Services                    | 2   | 1   | 0    | 3    | 2   | 3    | 11     | 2   | 2   | 6   | 2   | 2   | 0   | 14     | 25    |
| Mental Health & Addictions         | 3   | 5   | 3    | 3    | 4   | 4    | 22     | 4   | 4   | 8   | 11  | 5   | 2   | 34     | 56    |
| Shelter                            | 2   | 4   | 1    | 2    | 1   | 1    | 11     | 1   | 0   | 6   | 1   | 3   | 2   | 13     | 24    |
| Salvation Army                     | 1   | 12  | 0    | 0    | 1   | 1    | 15     | 2   | 0   | 3   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 5      | 20    |
| Gender & Sexual Diversity          | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0   | 0    | 0      | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0      | 0     |
| Hospital/Medical/Health Lin        | 2   | 5   | 1    | 2    | 3   | 2    | 15     | 3   | 2   | 5   | 5   | 3   | 2   | 20     | 35    |
| Lawyer/Legal Aide                  | 0   | 3   | 0    | 0    | 2   | 0    | 5      | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1   | 3   | 5      | 10    |
| Family/Friends                     | 4   | 5   | 1    | 1    | 5   | 2    | 18     | 4   | 0   | 7   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 20     | 38    |
| Food Bank                          | 2   | 1   | 0    | 0    | 4   | 0    | 7      | 2   | 0   | 3   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 6      | 13    |
| Band Office/Elders                 | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0    | 1   | 0    | 1      | 0   | 0   | 0   | 2   | 1   | 1   | 4      | 5     |
| RCMP/Victim Services               | 3   | 5   | 2    | 2    | 2   | 1    | 15     | 3   | 2   | 4   | 3   | 0   | 2   | 14     | 29    |
| Other: Specify                     | 7   | 6   | 2    | 3    | 2   | 5    | 25     | 6   | 2   | 8   | 9   | 7   | 4   | 36     | 61    |



## Nipawin Family Intervention Rapid Support Team (FIRST)

The Family Intervention Rapid Support Team (FIRST) has been a successful addition to the NEOSS team.

### Program Description

FIRST staff focus on providing intensive preventative and support services that intervene earlier in order to lower the risk factors and risk of violence for families before a crisis incident occurs.

FIRST is composed of 2 F/T Family Intervention Advocates and 1 P/T Outreach Manager.

Team members foster individual relationships and provide the North East Region communities with the skills, knowledge, resources and support to survivors of domestic violence and sexualized violence. Staff primarily use in-person services, but also use phone services. Continued engagement for at-risk youth families can be challenging, and the team has been creative in planning and implementing various approaches.



### Outcomes

We have built therapeutic relationships with the people we serve. This allowed for outcomes that include:

- safety planning,
- increased client knowledge on abuse and violence,
- enhanced client coping skills,
- advocacy support,
- emotional support and encouragement.

### Professional Development

The FIRST Department continues to expand our professional skills to meet the high needs of the diverse population being served by attending various training such as *Motivational Interviewing*, *First Responder to Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse* facilitator training (FRT), which provided the team the ability to train all NEOSS staff. The FIRST team has also taken training in *Trauma Informed Care*, and *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)* training and facilitator training. The skills gained have been instrumental in the services provided by the team and they will continue to implement all new knowledge into the programming.

## Pro-Active Community Engagement

FIRST program and community engagement is crucial in maintaining utilization of services. Because of this observation, the team has taken an assertive approach in advertising services, increased awareness, and ensuring service provider relationships are a priority. Regular social media engagement and advertising in a variety of mediums is crucial in providing communities current information to access services.

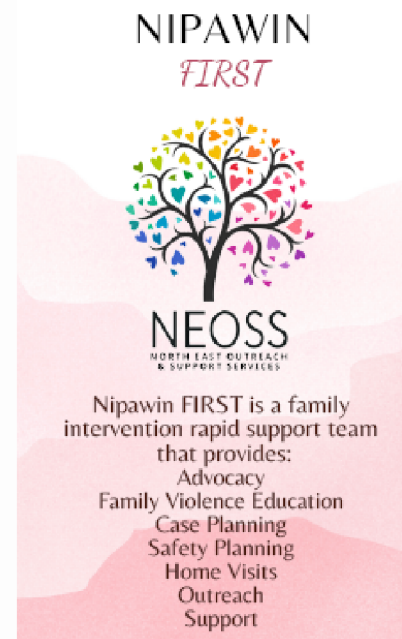
The FIRST team attended or presented various community involvement activities including:

- *Lions Trade Show* where we engaged with over 200 community members.
- The FIRST team had *Kids Club* weekly during the school year that averaged 10 children/week.
- *Teen Tuesday* took place bi-weekly that also averaged engagement with 10 youth/week.
- Community Women's event with 70 women in attendance.
- monthly meetings with the Nipawin provider team to collaborate with members of the health authority about community health initiatives.
- biweekly meetings with the HUB in Nipawin.
- Throughout the summer the team hosted summer day camps for youth age 12-18, each day camp week hosted 10 youth and provided education around topics listed previously.
- FIRST organized a walk for domestic violence awareness in October followed with refreshments.
- presentations on healthy relationships, coping skills, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, social media and community safety, and managing anxiety and depression. These presentations are primarily given to students between grades 4-12.

## Partnerships and Alliances

Partnerships with Addictions and Mental Health, Cumberland College, RCMP, Health Care Providers, Housing Authorities, Oasis Centre, Nipawin Harm Reduction, the Ministry of Social Services, Nipawin Family Resource Center, Victim Services, Kids First, local schools, Nipawin Hawks, Salvation Army, and the Food Bank have been helpful in service delivery through client referrals.

Along with the Outreach team, FIRST also holds strong partnerships with SASS, PATHS, and STOPS to Violence on a provincial level. This aids in connection with provincial service providers to create growth and updated best practices.



**Nipawin FIRST is on TikTok**

The FIRST team aids the Outreach Department to be successful at reaching identified goals and objectives. There is a side to this work that is often overlooked at times that include the emotional, mental and compassion fatigue faced by the people working in this field. Burnout is very real. Having to provide a variety of services that include counselling, advocacy, programming, awareness, promotions, education, group counselling, support work, and having to overcome hurdles, is a huge balancing act. We have had to take the appropriate steps to manage staff burnout which has been reflected in our utilization.

FIRST has successfully carried an average of 63 individual caseloads and 24 family caseloads on a monthly basis. The FIRST team provided 21,655 services throughout the year which is an increase from 15,854 in the previous year. FIRST has been welcomed into the community of Nipawin and we are consistently seeing increases in the number of referrals and engagement.

Becoming a new Manager in January has been a learning experience. Going forward my goal is to have transparency with the FIRST staff involving all important information such as our budgets, strategic planning, and policy making. To avoid any confusion around the budget and where our funds are spent, we will have a tracking system so everything is recorded. The team will have access to budgets, knowing the balances, and where the funds have been spent.

The FIRST program had a surplus of funds this year because the team did not have accurate, transparent knowledge of the budget, to be able to spend accordingly. FIRST was operating on the safe side, and was spending very little to avoid going over budget. However, one of the things that came out of this when we were made aware of our surplus was a trip for the youth. FIRST organized a charter bus and had Rush tickets donated to take the youth from Teen Tuesday on the bus to Saskatoon for supper and then to the Rush game. This is something that these youth would typically never experience.



All youth were grateful and enjoyed the day immensely. Having the ability to do a trip with this group of teens we were then able to work on communication skills, how to be safe in an urban centre, relationships and team building in a positive environment.

We would love to thank our funders and board members for your ongoing support of what we do, without any of you none of what we do to support vulnerable people would be possible. We look forward to continuing to provide consistent services and are happy to report that utilization of services is high and consistent. In the coming year FIRST is excited to continue running programming both in schools and in house for women's support groups and teens. Outreach and FIRST will also work together in the next year to attend tradeshow within the communities of the Northeast. Following is a brief update of our stats for this period.

#### FIRST Statistics

|                                  |                               |                              |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Advocacy: 3,571                  | Financial: 28                 | Information/Referrals: 1,597 |
| Childcare: 20                    | Follow-up: 3,116              | Outreach: 3,338              |
| Cultural Ceremonies: 5           | Group Counselling: 232        | Transportation: 434          |
| Family Court: 1,774              | Case Conferencing: 703        | Other: 745                   |
| Family Violence Education: 3,597 | Individual Counselling: 1,798 |                              |



## Melfort Youth Evolution (MYE)

### Program Description

MYE is built of youth leaders who plan and execute fun activities and deliver programming for their peers. This group is for youth in Grade 7 and beyond and is open to all genders and walks of life. Currently there are between 4 and 10 youth that attend on a regular basis. Average around 6 or 7 kids per week. This group works on skills such as; emotional regulation, coping skills, communication skills, and healthy relationships and so much more by planning and executing fun activities and workshops for their peers.

In 2017 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Melfort reached out to Melfort organizations to begin collaborative strategies to create better outcomes for the youth of Melfort. Community consultations commenced with the youth, youth-serving organizations, and family members with an intentional focus to engage youth in Melfort on both identity and community wellness.

Over the course of these years, BBBS of Melfort invited youth of the community to engage with the City of Melfort, North East Outreach and Support Services (NEOSS), Marguerite Riel Centre, Lakeland District for Sports, Culture and Recreation, RCMP, Students Commission of Canada, Saskatchewan Prevention Institute and the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth to the community meetings that they hosted.

As a result, these youth were inspired and empowered to form the *Melfort Youth Evolution*, a new youth initiative. Melfort Youth Evolution is a Council for youth by youth. They have called upon adult-allies to champion and oversee the formation of the Council and help with the structure and sustainability framework. The core group of youth recruits other dedicated youth in Melfort to become involved as active Council members or by inviting them to participate in organized events and programs for youth. This has allowed youth in Melfort to strengthen interpersonal values, appreciate and explore cultural diversity, enhance peer relations, build on communication skills and leadership skills, build self-esteem and strengthen self-confidence. Having a Youth Council has helped the youth to learn about community services, volunteering, and to help develop a sense of pride in their community and in turn, help in making Melfort a safer, more positive and nurturing environment for everyone.

NEOSS has been at the table from the start and through the process of determining the best way to serve the youth from a mentoring lens. It was decided that it is in the best interest of the youth of Melfort that Youth Evolution remains a locally-led and managed Council.



## Melfort Youth Evolution (MYE)

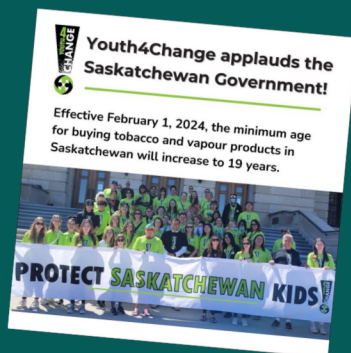
Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Carswell, Youth Coordinator



Melfort Youth Evolution had an incredibly busy and highly productive year! Here's a recap.

### MYE HIVE

April 2023 saw the continuation of our very successful "the mye hive" program, funded by Communities Initiative Fund (CIF). There were 63 participants, aged 10-19, joining in-person and/or virtually during this grant cycle. Youth engaged in activities focused on setting healthy boundaries, learning about respect in relationships, active living through swimming, a self-care checkup, practicing empathy, enjoying "unplugged" walks, consent, understanding digital safety, exploring music and painting, attending mental health wellness sessions, yoga, and much more each week.



In May, six of the MYE youth advocated at the provincial level on the steps of the Legislative Building in Regina for youth health issues through *Youth4Change* (a collaboration of Lung Saskatchewan, The Students Commission of Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation), with other youth advocates from across the province.

Their efforts have led to tangible change, such as the recent passing of legislation to raise the legal age for purchasing vaping and tobacco products in Saskatchewan from 18 to 19 (MYE youth personally lobbied for this change), making improvements in youth health outcomes at a broader scale. Through this advocacy, they were able to personally meet many MLA's (one youth got to meet directly with Premier Moe) and make many valuable connections across our province. This opportunity allowed them to represent our community at a provincial level in a very positive light.

In June, we bid farewell to two of our graduating members who left our community to pursue higher education. Additionally, our youth took the initiative to organize and carry out their 2nd Annual Pride Walk. Gathering at NEOSS, they invited our community to craft posters and walk alongside them. Approximately 30 individuals walked down Main Street, along Saskatchewan Drive, and returned. The youth were again delighted by the community's support, as evidenced by the honking and waving from passing vehicles. We facilitated a community art project on Indigenous Peoples Day where we asked our community to help us create two beaded wind chimes – one to be gifted to City Hall, and the other to James Smith Cree Nation.



During the summer, MYE youth strategized fun activities for their peers in grade 7 and beyond, funded by the city's Sask Lotteries Grant. Their debut event coincided with the wrap up of "the mye hive" CIF grant. They purchased a generous amount of NERF guns and supply of ammunition using the lottery grant funding and held a "NERF gun battle" night at the KVC as a wrap up celebration. Additionally, were asked to do glitter tattoos at Canada Day, and they contributed again to the Back Alley Tour in July by making and giving away Sno-Kones - which was very much appreciated on such a hot day.

They were also successful in receiving a \$5000 YES (Youth Endowment Saskatoon) grant from the Saskatoon Community Foundation to create "high school survival kits" to be dispersed across the north east to those youth changing schools or entering into high school. These kits were chockful of resources like coping cards that the youth created, journals, notebooks, pens, gum, fidgets, lanyards, and many informational materials from agencies like the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Saskatchewan Prevention Institute and The Students Commission of Canada to name a few.



Fall was a busy time with dispersing our survival kits. We traveled to James Smith Cree Nation for their powwow the first weekend in September. This was a first for many of the youth, and several noted how they “really felt a sense of community” at the event. We also recruited 2 new members. Currently the number of active members of MYE remains stable at 10-12 youth.

September was also their “2nd Annual Community Clothing Swap” held at the Legion Hall. Residual clothing was shared with the shelter and also with The Salvation Army. The youth would like to continue this event annually as they felt it was something that our community needs. We also wrapped up our “the mye hive” CIF grant program with a NERF gun (purchased with the SK Lotteries grant funding) and pizza party at the KVC. On Orange Shirt Day, we participated in the Round Dance at MUCC and were able to gift the beaded wind chime community art project to representatives from JS. We returned – via a limousine! to the Legislature in November to witness the first, second and third of Royal Ascension readings of Bill No.147, making the purchase of tobacco and vaping products in Saskatchewan illegal to anyone under the age of 19. On the 11th, the youth were again honored to represent at the Melfort Legion’s Remembrance Day service by laying a wreath.

In December was their Melfort Elks’ Annual Children’s Bingo canteen fundraiser. They raised a few dollars for their “fun money” account and enjoyed snacking on the leftover treats for weeks after. They were also involved again with the Tim Horton’s Christmas Smile Cookie Campaign by decorating the cookies twice during that week.

#### MYE #HANGOUTS. MYE Space and KEEP IT 100

Our current CIF grant kicked off in January. Their MYE #HANGOUTS program builds on the achievements of the former “the mye hive”, MYE Space and KEEP IT 100 initiatives, offering a successful healthy teen relationships program to youth aged 10 to 19 in an engaging and enjoyable format. Through this CIF grant participants enjoyed evenings with fun activities and games that focussed on such topics as self-care, self-love, body neutrality, empathy, communication, self-discovery, healthy and safe relationships, dealing with rejection and disappointment, social skills, canceling toxic relationships, and coping strategies. A special guest shared their experiences of growing up in the Philippines and spoke about their culture and shared some Filipino cuisine.

The youth made use of the remaining Sask Lotteries Grant funding to organize a macramé workshop and pizza night. They have reapplied for the SK Lotteries grant for the upcoming year.

We were approached by the Melfort Arts Council to collaborate with them alongside Youth Matters Canada in their plan to approach the City of Melfort to convert the historic Post Office into a thriving community arts centre. One of our youth was able to attend the city council meeting to assist with the presentation. City council is quite receptive to the plan and talks are underway for this project to become a reality.

We were honored to be nominated for the Community Involvement (Non-profit) Award at the Mel-Bex that we attended in February. We were especially proud when one of our youth, Josey Hovdestad, was presented Junior Citizen of the Year for 2024.

We were asked by Melfort & District Curling Club to participate in “Curling Day in Canada” with glitter tattoos for the children. The youth thoroughly enjoyed the day of showcasing Melfort to our country.

With our provincial budget 24-25 issued in March, another recommendation of the Youth4Change came to fruition – all retailers of tobacco and vaping products will now be required to have a licence in the province. This was another of the recommendations that MYE lobbied on personally.

With the support of grant funding and generous donations, our programming has benefited approximately 140 children and youth in the last year. I am thankful for the ongoing opportunity to support, advocate for, and collaborate with these young individuals.





# Treehouse Manager's Report

## Areas of Responsibility

Emergency Children's Receiving Home (Ages 0-11)

Respectfully Submitted by

Gayla Dickson - Treehouse Manager

## Program Description

Treehouse is a 30-day 5-bed Emergency Receiving Home with room for up to 12 beds. We provide the day-to-day care of children that have been apprehended by the Ministry of Social Services until such time as the children can be moved to a long-term care home or returned to their parent/s.

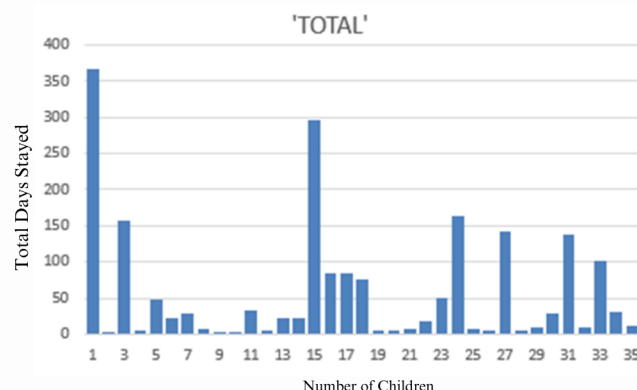
We have ten (10) Full-time employees and approximately six (6) Casual employees. Currently, staff are required to have First Aid and CPR, a Criminal/Vulnerable Person's check and a valid driver's license to be hired. Once employed by Treehouse, staff are trained in the following:

- On The Job Training – 3-day shifts and 2-night shifts of observation (recently increased from 2 and 1)
- Back to Basics – training that supports workers and teaches them the importance of service delivery through a trauma lens. Staff learn how to approach situations through understanding where the behaviors are coming from.
- Trauma Informed Care – staff learn how to identify trauma responses and recognize generational trauma. “Trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also the imprint left by that experience on the mind, body and brain.” – Bessel van der Kolk
- ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training – provides skills for staff to help someone that may be having suicidal thoughts and possibly create a safety plan depending on their age and ability.
- FRT – First Responder To Sexual Abuse Disclosure – teaches staff how to respond to disclosures of sexual abuse from residents and what to do both legally and empathetically.
- Play and Exploration – gives staff information on age-based learning and how to incorporate challenges to develop skills for our residents.
- Duty to Report - staff are trained in how to recognize situations that require reporting to superiors and the Ministry of Social Services.

When a child is placed at Treehouse, we stabilize and assess their needs. We get their medical assessments from family doctors, optometrists, dentists and, if needed, speech and language therapists. Daily programming is created to address their physical and social development and if they are of school age, they are enrolled in our local Elementary School.

As an Emergency Receiving Home, it can be difficult to arrange for services for children that are meant to only stay for up to 30 days, however, staff plan for long term goals and when a child gets discharged, that plan goes with them. The following chart reflects the 2023-2024 numbers for Treehouse.

*From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, there were 35 children admitted to Treehouse. The average stay was 57 days. The shortest stay was 3 days, and the longest stay was 366 days.*



### Our Treehouse Mission

The mission of the Treehouse residential program is to provide a safe and caring environment where each child's social, emotional, cultural, and developmental needs are met through quality programming.

A new agenda is created weekly that incorporates teachings that include the core needs of the children as well as fundamental skills like healthy boundaries, clear communication and sharing/ caring for our friends.

Staff focus on cultural awareness of a variety of countries, states, and provinces. Children get to experience the cuisine and even learn a couple of words from different languages.

Staff work with the children developing their self-awareness and awareness of the environment around them.

Through play, they can encourage children to ask questions, experience new things, overcome fears of the unknown and grow to be well rounded individuals.

### The Playroom



The majority of the toys are donated either from the community or the workers themselves. Staff encourage free play and get down on the floor with the children to observe and interact with them.

### SENSORY WEEK



Children learn how they can identify objects through smell and taste.

### The Hall



One of our staff is very artistic and uses her talents to enhance the surroundings of the home so that the children can use their imaginations! Some of our previous children also used their talents to paint murals on the walls.

### The Kitchen



The children spend a lot of time in the kitchen with our staff and our cook. An entire wall mural was painted by a previous staff member, and we still enjoy the scene today. Characters from popular learning programs are used to decorate the walls and the children enjoy talking about the lessons learned through the programs they enjoy.

**PIZZA  
TIME**



## Community Involvement

Children attended the MMIW walk, a local football team practice, and reading time at the library. Every day the children are taken outside to local events and gatherings.



It is our job to ensure the safety and development of the children, but it is our desire to make Treehouse a home that hopefully makes the difference in their lives.

Play  
time

## Indoor/Outdoor Activities



The children enjoy time doing crafts indoors and playing outside with staff.

# Shelter Manager's Report

## Areas of Responsibility

Women's Emergency Shelter    Second Stage Housing

Respectfully Submitted by  
Tawni Teiber, Shelter Manager

The NEOSS Safe Shelter continues its vital mission of providing a secure and supportive emergency shelter for women and their accompanying children who are seeking refuge from domestic violence. Women have access to a dedicated staff member around the clock for emotional support and crisis intervention during their residency. The shelter's personnel offer a spectrum of services to clients, including emotional support, referrals to pertinent resources within the community, parenting guidance, life skills development, financial literacy education, and assistance with safety planning.

Clients have actively engaged in on-site programs facilitated by shelter staff, the Outreach department, and the esteemed Marguerite Riel Centre in the local area. These programs encompass in-person educational sessions on domestic violence, collaborative group cooking activities, creative beading workshops, and informative parenting classes. This comprehensive approach not only equips clients with essential skills and knowledge but also nurtures a sense of solidarity and support within the community. The emphasis on a holistic approach underscores the commitment to addressing various facets of clients' well-being.

The ongoing provision of these critical services and programs plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals who have endured domestic violence, offering them a pathway to healing and empowerment. The dedication to this important work is commendable, and the impact on the lives of those served is undoubtedly profound.

Over the course of its operations, the NEOSS Safe Shelter has recognized a growing imperative to augment its staffing by introducing a second shelter staff member. This necessity has become increasingly apparent due to the shelter's consistently high occupancy rates, the escalating number of clients with complex needs, and the rising influx of clients grappling with co-occurring issues. These co-occurring issues are prevalent among our clients and their children, manifesting as unaddressed mental health challenges, developmental disabilities, substance abuse concerns, and severe physical injuries stemming from experiences of violence.



Throughout their residence at the shelter, clients benefit from access to essential amenities such as food, clothing, toiletries, over-the-counter medications, linens, and private bedrooms. Additionally, clients can rely on shelter staff for assistance with various tasks, including navigating housing and funding applications, completing tax returns, and obtaining copies of identification. Educational materials pertaining to domestic violence and safety planning are made available to clients and thoroughly discussed with them to ensure their well-being and preparedness.

This is the soft intake. Shelter clients are able to use the computer and phone in this room.



The shelter's personnel remain steadfast in their pursuit of mandatory training requirements. New staff members undergo essential training via online platforms, encompassing modules such as ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment), Human Trafficking Awareness, Mental Health First Aid, and WHMIS. Furthermore, new hires are familiarized with NEOSS Policies & Procedures, the Crisis Line Training manual, and documentation protocols as part of their comprehensive on-site training regimen. Staff members diligently maintain their First Aid and CPR certifications as necessitated during this period.

In recognition of the importance of continual professional development, many staff members are actively seeking enrollment in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) programs. However, due to high demand and the exclusive in-person nature of this training, several staff members find themselves on waitlists awaiting the opportunity to participate in this invaluable program.



One of the seven suites that we have for women and children. Two suites have adjoining doors so that we may accommodate large families that access our services.



The NEOSS Safe Shelter has 3 full bathrooms and 1 bathroom that is handicapped equipped.

**Staffing:**

Shelter Manager - Tawni Teiber

Early Years Worker - Meagan Poch

Shelter Worker Full Time - Brooke-Lynn March, Maureen

Taylor, Katelyn Poch, Laura Heavin, Alicia Donaldson

Shelter Worker Casual - Myriam Fortier, Jessica Matisz, Anna

Cram, Shantelle Ouellett, Casey Dawson, Christine Spizawka,

Stephanie Lai, Katherine O'Callaghan

Financial/HR Assistant - Amanda Danderfer

Administrative Assistant - Shelley Robertson



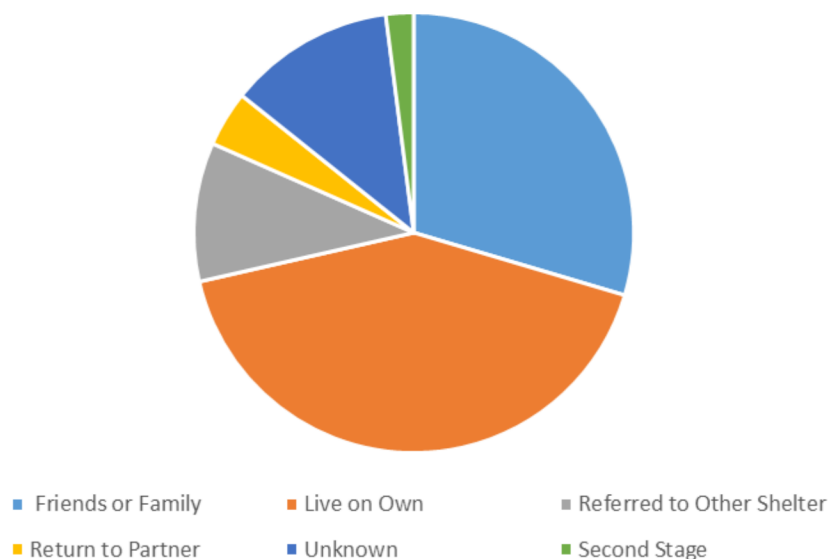
During the period April 1, 2023 – June 1, 2023, the percentage of bed nights occupied was 64%. From June 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 the percentage of bed nights occupied was 76%. The entirety of the reporting period saw a percentage of bed nights occupied of 82%. This reporting period the NEOSS Safe Shelter had 104 women and 92 children stay with us for emergency shelter. The average length of stay is 18.8 days and this is a decrease of half a day from the previous year. This year 29% of the women that stayed with us this period had previous stays in our shelter.



The women who stay with NEOSS can cook for themselves, their children, and other clients in the state of the art kitchen. Down time sees clients in the living room watching television.

Approximately 29% of the clients departed the shelter to live with Friends and Family, 41% secured their own housing and went to live on their own, 10% were referred to another shelter, 4% returned to their partner, 2% went to live in second stage housing, and 12% were unknown or left blank on the Woman's Shelter Information System (WSIS). There were a few individuals and families that left the shelter and went to an addictions treatment program that are counted in the 12% that had unknown departure plans as the staff were unaware as to what to categorize them under on WSIS.

Outcome After Departure from Shelter



| Monthly Stats | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. |
|---------------|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| # Women       | 8    | 8   | 16   | 8    | 6    | 11    | 5    | 6    | 9    | 16   | 5    | 6    |
| # Children    | 8    | 11  | 9    | 9    | 6    | 12    | 2    | 7    | 10   | 10   | 4    | 10   |
| Stay          | 20   | 19  | 14.5 | 30   | 21   | 17    | 17   | 14   | 17   | 18.5 | 21   | 17   |

The total number of women and children at the end of the year may not match the total count record in the month to month chart. This difference can happen because some clients stays cross over months, so they can be counted in both months. Throughout the past year the staff at NEOSS Safe Shelter supported the 104 women and 92 children by providing a safe home, food, clothing, toiletries, supportive listening, referrals, recommendations, and crisis intervention with an average stay of 18.8 days. This is an increase from the previous 22-23 year of 91 women and 92 children with an average stay of 19.5 days

### NEOSS's Store of Giving

Our store offers a heartwarming space for clients to carefully select the perfect birthday or Christmas gifts for their children. Additionally, children are joyfully welcomed to this room to discover presents for special occasions like Mother's Day, sibling or Mother's birthdays, and Christmas. This space also allows children to attend birthday parties for their classmates, creating memorable moments and fostering a sense of community. We take pride in providing a nurturing environment where families can get presents to celebrate their teachers. Families also have the opportunity to have baby showers for other clients and pick gifts for the new moms. This store creates cherished and positive experiences within NEOSS.



### Donation Room

Many clients arrive at the shelter with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Thanks to our community and their amazing clothing donations, our clients are able to gather much needed clothing and outdoor gear that they need for themselves and their children.





# Second Stage Housing Report

## Areas of Responsibility

Housing Referrals and Second Stage Housing

Respectfully Submitted by

Tawni Teiber - Shelter Manager/ Rick Nordstrom Building Manager

Second-stage housing for interpersonal violence survivors is a critical resource that offers a safe and supportive environment for individuals and families seeking to rebuild their lives after experiencing abuse. This type of housing provides longer-term accommodation compared to emergency shelters, allowing residents to continue their journey towards healing and independence.



Second-stage housing facilities is fully furnished to create a comfortable and welcoming living space for clients. Furnishings includes two or four bedrooms with beds and storage, living areas with seating and entertainment options, dining areas, fully equipped kitchens, and bathrooms. These facilities aim to provide a sense of normalcy and stability for survivors as they work to overcome the trauma of interpersonal violence and move towards a brighter future.

In addition to offering a secure and peaceful living environment, second-stage housing provides a range of support services tailored to the needs of survivors. These services may include counseling, case management, safety planning, life skills training, childcare assistance, legal advocacy, and connections to community resources. By combining safe housing with comprehensive support, second-stage housing programs empower survivors to regain control of their lives and pursue a life free from violence.

Overall, second-stage housing is referrals from Outreach and Domestic Violence Shelter plays a crucial role in the continuum of care for survivors, offering a holistic approach to recovery and empowerment. By providing a stable and nurturing environment along with essential support services, these facilities help survivors transition from crisis to independence, healing, and hope.

Throughout the reporting period from April 2023 to March 2024, our second stage housing facility provided shelter to a total of 7 adults. In addition, we had the privilege of accommodating 16 children over the year, ensuring a safe environment for them during a crucial time of transition. As the year came to a close, our facility continued to serve the community, with 5 children and 3 adults residing in the housing. These numbers reflect our ongoing commitment to support individuals and families in need, providing them not just with safe housing but with stability and care as they prepare for the next steps in their journey.

| Month           | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. |
|-----------------|------|-----|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| # Women         | 9    | 5   | 9    | 9    | 8    | 8     | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    | 5    |
| # Children      | 4    | 3   | 4    | 4    | 3    | 3     | 3    | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| Occupancy Level | 100  | 75  | 83   | 96   | 75   | 53    | 44   | 50   | 75   | 75   | 75   | 75   |



# Executive Director's Report

## Areas of Responsibility

Oversight of all NEOSS Operations

Respectfully Submitted by

Joan Bear - Executive Director

2023 had NEOSS contract the services of Wayne Hellquist and Haley Kennedy as the Interim Executive Directors while the Board commenced their search for a new full time person. Post covid there were significant changes in leadership for NEOSS. Joan Bear was hired November 27, 2023 and commenced operational stabilization under the direction of the Board of Directors.



Meetings were held with the Board and Staff and plans were laid to give the organization a fresh look and rebranded a new image in the Region. Next was to reach out to the local agencies and services providers to pool resources and form relationships through an inter-agency gathering in February. Policy was reviewed in depth by leadership, legal counsel and the board to update our guidelines with current legislation.

For stability, the organization needed fresh managers and those were hired from within as young recruits with organizational history filled the vacancies and will be mentored in the paths of leadership. Training was implemented for budgeting and work plans for the coming year.

Navigating the financial waters would be important. NEOSS contracted MNP EASE to assist with bookkeeping services as a transition was made from Sage 50 Accounting Software to XERO. Payroll also saw a significant change as the outdated Payworks system was replaced with a new platform called RISE, which had an international reputation.

Changes for the better were in the making at NEOSS as a complete organizational restructuring took place in very short order. Departments operating in silos learned to work in a team environment with the sharing of resources and cooperation. Monday morning network meetings started up with group planning. The board and staff will do a new strategic plan in the coming months. With all the changes for staffing, the direction from the board will include staff input as new Board members will also join the organization in the coming months. Together a new direction will be mapped out.

The next 40 years for NEOSS looks very bright.







# Funder Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge our Funders



**We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person, and business who has donated to NEOSS this past year, and beyond! With out your generosity, we would not be able to assist our clients, and children as we do. From the bottom of our hearts...Thank You!**





# NEOSS

**NORTH EAST OUTREACH  
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North East Outreach & Support Services



**[northeastoutreach1984](https://www.instagram.com/northeastoutreach1984)**

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Shelter Fax 306-752-6539