



Annual Report 2017-2018



April 9, 2018

Dear Anderson house,
No one should be abused by anyone.
Everyone should have freedom.
Everyone should be treated with care.
Abuse is very wrong.
No one should abuse anyone.

I think what you are doing is
fantastic. Keep doing what you are
doing. Keep people safe.

Since you are so fantastic, we
want to be fantastic by donating
to you.

Sincerely

Gr. 6 Somerset, Kinkora

Notable Moments from 2017-2018



Luna Loves Anderson House fundraising fashion show at the Confederation Court Mall



Video premiere for Sharing the Microphone by Kinley Dowling



FVPS staff summer get together and scavenger hunt



Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Campaign – proceeds to FVPS Endowment Fund



Ongoing clothing donations from Maurices



Winner of the WestJet trip at the 6th Annual Sweetheart Dinner



Clothing giveaway Summerside in partnership with the Free Store



Proclamation of Family Violence Prevention Week in Charlottetown



Reception at city hall following the Annual Walk in Silence



Mother's Day gifts from the Body Shop



Donation from UPSE

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.
37th Annual Report
2017-18

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PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.
37th Annual General Meeting
2017-18

AGENDA

Date: June 27th, 2018

Location: Farm Center, 420 University Ave, Charlottetown, PE

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

- Agenda:**
1. Approval of the Agenda
 2. Minutes of the 36th Annual Meeting of PEI FVPS
 3. Financial Statement
 4. Motion to Approve the 2017-18 Audited Statement
 5. Motion to Appoint Auditor
 6. Election of Directors
 - Break
 7. Report from the Board Chair and Executive Director
 8. Bylaw Amendment
 9. Roundtable Discussion
 10. Other Business
 11. Adjournment

PEI FVPS Inc. – 36th Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, June 21, 2017– 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Camp Gencheff, Stratford, PE

Present: Lee Anne Farrar, Lisa Kelly, Gwyn Davies, Bill MacLeod, Selina Pellerin, Ellen Ridgeway, Kara Katmouz, Sharon O'Brien, Kathy Bigsby, Michelle Burge, Jordan Gallant, Tina Pranger, Shauna Reddin, Michelle Buttery, Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl, Gloria Dennis, Lauren McQuaid, Shira Zipursky, Danya O'Malley (exofficial), Dara Rayner (exofficial)

Regrets: Daneen MacDonald, Cindy Banks, Jan Devine, Kim McGuigan, Maxine MacLennan

Chair: Tina Pranger

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Be it resolved that the agenda be approved as presented.

M/S: Sharon O'Brien/Kathy Bigsby

CARRIED.

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Be it resolved that the minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting held June 15, 2016 are approved as circulated.

M/S: Lee Anne Farrar/Gwyn Davies

CARRIED.

3. Financial Statements

Michelle Burge from MRSB reviewed the Statement of Financial Position, which is a snapshot of the financial position of the organization at March 31, 2017. Assets and cash are up from the previous year. Liabilities are up due to accounts payable amounts that are due to the Community Foundation and deferred revenue from projects. The organization ends the fiscal year in a strong position.

The Statement of Operations shows a deficit of \$23,150.00. Revenues are down approx. \$36,000, this is mainly in donation because of one time grant from the Provincial Government the year before. Michelle reviewed the Schedule to Financial Statements. Expenses have decreased approximately \$3000, which is helped by the lower fuel costs and are overall very consistent and shows good management of the organization.

4. Motion to Approve the 2016-17 Audited Statements

MOTION: Be it resolved that the audited financial statements are accepted as presented from MRSB Chartered Accountants for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

M/S: Shauna Reddin/Tina Pranger

CARRIED.

5. Motion to Appoint Auditor

MOTION: Be it resolved that MRSB Chartered Accountants be appointed as auditors for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

M/S: Tina Pranger/Shana Reddin

CARRIED.

6. Election of Directors

Selina Pellerin presented the report from the nomination committee. There was one nominee brought forth for election to the board: Shannis Gray. Selina called for further nominations from the floor three times. Hearing none, Selina moved that nominations cease and for the nominations to be approved. Lee Anne Farrar seconded the motion. As such, the nominee was declared a member of the board.

Board Chair Bill MacLeod, Kathy Bigsby, and Sharon O'Brien have completed 2 terms on the board of FVPS and per the bylaws are ending their terms with FVPS.

Tina Pranger and Selina Pellerin have completed their first term and both have agreed to renew for a second term.

7. Report from Board Chair and Executive Director

Danya O'Malley – Executive Director

Acknowledged that today is Aboriginal Day and noted the absence of Phil Matusiewicz.

Spoke of changes on staff and the changes in collaborating services with other agencies, as well as Bridge.

We have started an endowment fund called the Building Brighter Futures Campaign.

Bill spoke about the endowment fund and expressed his thanks to Phil for his guidance of FVPS and is pleased that Danya was selected to be the new ED. She brings an energy and experience to the organization that is much appreciated.

8. Roundtable Discussion

A discussion was held between the FVPS Board and staff regarding strategic priorities. Tina underlined the purpose of the discussion which is to update our members on the work of the Board with respect to strategic planning. There are some important questions the Board has considered: What is the role of the Board; who do we serve; what is the ideology of the organization?

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Be it resolved that the 36th annual meeting be adjourned.

M/S: Kathy Bigsby

CARRIED.

FVPS Board Member

Date

FVPS – Recording Secretary

Date

Executive Director 2017-18 Annual Reports

Danya O'Malley, Executive Director | Tina Pranger, Board Chair

We are closing out a very successful year here at PEI Family Violence Prevention Services. Over the past year a number of things strike me as noteworthy. Our organization's reach into the public sphere continues to grow in ways that can create meaningful change. I have had the privilege of speaking about or delivering training on family violence a number of times. This is especially exciting because the variety of groups that want this training is steadily increasing. Sessions on bystander intervention and the impact of trauma on adults and children can create a climate where victims of violence are believed and supported. People are feeling increasingly confident in taking a stand against family violence. We are at an interesting point in history, where never before has there been such widespread public understanding of the issue. I am pleased to be part of the conversation that compels people to act in support of victims.

The *Make It Your Business!* video series is probably the largest project I have ever been a part of. It is a public education video series that teaches viewers the valuable role that they can play when they witness an incident of family violence. This project was an example of true collaboration through the groups that sit on the City of Charlottetown's Purple Ribbon Task Force for Family Violence Prevention. What started last spring as a small idea to help foster workplace training grew into a well polished final product that was launched during Family Violence Prevention Week 2018. These videos have received a great deal of attention. Collectively the series has had over 6000 views, which is really remarkable. We hope that the videos and the training manuals are used for years to come.

I have also had the privilege of participating in a number of stakeholder consultations on a variety of topics. Interesting work is being done in many areas that affect our clients and other vulnerable groups – namely housing, poverty reduction, the mental health and addiction system, and the disability support program. The amount of media attention the housing crisis is receiving sheds some light on what has been a steadily building problem. Charlottetown currently has a vacancy rate of less than 1%. This is very troubling for our clients and staff, as the search for safe, affordable, and appropriate housing often overshadows other types of meaningful work we could be doing. Participating in activities like the Provincial Housing Action Plan Co-Development team gives me hope that things are moving in the right direction. I am very hopeful that representing the needs of our clients and women in general will help encourage a gender analysis in the solutions to these social problems.

PEI FVPS has also had a very successful year financially. We are completing the year with almost a \$35,000 surplus. A surplus is always carried forward to the following year in order to balance the budget. It is impossible to predict our project funding or donation revenue, therefore a healthy surplus helps to ease some of the uncertainty around financial sustainability. I am very happy to report that we are closing in on our \$1 Million goal for the Building Brighter Futures campaign. Last year the cover of our annual report showed our sun marker at 40% of our goal. I am happy to report that we are currently at 80% of our goal with additional revenue committed that could have us completing our goal by the fall. I offer a heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped get us there – our endowment committee, the board, and all of the donors who have contributed to the campaign.

I want to close by recognizing the efforts of my staff in ensuring that we are a responsive service to those in need. Through crisis services, outreach or housing, we are all helping to move our clients to a better place in their lives. It's work that often feels very incremental, but it's when progress is slow that it's most important to have dedicated staff that don't give up. Thank you for all that you do. Also, especially thank you to Dara, who I am fortunate to have supporting me in this role. Her competence and sense of humour make the hard days better.

Respectfully,

Danya O'Malley
Executive Director

Tina Pranger
Board Chair

Anderson House Annual Stats – 2017-18

| Admissions - Adults | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----|
| Total number of women admitted: | | 81 |
| By Age: | >18 | 0 |
| | 18-24 | 13 |
| | 25-34 | 27 |
| | 35-44 | 17 |
| | 45-54 | 14 |
| | 55-64 | 9 |
| | 65+ | 1 |
| By Marital Status: | Common Law | 21 |
| | Divorced | 2 |
| | Married | 14 |
| | Never Married | 42 |
| | Separated | 1 |
| | Widowed | 1 |
| | Unknown | |
| By Location: | West Prince | 1 |
| | East Prince | 9 |
| | Queens | 65 |
| | Eastern Kings | 4 |
| | Southern Kings | 1 |
| | Out of Province | 1 |
| | Unknown | 0 |
| Admitted with: | 1 child | 8 |
| | 2 children | 13 |
| | 3 or more children | 4 |
| Admitted for current violence/abuse | | 58 |
| Admitted for the first time to AH | | 48 |

| Admissions - Children | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|----|
| Total number of children admitted: | | | 47 |
| | Gender: | F | M |
| | | | |
| By Age: | 0-2 | 3 | 9 |
| | 3-6 | 9 | 5 |
| | 7-12 | 4 | 8 |
| | 13-16 | 8 | 1 |
| Total by Gender: | Female | | 24 |
| | Male | | 23 |
| Admitted for current violence/abuse | | | 41 |
| Admitted for the first time to AH: | | | 40 |
| | West Prince | | 0 |
| | East Prince | | 7 |
| | Queens | | 33 |
| | Eastern Kings | | 5 |
| | Southern Kings | | 2 |
| | Out of Province | | 0 |
| | Unknown | | |

Outreach Annual Stats – 2017-18

| Clients Receiving Services (count once for the year) | | | Services | | |
|---|----------------------|-----|---|-----------------|------|
| Total number of women served: | | 270 | Total number of supportive contacts: | | 3571 |
| By Age: | Youth | 5 | | Visits | 1733 |
| | 18-24 | 29 | | Calls | 1034 |
| | 25-34 | 96 | | Emails | 804 |
| | 35-44 | 71 | | | |
| | 45-54 | 43 | Contacts | | |
| | 55-64 | 17 | Average number of contacts per woman: | | 9.5 |
| | 65+ | 9 | Total number of women with... | | |
| By Marital Status: | Common Law | 37 | | 1 contact | 19 |
| | Divorced | 15 | | 2-4 contacts | 63 |
| | Married | 45 | | 5-9 contacts | 56 |
| | Never Married | 81 | | 10+ contacts | 132 |
| | Separated | 92 | Geographical Location of Client's Residence | | |
| | Widowed | 0 | Location | Number of Women | |
| | Unknown | 0 | West Prince | 42 | |
| Receiving outreach services for first time this year: | | 132 | East Prince | 56 | |
| Children | | | Queen's County | 76 | |
| Client: | Living with Children | 158 | Eastern PEI | 96 | |
| | Children in Care | 20 | Out of Province | 0 | |
| Women living with | 0 children | 0 | Unknown | 0 | |
| | 1 child | 64 | Supportive Contacts | | |
| | 2 childre | 74 | Average number of contacts per woman: | | 3.3 |
| | 3 or more... | 40 | Number of women receiving contacts | | 143 |
| | | | Total number of contacts: | | 470 |

Anderson House 2017-18 Annual Report

Dara Rayner, Manager of Operations

My role at PEI FVPS is Manager of Operations and within this role is managing Anderson House. Our clients, like in many of our allied services, have an increased level of complexity, facing a number of personal struggles and social barriers. Mainly our clients face domestic violence, childhood trauma, addiction and problematic substance use, and homelessness. Many of our clients also face mental health problems associated with living with abuse and chronic poverty. For many clients they face a number of these issues at the same time. Creating a plan to prioritize a woman's needs can often be a challenge when there is a high level of urgency to the case. We also must remember that a woman in crisis needs some time before making major decisions.

Finding appropriate housing and avoiding homelessness are becoming major obstacles in the women's lives. When a woman comes into the shelter she may be facing a loss of housing due to domestic violence. She isn't able to focus on any other issue in her life other than the need for safe, secure housing. Finding acceptable rental properties within our usual length of stay is a challenge that we deal with regularly and as such, on a case-by-case basis, we have increased our length of stay. We recognize that three weeks is no longer realistic for most clients. The onus is also on the woman to be actively working on her housing plan each day and to be able to live communally in the shelter, which is harder than it sounds. The house has 6 bedrooms with 18 beds and each family gets their own room. The remainder of the house is shared with the other residents. Living within the guidelines of the house can be challenging as we have a highly structured shelter program.

As we are so heavily focused on assisting women in finding housing and the supports that they need, we were finding that the education piece was not being covered as well as we would like. During this past year our Dalhousie Social Work Student – Melissa Munro-Bernard developed a resource for women that are leaving an abusive relationship. Each woman that comes into the shelter is given a manual on intake and the goal is to meet with each woman after they have settled into the shelter and see if they have any questions on the materials. The topics that are covered are: What is family violence (including forms of family violence, myths and the cycle of abuse); Is my relationship healthy, unhealthy or abusive; Why do women stay in abusive relationships; How experiences of family violence affect women; How experiences of family violence affect children; Common characteristics of abusive men; A woman's path to leaving an abusive relationship; After family violence: a journey to healing. We are hoping that this resource coupled with our case management process that was introduced in my 2016-17 report, will further support a woman in her healing journey.

Finally, I would like to thank each member of the Anderson House team and Outreach for their tireless commitment to the women. Our team consists of Michelle Buttery – Team Lead/Children's Services Coordinator, full time Shelter Workers: Cindy Banks, Jan Devine, Daneen MacDonald, and Kim McGuigan, part-time shelter workers: Rachel Hoogerbrugge and Beth Cruwys, and casual shelter workers: Noelle Burns, Valerie MacEachern, Rebekah Condon, Melissa Munro-Bernard and Karley McIver, Outreach Coordinators: Julia Phillips, Lee Anne Farrar, Gloria Dennis and Gwyn Davies.

Sincerely,

Dara Rayner, Manager of Operations

Program Manager 2017-2018 Annual Report

Ellen Ridgeway, Program Manager

The ASPIRE Program is now in its seventh year. ASPIRE is an individualized empowerment and strength based program for women experiencing barriers after leaving abusive relationships. ASPIRE has given support to 213 women, 15 women in the past year. The ASPIRE program supports women who live in poverty, wish to further their career or education, need supportive intervention with substance use and mental wellness issues. In addition the program helps women who need advocacy, housing, transportation, accompaniment to appointments, and/or support with the aftermath of leaving an abusive relationship.

ASPIRE offers Support Groups throughout the year. Over the year 22 psychoeducational groups were given on the topic "Building a Relationship with Myself". Much of the material that was presented originates from a manual "Seeking Safety" by Lisa Najavits. Thank you to Sandra MacNevin for your work formatting and presenting these sessions.

The ASPIRE Program gratefully acknowledges the support of Career Development Services for assisting women to further their educational and career pursuits.

Work continues with Women's Shelters Canada (WSC). The "Network" continues to develop as an organization that brings together 13 provincial and territorial shelter networks. I continue to be active on the Advisory Board and am representative for the Atlantic Region on the Board of Directors of WSC.

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services continues to hold the project for the federal government's initiative HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System), a software program from HPS-HRSDC designed to count and track homelessness in Canada. This past year data was obtained from Deacon House, a homeless men's shelter in Charlottetown.

PEI FVPS is represented on the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB). The CAB released its fifth consecutive Report on Homelessness for PEI. PEI FVPS contributes to this report by using data and analysis from HIFIS from the various shelters across PEI.

Second Stage Housing in Charlottetown is a seven unit apartment building that provides safe supportive housing and programming (ASPIRE) to women and their children. Many families come to Second Stage from Anderson House Emergency Shelter, Outreach Services, and referrals from community agencies. There were a total of 14 women and 12 children who resided at Second Stage in the past year. Our housing project SAS House assisted 11 women and 12 children. SAS House has 9 units for women and their children.

The ASPIRE Program gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS), a federal initiative from HRSDC. Through HPS funding the ASPIRE Program and ASPIRE Plus is undergoing a program evaluation with the assistance of Nishka Smith.

I would like to thank PEI FVPS Board of Directors for your interest and dedication to family violence prevention work. Also I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Danya O'Malley, ED for your ongoing support and leadership. Much appreciation goes out to our admin staff Dara Rayner, House Manager and Lindsay Merrill, Development Coordinator, for your support and proficiency in your everyday work. Thanks to all the staff and board for creating avenues and opportunities to assist women in very meaningful ways.

Respectfully,

Ellen Ridgeway, Program Manager

West Prince Outreach 2017-18 Annual Report

Julia Phillips, Outreach Coordinator

I am pleased to have been selected for the position of Outreach Coordinator for PEI Family Violence Prevention Services in the West Prince Region. I began the role officially on March 7th, 2018, and in less than a month, I have been presented with excellent opportunities to learn, be challenged, apply skills, and explore this new role.

Much of my first month with Family Violence Prevention Services has been spent settling into the Outreach position. I travelled across the region to assess the community needs, as well as discuss collaboration with various community partners. I am enthusiastic about opportunities to work alongside partners in the West Prince region. By working together, I am hopeful that we can recognize and respond to gaps that are contributing to family violence in our community.

I have been involved in two committees; The West Prince Christmas Hampers Committee and the Occupational Health and Safety Committee for the O'Leary Service Building. I have also become trained in Bridge

. I look forward to the future training opportunities, as well as representing PEI Family Violence Prevention Services on committees.

I began case management shortly after accepting the position, allowing me to apply skills from my education and previous experience. I enjoy this aspect of the role very much and I feel grateful for opportunities to be ally for survivors of family violence. I would like to acknowledge Dara Rayner, acting Outreach Coordinator during the vacancy of the position, for her time and assistance in ensuring that the transition of clients to a new case manager was carried out smoothly.

Though my time in this role has been short, I do feel it is an excellent fit for my personality and skillset. I look forward to growing under the supervision of the Executive Director, as well as learning with and from the Outreach Coordinators in East Prince, Queen's County, and King's County.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Phillips, Outreach Coordinator

East Prince Outreach 2017-18 Annual Report

Lee Anne Farrar, Outreach Coordinator

Another year has come and gone, and I am happily continuing my role as the Outreach Coordinator for the East Prince region. Last fall, the East Prince office changed locations and I have settled into the new space. As I am still relatively new to my role, I am constantly striving to improve my relationships with other resources within the area and determine new ways to collaborate. I feel strongly that strengthening these relationships brings awareness to the community of the many challenges my clients deal with in leaving a domestic violence situation.

In this past year I have worked closely with housing officials in the area. The East Prince office has collaborated with low-income housing and they have gratefully set aside one of their rental units for our clients. We officially have a tenant in the unit as of June. Housing is just one of the many issues some of my clients are faced with. This year has opened my eyes to issues surrounding income, child custody, and even broader to the experience of domestic violence for male victims. Within this past year I have received a number of referrals for men seeking support.

Last spring our organization was approached by a collaboration of nurses who had been searching for services to offer men impacted by intimate partner violence. Since meeting with these women, Julia (West Prince Outreach) and I have taken on the project of designing a support group for men affected by domestic violence. This group will consist of men who have been verbally, emotionally, or physically abused by their partners. We are hoping to begin our first group this fall. Men are often conditioned by society to hide their feelings and uphold a "tough" exterior. This often makes it difficult for men to seek out services when they are being abused. With this group, we hope to educate men on the stigmatization they may have faced and, in turn, educate the public that men have feelings too. There are no such services currently provided on the Island.

Support groups help those affected by domestic violence and therefore assist our community in providing help to end the cycle of violence- creating a safer, more secure environment for our Island. They allow us to educate our community on breaking the cycle of violence, perhaps preventing them from seeking another relationship similar to the previous one. Our groups help keep victims safe. All Islanders should be included in our anti-violence campaigns; men, women, and children. It is very important that we engage and educate our community.

Each client experience is unique, and I feel I am constantly learning from each individual I meet. I would find it challenging to do my job effectively without the rest of PEI FVPS staff. Thank you to each and every one of you for what you do on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Anne Farrar
Outreach Coordinator
East Prince Family Violence Prevention Services

Queens County Outreach 2017-18 Annual Report

Gloria Dennis, Outreach Coordinator

Queen's County Outreach Services is coming into the 22nd year of providing direct client service and community outreach. The direct client service has assisted clients by offering one-on-one support which has included: education on the impact of violence on women and children, assessment of needs, safety planning and risk assessment, and advocacy - in some situations accompaniment to appointments which can establish collaborative relationships that work well for all parties. The goal is to help women make improvements in their life by minimizing the risk of violence for themselves and their children, by having a safe place to discuss their concerns and challenges and to discuss their ideas to address some of those concerns it is helpful in moving forward. Women are referred to the Outreach Service by Anderson House, Child Protection, Victim Services, Legal services, Medical Services, Mental Health and Addictions, workplace, friends, and family members. Some women have contacted Outreach Service by searching the internet and reaching out through phone and email.

This year has proven to be especially challenging for women in the area of affordable, appropriate housing. In the Charlottetown area the vacancy rate has been at an all time low and rental is at an all time high. That combination has kept women in crisis much longer. In some situations the lack of housing has become the means for an abusive ex partner to continue his controlling ways by reporting to Child and Family Services that the children are not living in appropriate environments or by keeping children away from the woman, stating she is homeless. In those situations the women had places to stay. However, additional stressors were placed on her trying to prove she was meeting the needs of her children and sheltering them until she could find stable housing.

I was very pleased to hear that there are plans for more affordable housing units in the next year and more recently that Income Support will be offering additional help to struggling Islanders.

Community involvement has included representing Family Violence Prevention Services at the BRIDGE situation table meetings. The Bridge model brings service providers together to offer programs and support to Islanders who are at very high risk of harm occurring soon. Individual privacy and confidentiality is maintained by a strict 4 filter process where non-identifying information is shared with the table members to determine if acute risk is present. Non-identifying information includes age range and risk factors. Only after the acute risk is agreed upon will further information be disclosed, so services can determine if they have been involved with the person/s before and if they can be of assistance by offering service again. This has been a collaborative process with government and non-government agencies working together for the sake of vulnerable Islanders.

I have been part of Justice Options Steering Committee where Circles of Safety and Support was started in 2006. Circles of Safety and Support is a collaborative, facilitated safety planning process for women victims of family violence, it brings together professional and personal supports. During this past year there have been 8 requests for a Safety Circle. Not all requests went to a Safety Circle process, some requests resulted in a case conference or the woman choosing to continue using services individually instead of with a team approach. One of the challenges for Circles of Safety and Support is that there are not many available that have the Interest Based Conflict resolution and facilitator training and/or the time to coordinate and facilitate a number of Safety Circles. Justice Options is looking at ways to address some of the challenges.

Outreach was involved in a number of community events and education opportunities during the year. Once again we were invited to attend the DVA – Get Loud, an event about mental health. We were able to contribute by having a table with information and resources and speaking with individuals as they came to the table to get their passport stamped. The passport idea had people in attendance get a card to be stamped with all the

represented services. If you fill your passport with stamps showing you went to the table, your passport was entered for a prize draw. This offered an opportunity to speak with people who may walk past Family Violence Prevention table thinking this issue does not touch their life about community response to family violence, workplace response to family violence, resources and how each of us can contribute to a safer, healthier community. I spoke with approximately 200 individuals in a few short hours. It was a wonderful event and way to engage the majority of attendees.

As always I want to take a bit of space to express how honored I am to work with the women that come to us for service. Their courage, resourcefulness, strength and resilience is truly inspiring.

To the Staff of Family Violence Prevention, I thank each of you for your support, ideas and laughs throughout the year.

Thank you to Danya, Dara, Lindsay and new to us in the office Megan, as well as our hard-working dedicated board for all you do throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Dennis

Eastern PEI Outreach 2017-18 Annual Report

Gwyn Davies, Outreach Coordinator

This is the 23rd year of Outreach Service in Eastern PEI. The service has remained steady to the commitment of meeting women where they are- both physically and emotionally. Reaching out over the miles of the eastern part of the island is so important to women and their families struggling to make the hard decision to change their situation. Whether motivated by a crisis, or as a result of deliberation over time, women are challenged to move their lives out of the known chaos into the unknown. Their challenges include fear that things will not work for the better - feelings of inadequacy, or worry about a lack of competency to achieve independence. The "Where will I go, how will I do it, who will help me???" are problems I help to solve. This involves resourcing our partners in housing, income support, policing services, the justice system and anybody that can be useful. My job is to assist a woman to navigate systems that are complicated and overwhelming. Sometimes frustration, disappointment and feelings of hopelessness are a challenge to help them manage. Ongoing support is essential. Time spent explaining, advocating, and mentoring is what we need to offer. To help a woman take care of herself through a break up with an abusive partner, relocate her family, and sort out her feelings is a long journey.

There are so many heartfelt stories and amazing women that have come our way. Highlight of this year is a group I set up called Cooking for Wellness, based on my belief that food security is a problem for families with low income. Many women I meet are emotionally distressed; their levels of anxiety make coping difficult. One of the huge stressors is finances- their income is not livable. Our group meets to make a lunch to share together and another meal for the family. Lots of chopping and planning. We talk and they share experiences and learn some survival tips. Some difficult themes and some laughter. They appreciate the sharing of food and positive ideas for dealing with problems. The group is funded by Bell Let's Talk. These group times do help with emotional wellness.

Again this year the majority of system based referrals come from Housing and Child Protection. The most difficult problems arise from the course of pursuing custody and access for shared children. This adversarial system falls short of resolving the family affairs where abuse has created animosity that negates the basic tenets of collaboration. This can be a time of extreme conflict and anxiety. Our Divorce Act cannot be reformed soon enough. I wish some of my clients could be on the advisory committee!

Working with Social Workers, Victim Services and others on the front line can be rewarding. Partnerships in care to victims of violence make the difference for women lost in unknown territory. At the time they are the most depleted is the time they have to do the most to move their lives forward.

Agency meetings, information sessions and meeting with Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl offer opportunity to know more to improve services to women and their children. Thanks to Danya, the Board and Staff - all doing your part to better the lives of victims of intimate partner violence and family violence.

Respectfully,

Gwyn Davies