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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
10TH ASSEMBLY, 6TH SESSION

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Young Women's Christian Association of Canada

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October 1, 1985

Michael Ballantyne
M.L.A. Yellowknife North
Government of the N.W.T.
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
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Dear Sir:

Re: Task Force on Spousal Assault, Final Report

As you are aware, the Yellowknife Y.W.C.A. has provided assistance to hundreds of victims of spousal assault over the past few years. Knowing the urgent need for improved services in this area, we are greatly encouraged by the recommendations of the Task Force on Spousal Assault. In particular, we appreciate their emphasis on the need for provision of safe shelter, counselling, and additional support services to victims of spousal assault.

The Y.W.C.A. has developed a proposal to establish a transition house, which specifically meets the recommendations of the Task Force, including:

- . Counselling for victims and their children
- . Recognition of different cultural needs
- . Safe shelter using existing community buildings
- . Providing support programs
- . Utilizing existing community resources and expertise
- . Ensuring a mechanism for ongoing community involvement
- . Availability of regional centres for victims who may wish to leave their community even for a short time.

We endorse the recommendation that "community commitment be assessed as one of the prerequisites to setting up and staffing crisis centres." Support received from:

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- . Dene Nation
- . S.A.F.A. (Society Against Family Abuse)
- . N.W.T. Native Women's Association
- . Tree of Peace
- . Social Services, Yellowknife Area Office & Inuvik Regional Office
- . Women's Secretariat, Government of the N.W.T.
- . N.W.T. Family Counselling Services
- . City of Yellowknife

as well as many other agencies, individuals and politicians has been a positive incentive for the development of this proposal.


In keeping with the Task Force on Spousal Assault recommendation to "use existing buildings," the Y.W.C.A. has therefore initiated application to C.M.H.C. to purchase and renovate an existing duplex under their 2% mortgage Social Housing Program.

The Y.W.C.A. strongly supports the recommendation that safe shelter be available in every community, but that "regional centres be established for victims who may wish to leave...even for a short time."

As you will note from the enclosed summary of our proposal, we are applying to the Government of the N.W.T. for core funding to cover the cost of operations and maintenance. This is in keeping with the recommendations of the Task Force, which also pointed out that shelters must be "adequately and fairly funded" if they are to be effective.

We would appreciate it if you would inform your colleagues in the Legislative Assembly about this project and our response to the Task Force report.

Sincerely

for 
Catherine Timberg
President

Enclosure

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Transition House Services
Yellowknife, N.W.T.

High Demand

The Yellowknife Y.W.C.A. has been providing shelter to women experiencing spousal assault since 1966. Demand for such service has increased to an all-time high when shelter was given to 19 women and 24 children in a one month period. Over the past two years the Y.W.C.A. has provided 750 bednights to victims of spousal assault.

Cross Cultural Clientele

Approximately 33% of the women served under the Y.W.C.A. spousal assault program have been from out of town; 50% of the women who use the shelter speak English as a second language. The proposed transition house program would take these cross-cultural requirements into account and would develop resources to address these needs.

Working Group

In April of this year, a Y.W.C.A. Battered Women's Program Working Group was formed whose mandate was to "design transition house services for victims of spousal assault." The work of this Group continues.

Philosophy

Each woman has the right and power to decide for herself the direction of her life according to her own values and needs.

Role of the Y.W.C.A.

The role of the Y.W.C.A. is to offer the victim and her children counselling, safe refuge, support, information and referral services.

Target Group

The transition house would be for women in crisis or transition, with the first priority being given to victims of spousal assault and their children.

Regional Resource

In keeping with the recommendations from the Task Force on Spousal Assault that regional centres be made available for victims who may wish to leave their community even for a short time the Y.W.C.A. transition house would still be available to regional clients.

Physical Facility

The selected facility would conform to both City by-laws and Public Health requirements. The transition house must be able to accommodate up to 15 people.

Program

Recognizing that shelter is not enough for victims of spousal assault, a comprehensive program would be developed to meet the needs of women and their children.

Should the woman wish to stay at the transition house, shelter would be available to her for at least six weeks.

In-house counselling would be provided by professional staff on an individual and group basis; a trained childcare worker would be a key component of the program.

Staffing

There would be a minimum of one staff person on duty at any given time. Senior staff would possess a university degree and/or experience in related areas. Salaries would be based on the current Y.W.C.A. pay scale.

Persons of native origin would be actively recruited.

Volunteers

Volunteers would be involved at various levels, depending on their experience and interest. Training of volunteers would be provided on an ongoing basis.

Advisory Council

An Advisory Council to the transition house will be an important component to continued input from agencies and government departments. It's membership will be designed when the recommendations of the cross-cultural research report are formulated.

Liaison

The relationship of the Y.W.C.A. program with individual agencies and organizations would vary according to the task involved, and networking would be undertaken to ensure ongoing communication.