



Birthright of Penticton

Serving the Okanagan

200 Bennett Ave, Penticton, BC V2A 2P5
(250) 492-4901

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Birthright is a nonprofit charitable organization that helps any person, regardless of age, race, marital status or economic status, who feels distressed by an unplanned pregnancy.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Birthright of Penticton has now completed its fourth year of service and with it came transition and successes. In February, our Executive Director, Lois Hutcheson, left the organization. We welcomed Sandy Mikkelsen as the new Executive Director. Sandy has already made great strides in expanding the visibility of Birthright to the surrounding communities and organizations. Sandy took Birthright to the Mall and spent the day raising awareness and letting the community know what services are provided. Sandy also spends a day a month at the Summerland Resource Centre. She has spoken at community resources staff meetings and liaises with other non-profit agencies such as Pathways, SOVAS, SOWINS, SOSBIS and the Bereavement Centre the Boys and Girls Club, the Infant Development Program and Literacy Now. There is no shortage of women coming to the facility to share and learn.

Trina Carroll (Board Member) was successful in securing funding through Literacy Now and offered another Momentum Program for Moms, (now called MAPS **M**entorship for **A**ll **P**arents). The program focused on teaching life skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship.

Birthright teamed up with the Penticton HUB and Interior Health Authority to deliver the successful Connecting Mom's group. It was an 8 week program designed for Mom's needing smaller groups and who would benefit from being informed about and connected to community resources.

The house interior underwent a serious "clothing" clean out. We now only keep clothing from birth to two years of age. "We" receive many compliments and 'wows' every time someone new takes a tour. Based on the large volume of items donated to Birthright, we were in need of a shed. We obtained a fantastic shell and then, with donations from some local businesses, and the volunteer labour of Tony Cristini and Harry Neihe, we are the proud owners of a huge shed, complete with shelving.

Our Annual General Meeting was held in September 2014, and we welcomed three new members to our Board - Marie Prior, Evelyn Roberts and Sandra Moore. They are already hard at work and are confident their presence will continue to enhance the work we do for Birthright of Penticton.

Our challenge continues to be funding. Our Board members have gone to work on a variety of fundraising events. The sale of homemade meatballs has been a success and we now realize that the more we make, the more we could sell. In May 2014, the St. John Vianney Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women's League, provided a Mother's Day Dinner and Silent Auction Fundraiser....with ALL proceeds being donated to Birthright. They raised over \$4,000.00 for us.

Based on the increasing number of clients accessing and attending our centre, we are always encouraged to find new and creative ways to ensure the viability of Birthright of Penticton. The dedicated volunteers play a huge part in its success. We couldn't do it without them. In gratitude to everyone that helps to make Birthright a success,

Nella Todd, Chair

HISTORY

Birthright of Penticton incorporated in 2010 as a non-profit charitable organization (Registration Number 809961857RR0001) that serves those affected by pregnancy and pregnancy related issues.

WE PROVIDE:

- Free pregnancy testing
- Social agency and community services referrals
- Options Counseling
- Legal, medical and educational referrals
- Prenatal information
- Emergency transit assistance
- Educational groups
- Opportunities for healthy peer support
- Maternity and baby clothes
- Post Birth Support

Birthright services are always free, non-judgmental and confidential.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To create a safe environment by providing confidential, non-judgmental, loving guidance, support and skill development to those affected by pregnancy related issues.”

Birthright is not a “right to life” organization nor is it involved in any religious movements, political activities, or lobbying. Birthright’s focus is on caring for the parent, and supporting them in the choice they make.

OPERATIONS

Birthright of Penticton (BR) employs 1 part time Executive Director, who is responsible for the management of the Centre and the implementation of programs; this includes client services, public relations, volunteer coordination, and house management.

The office is a house located at 200 Bennett Avenue, Penticton, BC. It is owned by St. Ann's Catholic Church and is leased to Birthright of Penticton. Birthright provides service three days a week in Penticton, and one day per month in Summerland at the Resource/Food Bank office.

In early 2014 Lois Hutcheson, previous Executive Director, (since the inception of Birthright) resigned and Sandy Mikkelsen was welcomed to the position.

Sandy is a registered social worker with over 20 years' experience in a variety of capacities. She uses an integrated service approach; maintaining a strong relationship with clients, their support teams and community resources. Sandy believes in the goal of the organization and in the direction of the Board to help those who need a helping hand.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a necessary and important part of BRs operations. They provide support services to clients and to the BR house. Currently there are 31 people who actively volunteer. Volunteers sit on the Board of Directors, assist with child care, prepare and distribute quarterly newsletters, process donated items, help with house maintenance and yard work, provide food and cookies for programs, and are involved with raising funds. A volunteer appreciation luncheon was held in October 2014.



Volunteers clean, sort and organize donations for the infant supply room pictured here.

Parents in need are able to select appropriate items for their infants.

Pictured here is the new storage shed, for some of the larger donations we receive (strollers, new car seats, play pens, rocking chairs).

In 2013 Morphy Resaw donated the outdoor shed kit. In 2014 Rona donated the shed siding and soffits. Volunteer and Board Member Tony Cristini with help from Harry Neihe completed the assembly in the fall of 2014.

Yard work was completed this past year with the help from volunteers, members of the Holy Cross School, the CWL, and from residents of Discovery House.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A Volunteer Board of Directors, comprised of 6-8 members, provides strategic planning and administration for the organization. Board members are appointed for 2 year terms. This past year BR thanked Drew Vincent for his service of four years on the Board.

The Annual General Meeting was held September 10th, 2014 with 18 members present in person or through proxy. The following Board of Directors was elected:

Nella Maria Todd, Chairman
Mary Ellen Heidt, Treasurer
Tony Cristini, Maintenance
Trina Carroll, Secretary
Sandra Moore, Director
Evelyn Roberts, Director
Marie Prior, Director

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Programs held this year were:

1. Weekly Drop In: Prenatal and Post-birth support group
2. **Connecting Moms:** a 10 week program in partnership with Interior Health and Penticton and District Community Resources Society. The Program, which was operated at Birthright, facilitated self- esteem, relationship building and assisted

with connecting participants to the community. 14 Moms participated in this program which will continue in 2015.

3. The successful **MoMentum** program changed its name to **MAPS (Mentorship for All Parents)** in 2014. The program is a financial literacy class for Moms and Dads who want to improve their quality of life and standard of living through creating financial goals and developing entrepreneurial skills. During 2014 two of the participants received a micro loan from Community Futures Okanagan Similkameen (CFOS) to assist in moving their business plan forward. Enactus Okanagan College business students and alumni facilitate the training and provided 50% of the loan portfolio managed by CFOS. A community business review committee was set up and consisted of business analysts and local business owners.

Child minding is provided for this program to allow participants to fully engage in the classes without interruption. Two programs were run in 2014, one in the spring through a donation from Telus, and one in the fall through a donation from Literacy Now. This program has attracted 12 participants with another program scheduled for 2015.



Pictured are Jim Henderson awarding the Telus grant to Sandra Moore, Sandy Mikkelsen, Nella Todd and Trina Carroll of Birthright.

4. **Writing out Loud**, a partnership with Okanagan College and Literacy Now, held a series 6 weekly workshops to encourage participants with their creativity and writing skills.
5. Through our affiliation with BR International, we operate a **24 hour Helpline** 1-800-550-4900 for those with immediate questions.
6. **Penticton Bus Ticket Program** is a partnership with the United Way and the City of Penticton. This program provided access to transportation for BR clients to attend educational programs, medical appointments, housing appointments, and better access to food.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- An outreach office has been set up in Summerland and is managed one day a month at the Summerland Food Bank and Resource Centre.
- The Newsletter has been revamped to provide information on resources as well as health and welfare tips. The new look and name “The Buzz at the BOP” was created by Juanita Bright and is circulated to all stakeholders.
- The Executive Director organizes speaking and promotional events throughout our service catchment area.
- A Mother’s Day Dinner and Silent Auction was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and the CWL.

DONATIONS AND DONORS

BR is grateful for all of the donations contributed, both financial and in volunteer time commitments. In excess of \$25,000 and over 540 volunteer hours were received throughout 2014.