

Vulnerable Children Society

Meeting Title	Annual General Meeting
Date	May 11, 2017
Time	9am Pacific time, 12pm Toronto time, 1pm Atlantic <i>Meeting called at 9:16am (PST)</i> <i>Meeting adjourned at 10:34am (PST)</i>
Place	Facebook Group Chat
Chair Person	Arnica Rowan
Invitee list	Internal: Arnica Rowan, Flora Meier, Tawnya Pattie, Laura Morrison, Dacia Douhaibi, Nicole Bellefleur, Menbere Muluneh External: society members, the general public
In Attendance	Internal: Arnica Rowan, Flora Meier, Tawnya Pattie, Laura Morrison, Dacia Douhaibi, Nicole Bellefleur, External (actively and passively): Andrea Thain Kyle Liptak, Andrea Lawrence, Brad McCandlish, Bruce Frankard, Christy Cee, Emily Neufeld, Heidi Burzinski, Jennifr Meyer, Katie Bidulock, Karen Tobin, Kim Custance, Kristen Murphy, Laura Livingstone, Leslie Kudna, Lisa Vitols, Lori Tanizawa, Marie Allison- Matchett, Meaghan O'Rourke, Michelle Quinn, Paul Maarschalk, Rita Churchill, Sheldon Dueck, Tam Mickel
Absent	Internal: Menbere Muluneh
Agenda	Project Updates: New Life Program for Teen Girls; Love and Hope Centre Review of Annual Financial Statement Plans for Next year Election of Board of Directors
Minutes Prepared by	Laura Morrison
Next meeting	End of 2017 (Date TBD)

Decisions

Motion	1st	2nd	Passed
To call the annual general meeting of Vulnerable Children Society to order	Arnica	Nicole	N/A

To accept the 2016 financial reports as presented. https://vulnerablechildren.ca/who-we-are/administration/board-minutes/	Tawnya	Laura	Yes
To accept the President's program report as presented.	Arnica	Tawnya	N/A
To accept the board of Director nominees	Arnica		Yes

Discussion

Project Updates

New Life Program for Teen Girls

The New Life program for teen girls escaping the sex trade in Addis Ababa is in partnership with Hope for Children in Ethiopia. This project is funded annually, and we do not have an ongoing commitment, but we've managed to fund it for four years. Last year we fully fund 10 girls (we fund 10 girls and 10 supported by a US NGO), which costs \$20,000 for 2017. In 2016 we spent \$17,649.28. We had three substantive donations last Fall that made a difference. The costs for this program have almost doubled over the last few years, due to country inflation and the added services for the girls (such as a group home and medical care,) but the funds are well spent.

The New Life program continues to be successful. The seven girls we supported last year are now in the job market. They all have cook training, as opposed to other years were they either got cook training or hairdressing. Many of them have been placed in employment positions in four-star hotels in Addis Ababa. The cook training is the top level available in Ethiopia. We also hear periodic reports of those who have been out for a while and started their own businesses.

There are some challenges with having 20 street girls living in one house. They have a number of health concerns, and one big improvement is that those are now being addressed. Obviously, they struggle with a lot of emotional issues and even with counseling, that's an ongoing challenge. Many of them also struggle with addiction issues, and I'm interested next time we visit to learn if there are any other things we can do to help.

Love and Hope Family Centre

Our next project is the ongoing commitment that monthly donations funds. Sponsors and donations support the ongoing needs of 70 children at the Love and Hope Family Centre in Kality, on the outskirts of Addis Ababa. We fund the majority of operations at the centre, and it is operated by our partner, Canadian Humanitarian. When the centre opened 3 1/2 years ago, we funded half of the operations for the total program. In this next three year contract, the cost for the centre have skyrocketed, so we are no longer a 50% partner, but still the biggest donor to this project.

We spent \$25,605.85 on the Love and Hope Family Centre in 2016, and our commitment for the next three years is \$30,000 a year, although we hope to increase it.

Since it's an ongoing project, it often seems like there isn't a lot to report. When things are working smoothly, then it's uneventful! But the steady beehive of activity... tutoring, medical care, teeth brushing and showers, art and taikwondo classes, daily meals and employment opportunities for the adults, is buzzing along.

The 70 kids are now attending a variety of private schools in the surrounding area. Several children have special needs, such as sight and learning challenges. A big change over the last year or so is that the kids used to come for their lunch at the centre every day after school. But because they switch schools, there is a brigade of lunch delivers to take the lunches that the moms and grandmothers make all the way to the school. There is a team of mothers and grandmothers that rotates every month, then we pay these wonderful ladies to make food for 70 children. Great news is that they are incorporating more and more of the vegetables grown in the centre garden to ensure better nutrition for the children. The new social worker that was added to the team two years ago is actually trained as a nutritionist, so we gave him some tools, the healthy plate from Harvard University, to discuss with the ladies in the community about nutrition in a culturally appropriate way.

Review of Annual Financial Statement

<https://vulnerablechildren.ca/who-we-are/administration/board-minutes/>

We have \$3000 less in the bank July 2016 then we did at the end of July 2015. However, we still have \$37,000 in the bank at the end of the day. We funded seven girls through Hope for Children in Ethiopia, and 70 kids through Canadian Humanitarian. Our administrative expenses for that year total about \$5000 because it includes oversight trip that we took in 2015. It should be noted, that we didn't take any administrative trips in 2016, so that will not appear on our next set of financial statements.

We do have a financial policy of matching the source of donations with the flow of funds . For example, we try only to use ongoing, steady monthly donations to fund our ongoing commitment to the kids at the Love and Hope Family Centre, whereas we use one-off donations to fund the New Life Program for Teen Girls each year (no ongoing commitment). At the moment, we are still in violation of that policy, although we are making progress with the new monthly donors we have added this past year.

Plans for Next year

Flora and Arnica have developed a marketing plan.

Our financial goal is to bring up monthly donors level to 70 donors

Our marketing goals are for our monthly donors are personally connected to the kid, our supporters are proud of our teen girls, our supporters and followers are connected to and trust the board members, and all supporters know their money is making an impact and is important.

We haven't been getting regular pictures to do regular Instagram and Facebook posts, but we had Meron, our evaluator, take pictures while she was visiting the projects. So we hope to resume posting with those soon.

One success is that each of our board members is writing an article for our newsletter and website this year and they've been well received so far! It's nice to share that responsibility, and great for our supporters to get to know the other board members.

Something to look forward to in the fall... we'll be doing a Coffee Ceremony Tour! We'll start in Kelowna, but then us westerners will go through BC, and we are hoping that Laura in Winnipeg and Nicole in PEI will be able to host similar events. The idea is that a team of board members will go to a supporter's house, and make them and their friend's Traditional coffee, which takes two hours. The supporter will invite their friends, and we'll get to tell Vulnerable Children Society's story in a low key way, hopefully enticing some new supporters into the fold. Thanks to Lori and Lisa, two of our supporters on the coast, who came up with the idea. Lisa also suggested a variation on the theme would be to meet for lunch or supper at an Ethiopian restaurant, and a board member would join the group and share about VCS's work. So stayed tuned... we'll be asking for hosts!! Probably September and October.

So to get involved... we are interested in hosts for our coffee tour / restaurant visits in the fall!!

Paul: Suggest doing the rounds of the Rotary clubs as well, and take some coffee! It would be best if you spoke after your visit to Ethiopia. I could line it up with our program coordinator.

Election of Board of Directors

Because we haven't had an AGM for one year and three months, I should say that Pam Carlson left our board almost a year ago. We are so VERY grateful for her wise mentorship over the years. Pam runs another organization in Swaziland.

We welcomed Laura Morrison unofficially who join our board a couple of months ago as Secretary.

The nominees for this year's board are as follows:

Arnica Rowan - President

Tawnya Pattie - Treasurer

Laura Morrison - Secretary

Dacia Douhaibi - VP

Flora Meier

Nicole Bellefleur

Menbere Shiferaw

Everyone is standing, except Laura, who is new.

No other nominations brought forward.