



# VULNERABLE CHILDREN SOCIETY

## Annual General Meeting Minutes

<b>Meeting Title</b>	:	Public Meeting
<b>Date</b>	:	January 22, 2014
<b>Time</b>	:	10am Pacific time, 1pm Toronto time, 2pm Atlantic
<b>Place</b>	:	Facebook Group Messaging
<b>Chair Person</b>	:	Arnica Rowan
<b>Invitee List</b>	:	<b>Internal:</b> Arnica Rowan, Dacia Douhaibi, Menbere Shiferaw, Nicole Bellefleur, Pam Carlson, Tawnya Pattie, Flora, Birhan Ejigu
	:	<b>External:</b> Any interested donor, member of the public, etc.
<b>In Attendance</b>	:	<b>Internal:</b> Arnica Rowan, Dacia Douhaibi, Menbere Shiferaw, Nicole Bellefleur, Pam Carlson, Tawnya Pattie, Birhan Ejigu
	:	<b>External:</b> Amber Taylor, Frances Jasiura, Isabelle Josee Boudreau, Lorie LM, Sheldon Dueck, Megan Kemble-Lescanec, Brad McCandlish, Kristen Murphy, Sharla Kostelyk, Rana Wright, Lori Williamson Tanizawa, Isabelle Josee Boudreau, Carolyn Usher, Emily Neufeld, Marie Allison-Matchett, Heidi Eggen Burzinski, Nirpinder Sandhu, Mark Dixon, Julie Evans, Karen Tobin, Christy Cee, Dana Reimer Hiebert, Angela Schneider, Jade Coupry
<b>Absent</b>	:	<b>Internal:</b> Flora
	:	<b>External:</b>
<b>Agenda</b>	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Report</li> <li>• Project updates</li> <li>• Upcoming projects</li> <li>• Project reports</li> <li>• Upcoming visits</li> <li>• Charity rules in Ethiopia</li> </ul>
<b>Minutes Submitted By</b>	:	Dacia Douhaibi
<b>Minutes Submitted On</b>	:	January 22, 2014
<b>Next Meeting</b>	:	<b>Date:</b> TBA
	:	<b>Time:</b> TBA
	:	<b>Place:</b> TBA
	:	<b>Chair:</b> Arnica Rowan

#	Discussion Items
1.	<p data-bbox="298 268 545 302"><b>Financial Report</b></p> <p data-bbox="298 338 1385 516">The annual financial report was made available to the public through the Vulnerable Children Society (VCS) website. Tawyna provided a brief overview of the important pieces of information during the meeting. At year end, VCS had \$31,000 in the account. On July 31, 2013, VCS had \$40,106.05 in the account, but a portion of this was directed towards the Love and Hope Centre.</p> <p data-bbox="298 558 1370 699">Retail sales were minimal and the majority of income generated came through direct public support through sponsorships. \$49,141.00 was generated through sponsorship, the majority (approximately \$40,000) coming from individuals rather than businesses.</p> <p data-bbox="298 741 1385 1031">There has been one administrative issue with Canada Helps. When donors set up monthly donations, if they do not choose “no expiry” sponsorships automatically end after a one year period. Approximately ten sponsors have not re-started their monthly donations after their sponsorship expired. Email reminders have been sent to all donors about continuing sponsorship by signing up again. It was recommended that someone from VCS contact all current sponsors to collect phone numbers so that reminder calls can be made. Phone numbers should also be collected from new sponsors when they sign up.</p> <p data-bbox="298 1073 1338 1178">The 2013 financials were consistent with the previous fiscal year. Tawyna has completed the tax return and will send it following the meeting and subject to the approval of the Board.</p>
2.	<p data-bbox="298 1213 532 1247"><b>Project Updates</b></p> <p data-bbox="347 1289 786 1323">(A) Growing the sponsorship base</p> <p data-bbox="298 1356 1385 1646">Flora, a new director with VCS, has assumed the role of increasing the monthly sponsorship base by 20 new sponsors before year end (July 31, 2014). This would replace all vacancies and position VCS to seize opportunities should another centre or moth program present itself. Arnica has been doing an image campaign through the VCS Facebook page and all members of the Board and current sponsors should use the images to increase the online profile of VCS. In particular, anyone interested in becoming a sponsor could be encouraged to donate to “other campaigns” so that VCS has some flexibility as to where the funds can be directed.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1688 1370 1722">(B) Hope for Children - “Teenage Sex-Trade Workers Re-Employment Project”</p> <p data-bbox="298 1755 1385 1896">The reporting and program delivery by Hope for Children has been impressive. VCS received a report on their programs, excerpts of which will be posted on the VCS blog. Nicole provided an update based on her visit to Hope for Children in Addis Ababa on December 31, 2013. At this time she met with the executive director,</p>

Yonas Tesfaye, the Project Officer and Counselor, Ealed, as well as seven of the program's participants.

Hope for Children was started by members of a church youth group fifteen years ago. These young men took it upon themselves to share their food and clothes with street kids; their community outreach initiatives eventually led to the establishment of this organization. Last year, VCS partnered with Hope for Children to fund a training program for a cohort of ten former sex trade workers. Ealed is a former sex-trade worker, who came to Hope for Children as a young woman. She earned a nursing degree then went on to earn her master's degree in counseling and leadership. She is a remarkable woman and an excellent role model for the participants.

The participants range in age from 18-22; most are from small villages in northern Ethiopia, but most have lived in Addis Ababa for 1-3 years and want to stay there after they complete their training program.

- Zenbcn, age 18, enjoys coffee ceremony, wants to study catering
- Abeze, age 21, enjoys history movies, wants to study catering
- Tamre, age 19, enjoys music and dancing, wants to study hair dressing
- Mulu, age 20, enjoys sports (especially running), wants to study catering
- Melsh, age 20, enjoys fashion, wants to study catering
- Smarwet, age 22, enjoys coffee ceremony, wants to study catering
- Desta, age 18, enjoys history movies, wants to study catering

This cohort is still being finalized – the total final number of women that will complete the one year “Teenage Sex-Trade Workers Re-Employment Project” will be 10. The approximate cost for this one year project for 10 women is \$10,000.

In addition to skills training, the participants also learn about drugs, HIV, hygiene and general life skills, and receive counseling to help them cope with their circumstances and build their confidence. The program duration is one year. Nicole reported that the participants are sweet and shy and demonstrated determination.

The ‘retraining’ program is largely funded by VCS. Hope for Children has a number of other organizational sponsors for their other programs. Hope for Children pays the rent of the women in the retraining program, but they remain living in the community. Nicole indicated that one of the challenges faced by the program thus far is that when the girls finish the day program and return to their ‘regular’ lives during the night it is still hard for them to refuse clients. Yonas would like to explore the option of having the women live together while they complete the program, but this would require funding.

Arnica will inquire whether VCS has been the only funder for this particular project – whether VCS has been with it since its inception – or whether there have been other donors supporting it in the past. She will also explore the possibility of

	<p>supporting the housing strategy suggested by Yonas. Fundraising campaigns will be important, particularly over the summer, if VCS will support the housing initiative.</p> <p>(C) Love and Hope Centre</p> <p>Nicole provided an update based on her visit to the Love and Hope Centre on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Details of this visit are available on the website. Nicole indicated that the children need underwear and oral hygiene products. Nicole wrote profiles of two of the children at the Centre for the sponsor newsletters and Arnica will include the profiles in the newsletters for this week and next month. Nicole made the motion to accept her field reports. Pam seconded.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>New Projects</b></p> <p>(A) Community gardening</p> <p>There are two substantive groups of volunteers that have expressed interest in helping at the Centre. One group would like to volunteer for several months and could potentially build a community garden at the Love and Hope Centre, a project the Board has previously discussed. Before this project can begin we have to make sure the guardians want and can support the garden and we will have to organize with Canadian Humanitarian, who operates the centre. Arnica will discuss this with Bisrat and the guardians during her visit on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Depending on the size of the compound, the garden may have to be located nearby. This project would have several benefits: it would build gardening skills for community members and contribute to increased nutrition for the children.</p> <p>(B) Healthcare</p> <p>The second group of volunteers consists of doctors and nurses from Flora’s church. Arnica will speak with Hope for Children and Canadian Humanitarian to determine how these volunteers might be best utilized. Clinics have no lasting impact and are very challenging to organize. A project that would have a more lasting impact would be worthwhile, particularly if something can be connecting into existing programs in the area. Arnica and Menbere will follow up on this. Dick Northcott has regular medical missions and these volunteers could potentially fundraise for VCS and go to work with them on the missions.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Project Reports</b></p> <p>VCS has received reports on time from Canadian Humanitarian. Hope for Children has also indicated that their report, due on the 31<sup>st</sup>, will also be on time.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Upcoming Visits</b></p> <p>Arnica, and possibly Flora, will visit the Love and Hope Centre on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. This visit may coincide with a scheduled visit by Canadian Humanitarian.</p>

	<p>Arnica will bring a small literacy library to the Centre, that includes \$900 worth of readers in sets of ten selected by a literacy teacher, and wall maps. Scholastic gave VCS a 50% percent discount on the books. Hygienic items will also be collected and taken. When others travel to the Centre they should also bring items such as underwear for children aged 5-13, toothbrushes and toothpaste.</p>
6.	<p><b>Charity Rules in Ethiopia</b></p> <p>Amnesty has released a document outlining the rules for charities in Ethiopia, found at: <a href="http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR25/002/2012/en/3b0adc69-f0fd-4b43-9ff8-635073d60f44/afr250022012en.pdf">http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR25/002/2012/en/3b0adc69-f0fd-4b43-9ff8-635073d60f44/afr250022012en.pdf</a></p> <p>The big take away is that charities cannot engage in "human rights" projects in Ethiopia. So we have to be careful that our projects focus on poverty reduction.</p>

#	Decisions
1.	<p>Tawyna made a motion to accept the financial statement.</p> <p>Second: Dacia.</p> <p>The motion was passed unanimously.</p>
2.	<p>Arnica will inquire whether VCS has been the only funder for the “Teenage Sex-Trade Workers Re-Employment Project” and explore the possibility of supporting the housing strategy suggested by Yonas.</p>
3.	<p>The group of doctors and nurses that have expressed interest in volunteering with VCS will only come under the organization’s banner if they can be incorporated into existing programs or services.</p>

Action Items					
#	Action Item	Owner	Status	Due Date	Comments
1.	Nicole wrote profiles of two of the children at the Centre for the sponsor newsletters and Arnica will include the profiles in the newsletters for this week and next month.	Arnica		January; March	
2.	Discuss the possibility of using volunteers to build a community garden				

	with Bisrat and the Centre guardians.				
3.	Potential projects for the doctor and nurse volunteers from Flora's church.	Arnica, Nicole and Menbere		January/April	
4.	Follow up with donors that have not re-signed up for sponsorship following the end of their one year of sponsorship.	TBA		Ongoing	
5.	Collect phone numbers from current and incoming sponsors for communication purposes.	TBA		Ongoing	
6.	Continue working on a targeted market campaign for monthly sponsors	Arnica, Flora and Nicole		Ongoing	