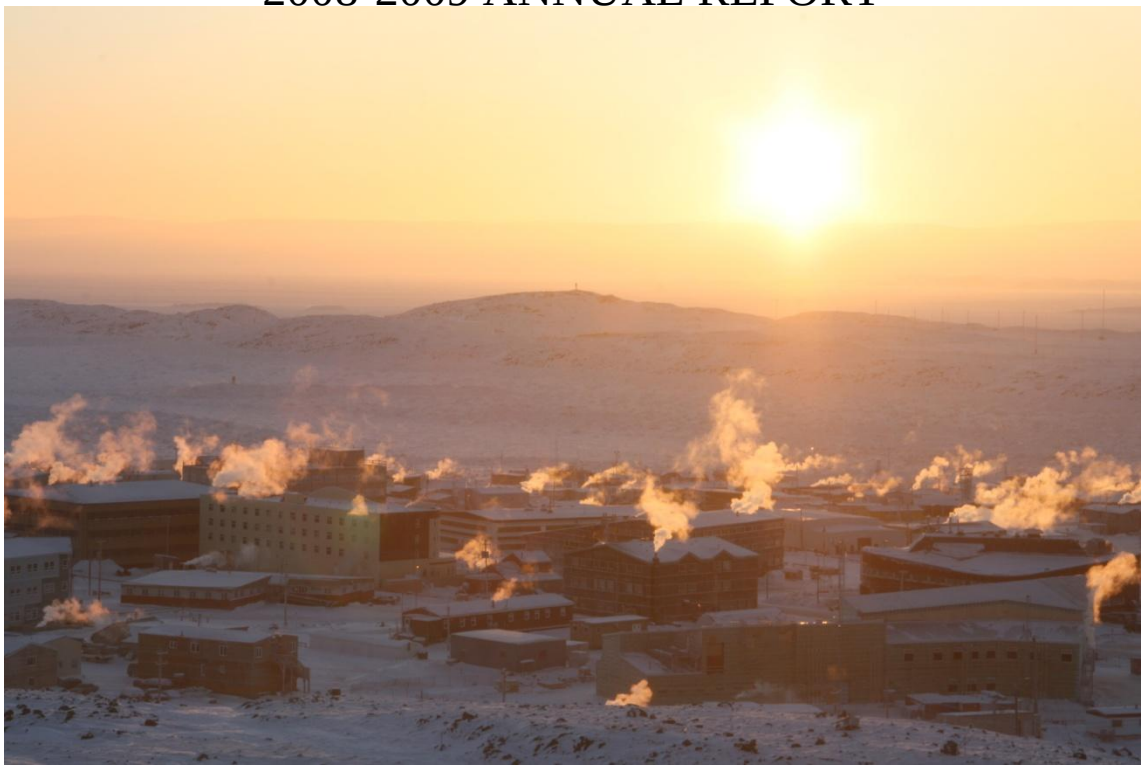
2008-2009 ANNUAL REPORT



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Background

The Embrace Life Council was established in January 2004 as a result of many partnership efforts, which began in 2003. The Council has eleven member boards. This year the members representing its organizations were:
Jesse Mike – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Marty Cheliak – Royal Canadian Mounted Police “V” Division
Sheila Levy – Kamatsiaqtut Helpline
Becky Kilabuk – Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Sandy Oleekatalik – Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Joclyn Ukutaq-Malla – Kivalliq Inuit Association
Mary Etuangat – Nunavut Teachers Association
Percy Kabloona – Nunavut Association of Municipalities
James Brown - Community of Faith
MaryAnne Tattuinnie – Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit
Jack Hicks – Government of Nunavut

The Council is a non-profit organization who recently attained charitable status. According to our by-laws the Council aims to:

- Contribute to the mental, emotional and physical health and community wellness of Nunavut residents by providing education, research and statistical analysis, a clearing house, training and a coordinated holistic approach to suicide prevention activities;
- Recruit, co-ordinate and provide on going training to volunteers in order to give them the expertise to deliver suicide prevention and community wellness services;

- Educate the public on the issues of suicide, mental health, community health and related issues; and, acquire sufficient resources in cash or in kind to support the objectives of the Council and communities throughout Nunavut.

Letter from the President

It's been both a pleasure and a challenge to serve as the President for the Council in my first year. When NTI, appointed me to serve on the board for Embrace Life, I had no intention of serving as President. However, during the AGM in Iqaluit, I was excited to accept the trust from my fellow board members.

It is an honour for me to be in a leadership position, especially with the Embrace Life Council, because it is an opportunity for me to show my peers the role we can play in voicing our issues as youth. I've done my best during our meetings with the executive as well as representing the board in other places such as doing work for the development of the suicide prevention strategy. Participating in the community consultations was difficult, but it also confirmed my view that Nunavut communities have the solutions to improving wellbeing for us all.

For the next fiscal year (2009-2010) we will continue to deliver Inuusivut (multi-media and mental health promotion workshops for youth), Resolution Health Support worker and elder provider programs for former residential school students and capacity building for community committees. We'll continue to administer the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, which is a proposal based fund for communities to access. Please feel free to contact any of the representatives from the organizations that form the Embrace Life Council. We are always open to new ideas for improving our services and increasing wellbeing for all Nunavutmiut.

Introduction

During its Annual General Meeting in 2006, the Board had approved the priorities and guiding principles. The priorities were determined at a previous board meeting, which were to focus on:

a. Family and Parenting to further develop self reliant communities.
b. Efforts on maintaining relations and partnerships and improving communications to the communities.

Guiding principles were set up to guide the activities of the office:

a. Embracing life – (not just preventing death) – Asking people what they think it means to embrace life
b. Inuit history driving the programming – instilling Inuit Pride
c. Collective solutions from the community
d. Communities identify their own solutions, recognizing that every community is unique
e. Families being central to life – focus on parenting skills, kinship, teamwork
f. Protecting, being aware and guided by the environment.

Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings

There was one board meeting held with the gathering of the steering committee in Iqaluit, where they had a chance to hear about existing initiatives and a literature review that was conducted by staff. Executive Committee meetings occurred monthly.

Staff

Lori Idlout – Executive Director
Kane Tologanak – Wellness, Training and Development Coordinator
Marie-Lucie Uviliq – Resolution Health Support Worker
Qajaaq Ellsworth – Inuusivut Coordinator
Lisa Oolooyuk – Training Facilitator

Partners of the Embrace Life Council

Amoung others: National Inuit Youth Council; John Hasyn Photography; Nunavut Arctic College and the Mental Health Worker Training Program Steering committee; NTI's Qauma Mobile Treatment Program, Isuma Productions, the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Nunavut Hamlet offices. The most important are the many contacts as our volunteers and share our message of working together to be proud of being Nunavutmiut.

In-Kind Contributions

The Council is grateful to the Government of Nunavut for its contributions. Of these include the salary and time of Lori Idlout and Kane Tologanak. We'd also like to acknowledge the support and office space it received from the Department of Community and Government Services.

Donations and Fundraising - Our donations and fundraising efforts totalled $15,426.

Ben Williams Fund - There was no distribution from the Ben Williams Fund, this year. As such the fund remains at $7895.

Projects by Contribution

Source: Department of Health and Social Services Amount: $135, 00.00
The funds were used mainly for operational costs and interpreting and translation of documents. We were also fortunate to attain Lisa Oolooyuk as the Training Facilitator. This fund was used to coordinate the annual Nunavut Embrace Life Day activities.

Source: Health Canada Amount: $224,086.00
This fund came out of Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program to employ Marie-Lucie Uviluq and Ruth deVries as the Resolution Health Support Workers. Their positions are another positive example of partnership. The Council works with NTI and their steering committee that oversee's the Qauma Mobile Treatment Program, which is funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Source: National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy $306,974.00
This council administered this fund on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services. A team consisting of Embrace Life Council, Department of Health and Social Services, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., National Inuit Youth Council with support from Health Canada reviewed proposals as they arrived. NAYSPS has four key elements: Primary Prevention (increasing resiliency and reducing risk), Secondary Prevention (supporting communities at risk), Tertiary Prevention (crisis response) and Knowledge Development (evaluation and research). A more detailed report is available upon request.

Source: Health Canada-Inuusivut $209,440.00
Under NAYSPS Aboriginal Youth Mental Health Promotion Program this fund is to help build capacity and produce new knowledge in the area of Mental Health Promotion in Inuit communities. The project focuses on protective factors against suicide -activities that take a strengths-based, positive approach and is focused on maximum and lasting impacts for youth.
Inuusivut, Our Way of Life, is youth driven and has the support of several key partners. This work builds on and complements existing mental health promotion activities and initiatives already underway in Inuit communities. The purpose of this project is to learn, document and share, through various means, how Inuit perceive, express and develop/foster/promote mental health. The project aims to develop capacity in Inuit communities by having youth directly explore issues related to mental health and to enable them to share their findings with their peers, families and communities.

The Inuusivut Program further received 50,000 from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Inuit Secretariat, $80,000 from the Government of Nunavut's Brighter Futures Program and 21,000.00 from Pauktuutit.

Getting to know the Staff

Lori Idlout - Executive Director

I was excited going into the 08/09 fiscal year, knowing that working with new staff and new board members meant more opportunities to spread the positive messages of embracing life and discussing what it means to us. Being reminded by communities to keep sending out the importance of community ownership was always uplifting.

Aside from the honour of working directly with communities, I've tried my best to represent Nunavutmiut outside of our wonderful territory. We are praised for using our historical life affirming values, in believing in our youth and our communities. We are further recognized for our efforts to strengthen community unity and self determination as key to our success.

It has also been pretty cool to work with Jesse as our President. It makes me very proud to say I am Nunavutmiut along side her leadership. This proves to many people that although we've experienced many struggles, we have overcome many of these challenges, and still work to preserve our heritage for our future generations.

Kane Tologanak – Wellness, Training & Development Co – ordinator

It has been difficult to stay focused with my year since there has been loss of family in the past year which affected all my immediate family. Thanks to the support we've received, we feel we are strong and continue to support each other more closely. Remember to always shake hands but hugging and smiling is always welcomed by anyone. Acknowledge your peers and elders even if you just give them a pat on the back. As you know it always brings relieve of sighs and good feeling.

As the new season comes let us continue our roles, responsibilities and support for our people who value life by supporting each other and lending a hand and confidence in whatever the Nunavutmiut's goals and objectives in their respective communities.

Marie-Lucie Uviluq – Resolution Health Support Worker

Marie-Lucie works out of Cambridge Bay. Her support and commitment is invaluable. She brings with her, a strong foundation towards communities taking ownership and has been a wonderful resource for supporting former residential school students. Marie-Lucie has an interpreting/translating background which can be an asset with unilingual persons or individuals with limited English Marie-Lucie is originally from Igloolik where she raised her four daughters, one son and several grandchildren, one of which she and her husband raised who they like to call Piipia.

Qajaaq Ellsworth – Inuusivut Coordinator

Qajaaq coordinates the Inuusivut project, helping youth to learn technical and creative aspects of photography and film production. Embracing Life is a lot about taking responsibility and initiative for the things we care about. Rather than relying on governments or other organizations to resolve our issues for us, we must come together and put our solutions into action. This is a dream job for me, working with youth in Inuit communities across Canada's north and working together on cool projects. Sharing laughter is an important part of the equation in the work that we do. I am a proud parent to Mister Lee (now 11 years old) and Nala Joss (8 months). I would love to spend some more time out on the beautiful land we are surrounded by and share meat and country foods with friends and family. Whether big or small, we must all do things to help each other and show that we care. If anyone has any ideas or questions to share on ways we can work together to help our communities, I am more than willing to help out!

Ruth deVries – Resolution Health Support Worker

It was an exciting year for me as I did a lot of work with former residential school students & getting more trainers to be part of the Nunavut team for the Returning to Spirit Organization.

Returning to Spirit offers workshops in personal empowerment & reconciliation for former residential school students & different churches. The program has been designed specifically for

residential school issues and for anyone who wants to move beyond existing limits & constraints. It is for anyone who is committed to personal growth and wants to have a deeper sense of understanding of how to move beyond the residential school experience rather than be stuck with it. I have been in the trainer development program since 2003 but have been very difficult being the only trainer from Nunavut as 1 person cannot give the workshops by themselves. In the past few years, I have been able to attract future trainers & we now have 3 more trainers being trained, Marie-Lucie Uviluq, Gela Pitsiulak & Charlotte Kattegatsiak. They attended their first workshop last year in 2008 & have also taken a trainers seminar as well.

I continued to give support to former students who needed to talk, assist with the paperwork for Common Experience Payments & the Independent Assessment Program including attending a hearing. It was a real honor & privilege to be there for an Elder who had the courage to tell her story & be willing to let it go & start on her healing journey. I was deeply inspired & now have the courage to tell my story from residential school.

I've learned that there needs to be time set aside for debriefing for the Resolution Health Support Workers. Providing emotional support is sometimes very difficult. To hear some of the experiences students have gone through especially when you're a former student yourself. Without the debriefing set in place, you can get burnt out really fast. Also, it is crucial that Health Canada gives an orientation & training right at the beginning of hiring a Resolution Health Support Worker & also for new & existing Cultural Support Providers so that people are doing the work they are supposed to be doing effectively.

I'm also a proud mother to 4 daughters (Sue - 31, Darcy - 20, Kaylie -16 & Qulaut - 3), 1 stepson (Jason)& 5 beautiful grandchildren (Cameron, Kyra, Aapak, Cymonie & Alisha) & am married to a wonderful man who is extremely supportive in everything I do

Financial Report – Summarized (Audited statements available upon Request)

Revenue	**Amount**
Health Canda	$ 433,526.00
Government of Nunavut	$ 215,000.00
INAC	$ 50,000.00
Fundraising and Donations	$ 43,333.00
NAYSPS	$ 306,974.00
Other	$ 21,100.00
Total	$ 1,069,933.00

Expenses	**Amount**
Salaries	$ 338,402.00
Operations	$ 359,053.00
Programs	$ 371,495.00
Total	$ 1,068,950.00