2009-2010 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. Since its inception the Council has experience many changes, including its membership and staff. The Council has ten members on its board. For the 2009-2010 fiscal year the members representing its organizations were:

Jesse Mike – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Steve McVarnock – Royal Canadian Mounted Police "V" Division
Sheila Levy – Kamatsiaqtut Helpline
Becky Kilabuk – Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Vacant – Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Eugene Kabluitok – Kivalliq Inuit Association
Mary Etuangat – Nunavut Teachers Association
Vacant – Nunavut Association of Municipalities
Alice Ayalik– Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit
Norm Hatlevik - Government of Nunavut

The Board during its AGM in October 2009, agreed to add a new objective to its by-laws. This addition reflects the commitment the Council has towards improving health and wellbeing amoung Nunavutmiut. 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.
- To support the facilitation of healing and healing sessions in communities.

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 – 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.

Letter from the President

When Lori asked me to prepare a Presidents message, I thought to myself "I just did this a couple of months ago". This goes to show how quickly the year has gone by. Although we haven't been able to hold a full board meeting, we did have many more executive committee meetings this year. We had a very productive and challenging year, with our staff turnover being high; we had staff experience personal challenges and struggled through partnership initiatives with other organizations. This year, some of our biggest accomplishments included: identification of community role models of Nunavut, Embrace Life day (September 10) activities in most communities, increase in staff from 5 to 9.5 and a successful gathering of cultural support providers in Iqaluit. Among other partnerships, the two notable ones are with Isuma, who posted Inuusivut projects completed by youth participants on their website and the Tukisigiarvik Society in Iqaluit, who have agreed to share office space for one of our Resolution Health Support Providers. I'd like to thank all the partners, the staff, and the executive for always being available and being the driving force towards the successes at the Embrace Life Council. Working together is always a key to success and overcoming the challenges. Also a special thank you to a former board member who served as an executive member as well, since the beginning in 2004; Sheila Levy who represented the Kamatsiaqtuq Helpline. During her membership, she has served as Treasurer and at another point as President. Her contributions and support to staff was most appreciated.

Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings

There were attempts to have a board meeting, however due to the lack of a quorum, the only meeting that occurred with all board members was the annual general meeting held in October. Executive Committee meetings occurred monthly.

Staff

Lori Idlout – Executive Director
Kane Tologanak – Wellness, Training and Development Coordinator
Marie-Lucie Uviluq – Resolution Health Support Worker
Qajaaq Ellsworth – Inuusivut Coordinator
Ruth deVries – Resolution Health Support Worker
Brian Higgins – Projects Coordinator (Ralph Kownak was with us for a few months)
Mary Sammurtok – Resolution Health Support Worker
Jimmy Paton – Resolution Health Support Worker
Jean Kigutikakjuk - – Resolution Health Support Worker/Coordinator
Beatrice Ikkidluak – Resolution Health Support Worker
Annie Gibbons – Administrative Assistant (casual)

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.

Research Initiatives

A research initiative that we had a partnership with was completed in the previous fiscal year with the publication. This research was with Jack Haggerty and the article was published in the American Association of Suicidology entitled Suicidality in a Sample of Arctic Households.

Continued research collaboration with Michael Kral, whose research has included participatory action research in the area of suicide prevention and the interpretation of resilience from the community level – both have included participation and collection in the community of Igloolik.

The final research partnership is with Karla Williamson in the area of resilience and spirituality. The partnership with Karla has included the communities of Caped Dorset and Iqaluit.

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 (who completed his secondment during this fiscal year). 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 $35,940.51 and a GST rebate of $11651.25

Ben Williams Fund

There was no distribution of the Ben Williams Fund. 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, including interpreting and translation of documents. The Training Facilitator position was changed to a Projects Coordinator Position, which is currently employed by Brian Higgins. This fund was used to coordinate the annual Nunavut Embrace Life Day activities and to launch a role model program, where communities identified their own role models based on their own criteria. The role models identified this year are: Zachary Cousins and Aviaq Johnson of Iqaluit, Roseanne Aklah and Wendy Nignark of Kugaaruk, David Shooyouu and Cindy Alorut of Arctic Bay, Solomon Malliki and Shirley Kidlapik of Repulse Bay, Tutuiya Qimirpik and Rosie Akavak of Kimmirut.

Source: Health Canada Amount: $811,840.63

This fund came out of Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program to employ Marie-Lucie Uviluq, Ruth deVries, Mary Sammurtok, Jimmy Paton, Beatrice Ikkidluak as the Resolution Health Support Workers and Jean Kigutikakjuk as both an RHSW/coordinator. This increased funding was also used to administer a cultural support program, which allows the council to hire elders to provide additional mental health support to former residential school students and their family members.

Source: National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy $407,972.52

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 $110,000.00

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.

Getting to Know the Staff

Lori Idlout - Executive Director

2009-2010 was different from previous years, as I had experienced personal hardships which really taught me to "practice what I preach". Over the years, while I worked at embrace life, I've always advised people that it is possible to overcome challenges. The first few months of the fiscal year were difficult due to the passing of my sister. She left behind three small children and it had been planned for me to adopt them. However, right before the intended arrival of the children the adoption did not proceed. This was quite devastating as I was very much looking forward to staying at home to raise them. I've very much appreciated the support that I received from my friends and staff that worked with me. Both Qajaaq and Ralph contributed so much in allowing me to grieve while they maintain the operations in the office. Jesse's unwavering support also allowed me to maintain my commitment to my work for.

The overall support that, embrace life has received from Health Canada is commendable. In previous years, the resolution health support worker position was challenging to retain. Through their understanding and hard work, we were able to increase our staff composition from two to five funded positions. Further, we were able to have a gathering of elders who would later work for us as cultural support providers. Because of their funding, we had participants from most Nunavut communities. I look forward to the renewed energy based on the increase in staff.

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

As a coordinator, helps 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

This year we hosted our first 5 day Returning to Spirit workshop for former residential school students in Chesterfield Inlet from August 8-12, 2009 which was a huge success. We had former students from Iqaluit, Igloolik, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Repulse Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Ottawa & Winnipeg & were all Inuit participants with all First Nations & Inuit trainers. Everyone in the workshop including the trainers were moved profoundly & now have new tools to keep working on themselves to make breakthroughs rather than staying in their breakdowns.

Another part of RTS is reconciliation between the former residential school students & churches which I will be working on to get the participants that are interested to attend. As I am leaving Embrace Life Council effective October 30, 2009 to pursue my becoming a certified trainer for Returning to Spirit & opening a Nunavut office for RTS, I wish the staff & board of Embrace Life Council the best success in keeping Embrace Life alive & thriving. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn & to pass on what I know to others.

Brian Higgins – Projects Coordinator

I started my employment with Embrace Life Council on January 19 as the Projects Coordinator. It has gone above and beyond my expectations and I truly feel fulfilled in my position. I have coordinated travel for well over 70 CSP's from all over Nunavut to attend the Cultural Support Providers Orientation. I have assisted RHSW's with drafting letters and reports plus travel. I have supported staff with technical issues relating computers and software. Performed general office duties and with an attitude of no work too small or task too daunting to complete. Outside of my work my hobby is to keep up with the sport of boxing and run a boxing website.

Mary Sammurtok – Resolution Health Support Worker (Kivalliq)

I started my first day with Embrace Life Council January 22, 2010. I' am originally from Whale Cove, where I was born and raised. I have three grown up children, two adopted children and several grandchildren. I've been living in Iqaluit for the past four years. I graduated from the mental health worker training program offered by the Nunavut Arctic College,, which was exciting very exciting for me!

Jimmy Paton – Resolution Health Support Worker (South Baffin)

Jimmy started working for the Council on February 1st 2010 in pursuing healthier life for Inuit cognitively and emotionally. She thinks all types of people should be able to have a person to talk to. She facilitated the southern part of Baffin Island communities during the gathering that embrace life delivered in late February. She has been recruiting Cultural Support Providers trying to reach the goal on Inuit community wellbeing. She enjoys associating with all age groups; especially when the environment can get a grasp of

positive outcome. Jimmy likes to travel out on the land as well as in the air. Learning is most appreciated for her achievements. I can speak and write in English and Inuktitut very well as well as in Roman Orthography. She enjoys spending time with her family of seven.

Jean Kigutikakjuk – Resolution Health Support Worker/Coordinator

I am originally from Arctic Bay and I've lived in Iqaluit for the past 8 years. I have three amazing children who give me strength and happiness and I have a very supportive and loving common law. It is because of them, I am where I want to be, for me, self-satisfaction is giving and helping others. I enjoy interacting with people, value peaceful living and security, and enjoy a variety of activities, but work well with routine tasks. I've been with Embrace Life Council since February 22, 2010 as a Resolution Health Support Program Coordinator. It's been only a couple of months, still trying to get used to the routine but I'm looking forward to working within the organization and provide caring support for former residential school students and their families. I am ready to face challenges and mistakes. Facing many challenges will lead us to a good and strong foundation.

Beatrice Ikkidluak – Resolution Health Support Worker

I have 3 daughters and 1 son with grandsons and granddaughters. I started my job on the 22nd of February of this year. I moved here to Iqaluit August 2002 with my family to work with Public Prosecution Service as the Crown Witness Coordinator. I have always liked counseling and with this job I will have time to do it and get paid too!! I believe EmbraceLife is the best thing to happen to Nunavut. With a dynamic Executive Director, Lori and the support of the Executive committee the mission statement to support and encourage Nunavutmiut to value life will certainly be met.

Financial Report – Summarized (Audited statements available upon Request)

Revenue	**Amount**
Health Canada (Indian Residential Schools)	$811,840
Government of Nunavut	$135,000
National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy	$407,479
Health Canada (Nationals Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy)	$110,000
Fundraising and Donations	$35,941
Other	$11,651
Total	$1,511911

Expenses	**Amount**
Salaries	$ 335,027
Operations	$576,010
Programs	$375,432
Total	$1,286,469
Remaining	$18,312

Note audited statements only show actual revenues and expenses. Amounts in revenues were according to contribution agreement amounts.