

Help and Hope for Families Society

Watson Lake

Started: 1985

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The Help and Hope for Families Society is a shelter for women and children in crisis. Open 24 hours a day, the facility has 11 beds and serves southeast Yukon and northern BC. The staff and volunteer board of directors also do education in the community on family violence.



Community benefits: Reducing violence and providing a safe environment for women and children is key to building a healthy community. Society members believe that speaking out about violence leads to a decrease in violence and will reduce shame and victim blaming. Involving other community members in this issue helps break the cycle of violence. The society also looks for ways to find solutions by working with the people who are violent.

Lessons learned: One of the biggest difficulties the shelter has faced is finding trained staff. The first director was hired from Alberta based on her extensive experience. Ongoing staff training for others was accessed through BC government programs. The lack of adequate resources means that staff has had little time to do much community education and outreach.

Future of the project: The co-directors are in the process of trying to find additional resources so that they can improve staff wages and hours, and undertake some focused community outreach initiatives. They would also like to restart a women's support group at the facility.