BOUNDARY WOMEN'S COALITION
NEWSLETTER
September 2026

Board Chair's Report

by: Elly Macmaster, BWC Board Chair

It is my pleasure to present this report as Board Chair of the Boundary Women's Coalition.
Looking back over the past year, I am once again reminded of the important work BWC does in our community and of the dedication of the people who make that work possible. Every day, our organization provides safety, support, resources and a path forward for women and children experiencing violence. Much of this work happens quietly and behind the scenes, but its impact in our community is significant.

I am incredibly proud to be part of an organization that continues to provide these essential services with compassion, professionalism and care.

Strong Leadership and Staff Team

I want to begin by recognizing our Executive Director, **Meghan Hatley**, for her strong leadership of BWC. Meghan leads the organization with commitment, thoughtfulness and a clear understanding of the needs of the people we serve and the responsibilities of the organization. She has built a strong team, navigated ongoing challenges and opportunities, and continues to move BWC forward while keeping our core mission at the centre of the work.
I also want to recognize the entire BWC staff team. The Board sees only part of what happens within the organization, but we know the day-to-day work is demanding and often challenging. Your dedication, knowledge and compassion make a tremendous difference to the women and children we serve. Thank you to each of you for the work you do.

Our Board

I am also very proud of the Board team we have built and want to thank each of our Board members for the time, thoughtfulness and commitment they bring to their role. Governance work happens in the background, but it is an important responsibility. It depends on directors who are willing to roll up their sleeves, ask questions, listen, work collaboratively and make decisions with the best interests of the organization and the people we serve in mind. This Board has demonstrated that commitment.
We've had a strong and productive year, continuing to improve board processes, build our board roster, respond to the needs of the organization, and provide strong governance and oversight.
This year, we welcomed **Linda Andersson** to the Board in January. Linda brings a wealth of knowledge and board experience along with professional experience in project coordination and workflow management. She also brings a strong background in collaborative, consensus-building teams. Linda has already been a valuable addition to our Board, revising the Board Calendar and assisting on the ED annual review. I am very pleased to welcome her to the BWC board team.
I also want to recognize **Maureen Walters**, who stepped down from the Board this past winter. Maureen believed strongly in the mission and vision of BWC, and we thank her for her service and wish her all the best.
This AGM also marks the end of **Ali Dickson's** time on the BWC Board. Ali has served as both Secretary and Director at Large, and I want to sincerely thank her for her contributions. We will miss having her around the Board table.
I am also very grateful to our returning Board members for their efforts and expertise: **Tricia Ronmark**, who will continue as Treasurer; **Melissa Klingler**, as Secretary; **Sam Vaugeouis**, as Vice-Chair; and **Lee Greaves**, as Director at Large.

A Personal Thank You

For me personally, this AGM is also a significant one, as I will be stepping down from the BWC Board after seven years.
This has been a difficult decision. I have loved working with this team and have enormous respect for the work BWC does. My own work commitments have expanded, and while it is difficult to step away, I know it is the right decision at this point in my life.
It has been an honour to serve as Chair and as a member of this Board. I am incredibly grateful to have worked alongside so many dedicated staff, volunteers and Board members. I have learned a great deal, made wonderful connections and, most importantly, had the privilege of contributing to an organization whose work matters deeply to our community.
Although I am stepping away for now, I sincerely hope this will not be goodbye. I would very much like to return to the BWC Board in the future when the timing is right.
As I step away, I leave with tremendous confidence in BWC, in Meghan and the staff team, and in the Board that will continue to provide leadership and oversight.
Thank you to everyone who contributes to the Boundary Women's Coalition and to the important work we do. It matters, and I am proud to have been part of it.

Respectfully submitted, Elly Macmaster

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Executive Director

by: Meghan Hatley, BWC ED

It is hard to believe this is my fifth Annual General Meeting as the Executive Director of the Boundary Women's Coalition. It is a privilege to lead this organization alongside all our amazing, hardworking staff. As always, the year has flown by, and I am excited to share what we have been working on over the last year.

I would like to start off by sharing that long-time employee Norma Busch retired in July of this year. Norma has worked with the agency since 2004, primarily as the agency's Finance Coordinator. No words can describe how much Norma will be missed by all staff in our office, and we truly wish her the best in retirement. Norma's dedication to her work was beyond admirable, and she had a gift for making coming to work fun every day. I want to thank Norma for everything she did for the BWC.

We continue to focus on service delivery in all of our programs and, most recently, have received wonderful feedback and testimonials from different clients. This truly reflects our staff's approach and dedication when working with the women who come through our doors. We will continue to focus on service delivery and feedback, and we have been updating client feedback surveys and providing more modern options using online links and QR Codes. We hope a more modern approach will reach more clients, help us keep improving, and help us hear what clients enjoy about our services.

Our Women's Resource Centre received a new look this year, with a more professional design and new programming that you will hear about later in the newsletter. Several staff members helped bring this new look to life and worked hard to have it ready by the time it reopened in May.

This year we received funding to purchase an agency vehicle for the purpose of having a means to transport residential clients out of town in the event of a town evacuation. This coincides with our robust Emergency Management plan in the event of a natural disaster. Purchasing this vehicle has eliminated several barriers, and we are grateful to have the means to be as prepared as possible.

Our agency has been represented at several community events over the last year, usually with a resource table showcasing who we are and what we do. We also held another Women of Influence Awards night and celebrated the phenomenal work women are doing across the Boundary area. Stay tuned for future event announcements for the upcoming year; you can find them on our website or Facebook Page.

Lastly, I want to thank our Board Members for their commitment and dedication. Most of our Board Members work full-time, have families, and are volunteering their time in their Board role. Most of their work happens behind the scenes but plays a critical role in the Organization's overall success. I also want to thank our hard-working staff. This diverse group of women on our team is incredibly dedicated to their work and continues to amaze me with how they work with the women we serve. It is an honour to have gotten to know all of them and to continue working alongside them.

Meghan Hatley- Executive Director

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Transition House

by: Frani Carmen, House Coordinator &
Georgia Hilburn, House Team Lead

The House Coordinator, Frani Carmen, & The Team Lead, Georgia Hilburn, work closely together to support the Transition House, the Front-Line Support Team, and the clients accessing our services. While our roles at times have different areas of focus, we work collaboratively to strengthen day-to-day operations, staff support, and client care. The Executive Director supervises both roles.
Since December 2025, we have welcomed three new Support Staff. Our team currently includes six permanent staff members, with one on maternity leave, as well as four casual/on-call staff.

Team Health & Client Care
This year, we have continued to prioritize Team Health and Client Care. We know that when staff feel supported, informed, and connected, they can provide consistent and compassionate care to the women and children we serve.

Our ongoing work has included strengthening communication, supporting staff training and development, and reviewing procedures and resources to ensure they are practical, clear, and helpful to staff in their day-to-day roles.
We are grateful for our Executive Director's continued support and guidance. We also want to recognize our Support Team for their ongoing commitment to client-centered care, and all the other BWC programs and community partners we work alongside. These relationships and the dedication of the people who support women and children in our community strengthen our work.

Trends We Are Seeing in the Clients We Support
A lack of affordable, adequate housing continues to be a significant barrier. It can take months to secure suitable housing, and some women must resort to motel accommodations, which can cost more than $1,000 per month.
Longer stays at the Transition House. Because housing options are limited, women are staying considerably longer than in previous years, with some stays extending an additional three to four months.

Second Stage housing remains an important resource. This year, many Transition House residents moved into our Second Stage program when leaving the House, providing greater continuity and stability in their housing journey.
A wide range of ages and circumstances. The women accessing the Transition House continue to represent a broad range of ages, from 19-year-olds to women in their 90s.
At times, we also work with MCFD to support an underage young woman accessing our services.

2025–2026 Service Statistics
During the previous fiscal year, from April 2025 to March 2026, BWTH provided:
• 1,254 bed days for women
• 457 bed days for children
• 1,711 total bed days
This represents an increase of 240 bed days compared with the previous fiscal year.

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Women's Resource Centre

by: Paula Splichal, Coordinator

My name is Paula Splichal, and I support the women who come to the Resource Centre. I also work on call at the Women's Transition House and assist at Second Stage once a week. I have been in Grand Forks for just over a year and have really enjoyed being part of the community.

The BWC Women's Resource Center is a safe space for women to connect with each other, talk to staff about other support services the coalition provides, and have a hot coffee and snack. The center operates every Tuesday and Thursday from 10am
to 2pm, and we see anywhere from 6 to 24 women coming throughout the day. Women come in for support regarding gender-based violence, with staff providing them with resources and safety plans when needed.

We run free educational programs every Thursday, including cooking, learning sign language, food security, end-of-life care, stretching, ukulele, painting, and more. The classes not only help women learn skills they may not otherwise access but also allow us to support and showcase local businesses in our community.
We also hosted a Women's Appreciation Day this year, where the ladies enjoyed snacks, free manicures, free haircuts, and each other's company.

The centre is also a place where women can do their laundry - which is frequently used - take food donations that we receive from the food bank once a week, enjoy clothing donations and have free access to Wi-Fi and a computer. We can also print documents, help fill out online forms such as BC Housing applications and provide some tech support.
This year the staff came together and gave the Centre a new, fresh, modern look. They painted the space to match the colours of the Coalition Logo and upgraded some of the furniture. The space is bright and inviting, and community feedback has been very positive.
The Women's Resource Center is an integral part of the small community of Grand Forks, as it addresses the need for social connection and reduces isolation.

Outreach

by: Laura Makeiff, Outreach Worker

Over the last year, I have found the program to be busy providing support to women in the following areas:

Assistance in applying to legal services for women in matters relating to child and spousal support, parenting time, and guardianship, and protection orders. I have assisted many women in applying for BC Housing's subsidized housing, Income Assistance, and dispute resolution with the Residential Tenancy Branch this past year by helping fill out forms and supporting hearings or calls as needed.

I have continued to assist women in applying for rental subsidies for survivors of Gender Based Violence; this enables women to get assistance for market value rentals in the community, which in today's economy is extremely helpful when rental costs have skyrocketed. There are many women 55+ finding it very difficult to secure long-term rental housing in our area with very few affordable rentals available.

I was able to attend some community events and presentations that showcase what services our programs provide to women in our service area. We have continued hosting luncheons for some of the clients STV and Outreach share; we attempt monthly when possible. The women who attend regularly connect with others whomay be experiencing some of the same social anxieties or challenges around meeting new people, getting out of the house to socialize and making connections within the community. It has been nice to see how far the women have come; they share ideas,respect each other's opinions and offer to help each other out when in need.

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Stopping the Violence

by: Morgan Paterson

My name is Morgan. I have been with BWC for almost 1.5 years, with most of that time spent as a permanent support worker at the Transition House.

During my time in the STV role, I completed over 28 hours of training focused on short-term counselling methods and trauma-informed practice. I assisted the ED in developing an introductory package for new clients that outlines the program structure. I helped create an Operations Manual for the STV position as well as an updated client feedback form. I have created an outline for four weeks of group counselling that focuses on psychoeducation around stress responses, regulatory tools, and boundaries.

I also connected with a local brain injury association and gathered information about other free counselling, outreach, and group services in the area. Overall, my time here has provided me with a wealth of experience and connection to my community"

Second Stage

by: Holly Hume, Coordinator

As part of the Boundary Women's Coalition's contribution to the community, I am excited to have recently started overseeing Second Stage. I came into this role at the end of July and have enjoyed learning about the many parts of this role and the Second Stage program! My background is in Social Services, as I have a Diploma in Social Work and an Associate Certificate in Mental Health and Addictions. In my last role, I worked with youth impacted by or using substances at Freedom Quest; before that, I worked at Work BC as an Employment Counsellor and workshop facilitator.

The Second Stage program is a transitional housing program created to support women and children who are fleeing abuse, domestic violence, or homelessness. With compassion at its core, Second Stage provides a temporary, fully furnished home that offers safety and dignity, and a sanctuary where healing can begin. Here, each woman is met with empathy and encouragement as she rebuilds her confidence and embarks on the journey toward a life of independence, stability, and hope—free from harm. The program includes 10 units: four 1-bedroom and four 2-bedroom apartments, plus two 3-bedroom townhouses.

As part of the program, I meet with each resident weekly to connect, discuss their progress, explore the resources they're using or may need support accessing, and collaboratively set meaningful goals to work toward each quarter. These goals focus on strengths and challenges in the following areas: current housing, personal connections, education/career, self-care, and legal and financial matters. Paula and I offer encouragement, support and guidance as each woman works on her self-directed goals. I recently started weekly groups based on topics the women selected. Some of the topics scheduled so far are painting, icebreakers, yoga/stretching, sound journey, Tai Chi, and a group outing to Work BC to learn about all their program available. These groups bring us all together to collaborate, support each other, have fun and learn. The Second Stage programming is an incredible opportunity for women and children, and I am honoured to walk alongside them on this healing journey!

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Finance

by: Chris Ditto, Coordinator

Hi, my name is Chris Ditto, and I have been with the BWC since January 2025, starting as a casual Transition House support staff member, moving into Second Stage Coordinator, and, when Norma retired, moving into her role as Finance Coordinator at the beginning of August after completing education to support me in this role.

Having worked in human services most of my adult life, this shift is different than anything I have ever done, and I am really happy this opportunity allows for new learning, new challenges and new growth while still being a part of the BWC and the substantial impact our amazing team has in supporting women and children.



Operations Assistant

by: Lisa Piché

I have been working with the Boundary Women's Coalition for over five years in the role of Operations Assistant. In this position, I work with all programs across the organization, providing administrative and operational support to help ensure that programs run smoothly and effectively.

It has been a pleasure to be part of such an amazing team of women. I truly value the collaborative, supportive, and dedicated environment we have created together and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Boundary Women's Coalition.