Rossbrook House Presentation to City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee
December 8, 2016

History: Rossbrook House was founded in 1976 by the late Sister Geraldine MacNamara and a group of street involved youth as a refuge from the destructive environment of the streets and a diversion from involvement in the criminal justice system.

A youth drop-in centre in the Centennial Area of the city it has always had an Indigenous focus due to its participants and staff. Rossbrook hires from its group of regular attenders which provides a staff with strong lived experience and empathy for participants. They are accessible mentors and role models to the children and youth coming to Rossbrook on a daily basis.

Purpose and Vision: Rossbrook is open 365 days of the year and operates 24 hours every weekend and period of school holidays (Summer, Christmas break, Spring break, School in-service days); so there is always *a safe place for children and youth to belong, play, learn and become…* and we can realize the vision articulated by Sister MacNamara that "*no child who does not want to be alone should ever have to be.*"



Participants: Today up to 1,000 individual participants ages 1 – 24 years come through the doors on an annual basis. There are relatively equal numbers of males and females and the largest age grouping is 12 – 17 year olds closely followed by children 6 – 11 years old. On a daily basis approximately 80 children and youth attend Rossbrook House. Most of our participants have Indigenous heritage and come from the Centennial and surrounded areas where poverty and racism play major roles in their families' lives.



Food: Rossbrook has a commercial grade kitchen that serves daily healthy meals and snacks to participants as well as promoting opportunities for participants to learn about nutrition, cooking and food safety.



Education: Rossbrook House is associated with three Winnipeg #1 School Division alternative school programs: Wi Wabigooni (Elementary), Eagles' Circle (Jr High) and Rising Sun (High School). Eagles' Circle School is on site at Rossbrook House and the other schools are at locations associated with Rossbrook House.



Rossbrook House also has a successful afterschool homework program called *Learning Always* that is facilitated by former participants who continued on into Education degrees and work in the school system.



Programming: Rossbrook has a variety of recreation and employment development programs that reflect the needs and desires of its participants. There are also traditional Indigenous cultural activities, a drop-in music program, an art program, a young mothers' group and a variety of special events and outings to give participants a wide range of options and opportunities.





