His Worship Mayor Bowman and members of the Executive Policy Committee,
Chairperson Councillor Allard Councillor Gillingham Councillor Gilroy Councillor Mayes
Councillor Orlikow Councillor Rollins

I'm Phil Chiappetta, the Executive Director of Rossbrook House. Denis Bracken our Board President, was unable to attend after this meeting was rescheduled. However, he and all the Rossbrook crowd are with me in spirit.

In that spirit we appear before you as old friends who partnered over 44 years ago to meet the needs of children and youth living in the inner city of Winnipeg. You took a big risk in 1976 when you offered the old church on the corner of Ross Avenue and Sherbrook Street to the late great Sister Geraldine MacNamara and a group street affected youth. It paid off by providing a place of safety, belonging, opportunity and employment for thousands of inner- city children and youth over the years.

For the councillors who may not be overly familiar with Rossbrook House our mission is to be a safe place for children and youth to belong, play, learn and become…

Rossbrook offers a constant alternative to the destructive environment of the streets by:

- Keeping the doors open 365 days of the year and 24 hours every weekend & period of school holidays
- Recruiting its staff from the young people who come to the centre on a regular basis
- Driving participants safely home each evening

Today, over 1,000 children and youth ages 6-24 years come through the doors annually and up to 80 participants on a daily basis. Beyond being a safe place to be, Rossbrook hosts three Wpg 1 alternative school programs, an afterschool homework club, young mom's group, sports and recreational activities, Indigenous cultural activities, leadership activities, a music program, summer camping and activity programs, and a healthy kitchen that provides daily meals to participants.

We share the belief that the symptoms of poverty, injustice and racism are: trauma, addiction, and over representation in the child welfare and criminal

justice systems. The Wpg Police and Child Welfare agencies agree that they need the support of community services like Rossbrook House, Art City, Spence Neighbourhood, Ndinawe Resource Centre, IRCOM and MaMawi, to name a few, to make their jobs doable. They can't address these symptoms on their own.

Last Friday brilliant presentations were made to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks. I was proud to hear the values of Winnipegers voiced so articulately and powerfully. Strong connections were made between the health and vitality of Winnipeg and the sectors that would be affected by the cuts. Doctor Ian Whetter, focussing in on libraries closures, made a powerful case for all arts and community services having a direct and important impact on the health of those using them. He underlined the necessity of having these services available to children and families living in poverty.

We applaud the City's plans to make funding commitments of multiple years to arts and community service groups; predictable funding sources are key to the health of our organizations and enable us to leverage support from other sources. You are making a commitment to the people of Winnipeg in a thoughtful and deeply meaningful way when you make funding healthy community initiatives a priority in your planning. However, needs for these funds have grown not diminished. Investments should not diminish.

There needs to be a preventative network of strong community- based services where children and youth develop a sense of belonging and foster hopes for their future. We need to continue to invest proactively if we are to have a vibrant City where all can thrive. I'm sure the City still wants to embrace the vision that started Rossbrook House, that "no child who does not want to be alone, should ever have to be."

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Phil Chiappetta| Executive Director
Rossbrook House Inc.