

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO ROCKHILL FIRE CRISIS IN YELLOWKNIFE
October 12, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday morning last week, I woke to the news that the Rockhill apartments were on fire. When I looked out my kitchen window, I could see the black smoke, and I feared for the lives of the families who called Rockhill home. For 20 years, the transitional housing program has helped hundreds of families rebuild their lives. It has become indispensable, and I worked there myself for six years. The good news is that all 87 people who lived at Rockhill escaped unharmed. The bad news of course is that the building was destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, since the fire, the YWCA has had an overwhelming amount of good news. First, Northview Property had enough empty units to accommodate most of the families. The remainder found places on their own, or they have now bunked in with family and friends.

Another highlight was the government response. The City of Yellowknife opened their facilities. A GNWT emergency response team came in to register families and provide them with services, from replacing ID to reissuing income assistance cheques.

Mr. Speaker, businesses stepped up. The diamond mining companies pledged money. DC Moving spent three days picking and up dropping off furniture. The Co-op donated \$7,500 in gift cards. This isn't the whole list, but it is an indication of how business rallied to the cause.

Faith groups joined in as well. The St. Vincent de Paul society provided vouchers for shopping at their thrift store and collected clothing Donations, while the Islamic Centre bought new kitchen supplies for families. The Salvation Army provided all the meals at the Multiplex and the Field House.

Individuals went out of their way with online donations. The Students Against Drunk Driving at St. Pat's sold slushy drinks. The Department of Justice collected gift cards. Another group held a scavenger hunt. Yellowknife Catholic Schools hosted a Thanksgiving dinner.

Mr. Speaker, the response has been so generous that it is truly overwhelming. The YWCA now faces some tough decisions about the future of its housing program and housing staff, and they do so with the knowledge that the community has their back. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.