

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**YELLOWKNIFE WOMEN'S SOCIETY NAMED UP HERE MAGAZINE
NORTHERNERS OF THE YEAR**

February 14, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Yellowknife Women's Society on being named Up Here magazine's Northerners of the Year.

As the magazine's testimonial story outlines, today the Yellowknife Women's Society is a major force in the safety and wellbeing of women. It has moved from strength to strength in the last few years.

YWS leases apartments throughout Yellowknife and sublets them to people transitioning from homelessness in the Housing First program. YWS continues to operate a women's shelter from its long-term location on Franklin Avenue, along with eight semi-independent units downstairs where the daycare used to be. Now, the daycare is in a standalone building that doubles as a family centre. The society has staff who operate the highly successful safe ride program that assists people in distress on our streets. They also lead the Common Ground project to facilitate employment for downtown homeless people. The Yellowknife Women's Society is a major force for good in our community.

Mr. Speaker, as usual in the world of activism, YWS started with a few committed people with a passion for change and for social justice. According to the Up Here magazine profile of them, the society's roots are in a gathering at International Women's Day in 1988. Incorporated in 1990 under the leadership of Arlene Hache, the society set up first as a drop-in and mutual support centre downtown. As the society moved on to a house on 49th Street and then to its long-term location on Franklin Avenue, the society expanded to include a women's shelter, providing emergency housing for up to 30 people at a time. Our own Minister of Education, Culture and Employment was the executive director before she was elected and helped the society regain financial stability.

Under the leadership of the current executive director, Bree Denning, YWS has further expanded and grown. The Up Here article describes her desire to see the emergency shelter operate as a short-term solution in a city where anyone capable of living independently has that opportunity. I am confident that these developments are just the latest chapter in the continuing story of service to Yellowknife women and to the community as a whole.

Please join me in congratulating the Yellowknife Women's Society for its recognition as Up Here's Northerners of the Year and, above all, for its many years of outstanding service. Mahsi.