Lucille

**ACT FOR CHANGE**
September 9,1997

**INCORPORATION/MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION**

1. **Name of Society**
   - ACT for Change (Adolescents Coming Together for Change)

2. **Objects of the Society**
   - to establish and maintain a youth-directed, youth centre in Antigonish that will provide community youth with opportunities to positively direct youth activities;

   - to provide services and programs which will enable youth to develop skills to address youth issues and to positively contribute to community.

   - Note:
     - by *youth* we mean young women and men aged 13-24 years;
     - by *youth-directed* we mean youth will determine guidelines for the usage of the youth centre, which activities we undertake, and which programs will be offered. Youth will be involved in all decisions made by ACT for Change.

3. **Membership**
   - youth membership is open to all youth aged 13-~~24~~ 21 years. Membership numbers are unlimited. ←
   - adult membership is open to *(who? how many? criteria?)*

4. **Board of Directors**
   - 20 board members including 12 youth and 8 adults elected for a three year term.
     - ⇨ Youth membership could include 2 representatives each from grades 8 through 12 with 2 post-secondary reps.
     - ⇨ Youth could be elected by the youth membership or by peer group. (Note: we are looking for a diversity of youth.)

     - ⇨ Adult membership could include service providers (Mental Health, Drug Dependency, Community Services, RCMP), community groups (Women's Centre, Naomi Society, Kids First), and parents. Public Health

   - Officers for the Board could be 2 Co-chairpersons (one youth member, one

adult member), a treasurer and a secretary.

5. **Decision-Making**

- We need to decide whether we want to use a consensus decision-making process or to vote.

- *Consensus Decision-making*

  ⇨ we strive to reach a solution that is agreeable to all members. It can take longer to come to a decision using this process, however it often results in more creative solutions and ends with most people being satisfied with and supportive of the decision reached. Consensus decision-making requires the commitment of everyone to work together and is a very easy process to disrupt, frustrate and stall. This is the process we have generally been using to date.

- *Voting - one person, one vote*

  ⇨ voting is a more traditional form of decision-making that requires a majority of members to agree to take a decision. The percentage required (50-75%?) would be determined by ACT for Change. While this process may seem to be more time efficient, it is based on a winning and losing system which results in some people being dis-satisfied with the decision taken.

THE RESULTS ARE IN.....

Over the past number of years, there have been several surveys or information days where the issues of teenagers in the community have been brought to light. The following are three of these events and the results of them:

**The Adolescent Health Project (1991/92)**

In 1991 the Adolescent Health Project, sponsored by the Antigonish Women's Association, and funded by Health Canada surveyed over 400 teenagers between 13 and 18 from Antigonish Town and County. The survey found some of the following results:

- 83.5% of teens, 13 – 18 yrs reported using alcohol
- 87.5% reported having a friend or friends who abuse alcohol
- 46% of those teens who used alcohol, drink once a month or more, with 25% using once a week or more
- 43% of teens who drink, report taking 5 or more drinks at one drinking session
- 54% of teens report having been in a motor vehicle driven by an impaired driver.
- 74.5% of teens report having been seriously "stressed out" due to personal problems
- 13.5% teens reported having attempted suicide. 40% of these did not receive help
- 34.6% of 13 –18 yr olds report having had sexual intercourse
- 51% 16 –18 yr olds have had sexual intercourse
- 20% of teens were questioning their sexual orientation
- 62% of teens having sexual intercourse did not practice safe sex
- 57% get information on reproductive health from their friends 30% get info from parents
- 82% of teens are most comfortable talking with friends about sexual matters, 19% to their parents
- 46.7% do not want to talk to their parents regarding sex
- 11% of teens talk about ALL sexual matters with their parents
- 15% of teens report being sexually abused
- 20% of teens reported witnessing physical abuse in their homes

**Street Talk '97**

In March of 1997 youth identified their main concerns with violence, stress and depression, sex, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of respect, boredom and discrimination.

**The Youth Services Committee**

The YSC brought forth many of the same issues as Street Talk did and as well, they identified programming that they felt would benefit youth that was not presently addressed in the community:

- environmental issues
- sexuality issues

- economic justice/global issues
- leadership camps
- entrepreneurship
- video nights
- counselling
- referral centre
- employment counselling
- sexuality education
- youth advocate/youth rights

They also identified the issues of "home-life concerns " and "peer struggles"

TEEN HEALTH SURVEY RESPONSES

"A lot of adults in Antigonish are conservative... teens don't get emotional support because we are too afraid to bring or different views forward, the community just wouldn't understand"

"Help us learn so we can do good things for ourselves"

"We have problems and as a result look for outlets in the form of sex, alcohol and drug abuse"

"Get up to date on things and get out of the old way of doing things. Times and things are changing – Get with it!"

"Talk to us about sex and birth control"

"Accept what is going on instead of closing your eyes, then begin to look for solutions."

"We need a place where teenagers can go and get the support that may be lacking in their family, school, community or friendships, so that they can build up their self-esteem."

"We need a drop in centre with confidential counselling and a phone-in help line"