

## **Annual General Meeting – True North Society**

**June 24, 2026**

### **Message from the Board – delivered by Board Member Josh Poteet on behalf of the Board Chair**

Good evening, Friends and Neighbors, Supporters, Staff, and Volunteers

My Name is Josh Poteet, and I am humbled to address you tonight on behalf of our Chair Joyce Li and the entire True North Board of Directors. I want to start my message tonight with a sincere thank you for all of the time, effort, sharing, and sacrifice that allows us, as a Society, to do this important work in our community. I want to thank our clients and our community members for giving us their trust, for believing us when we tell them, “we can help, just ask” . I want to thank our neighbors in Siksika for being willing to work together in a spirit of reconciliation. We stand on the shoulders of giants, recognizing the incredible work done by so many sincere, dedicated people over our 33-year history. Each contribution over that time has built what has become an essential source for safety and for goodness in our community. Today, True North continues to work with the same vision, to offer shelter and support to anyone in need of safety, regardless of gender identity or expression. The same Vision of Ending Violence. The work is led and executed by Courtney and her fantastic team who are dedicated to taking this vision, that of a community without violence, and making it happen. Thank you for all you do, both seen and unseen. Sitting on the board gives us the chance to see behind the curtain, and I am always impressed by the resilience and dedication of this group of people.

I wanted to use this chance to address this group in this public setting to talk about change. Lately, it seems my life is full of change. It might be the season of life I’m in, where things move fast with career, family and community. But when I think about it, as a younger person it sure felt like things changed all the time then. And then, when I talk to my patients at the pharmacy, those with more grey than me tell me about all the changes they are confronted with too. I feel and hear about a lot of worry that comes with change. Just recently in the news its been announced that through an evaluation of similar shelters across Alberta, the Province has decided to change our funding, and that of many other rural shelters. This was not a welcome change. More broadly, factors outside of our control lead to changes in prices of goods and services, changes in housing availability, and changes in the complexity of what it takes to actually be safe from someone committing abuse. These are not welcome changes, and can lead to worries about future changes, like how much do we have to tighten our belts? I think it is important to name the worry out loud and address it.

Things appear to be changing for the worse, and it appears to be getting harder to do the work. These worries will try to change us, our minds and our hearts. Just like the river erodes the bank and the wind smooths the mountain face, it can feel like life is changing us, flattening us, wearing us away. I think that is how many of our clients can feel, defeated, worn away, like life has changed them for the worse.

I know, however, there is another way that we as people, change. People change but also, people CHANGE. People can be changed but also people can make change. A person with vision and a community to support them can manufacture change. And we, at True North, specialize in manufacturing Change. We change people's environments. We manufacture change in their lives by empowering them to change themselves. We change futures by teaching the young and changing the cycle of violence so that those people are no longer changed by life, but instead can change their families and communities.

And so, after acknowledging the truth of my worries I also must acknowledge the truth of my optimism. This group makes change happen. Their vision of ending violence is rooted in manufacturing social change. And so, I am optimistic for our future. The coming years will see many more amazing, positive changes for True North, especially with the Finding your True North second stage housing project to be built in Strathmore. This will be a huge organizational change which will allow these fantastic people to make even more lasting changes in the lives of the people they serve. Change can bring worry, but I promise you, the changes that you can make in your life or in your community are good, so don't worry about those.

So, this brings me to my invitation. We, as True North, must undergo change just as all people do. Instead of letting things out of our control change us, I invite you to join with us and help us manufacture change. Our legacy is that of a few individuals who cared enough about the forgotten to make a change, and they inspired a community to join them in supporting victims of violence. We are so grateful for the generosity of our donors, volunteers and sponsors. We have always needed this, and we need this again. We need your support. We need Donations, of time, talents, money and goods. We need Members and Volunteers. I invite you to join us in making change in our Community. Invite your friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues to join us. Everything you do, no matter how small or big, can be used by these good people to help a person change their life, and that of their family.

Thank you for your support.

Josh Poteet

True North Society Board Member at Large