



Taking a Stand: Engaging Men as Leaders

Men are uniquely positioned to become powerful agents to end violence against women and girls by virtue of their leadership roles in society. A guy talking to other guys on this topic can have a great impact. Men are more likely to take a stand against domestic violence if they are mentored and motivated by men they can identify with and respect.

Work we've done to date

In efforts to create awareness for men in the business community in Edmonton six years ago, ACWS organized the first *Breakfast with the Boys* event. Edmonton's Mayor Mandel and then Edmonton Eskimo's CEO Hugh Campbell invited male leaders from Edmonton and surrounding areas to attend on our behalf. Mark Wynn, a retired police officer and renowned family violence expert from Nashville, was the keynote speaker at this inaugural event. It was a great success with over 280 men from business, government, industry, sport and culture attending.

The event was so successful it has continued in Edmonton ever since and is now duplicated in Calgary and around the world. The list of *Breakfast with the Guys* speakers over the years includes: Minister Jim Prentice, Patrick LaForge, Jim Peplinski, Craig Simpson, Lanny McDonald, Jackson Katz and Lundy Bancroft. Organizations from all over the globe have contacted ACWS wanting to re-create the event.

Our *Taking a Stand* project, funded by the province's Community Incentive Fund included hosting a focus group of a cross section of men after our 2009 *Breakfast with the Guys* in Edmonton. We asked men what we could be doing better at our Breakfasts to inspire action, we obtained input on our ideas for future engaging-men projects and we heard how this issue has touched their lives. The focus group validated our ideas for future projects and sharpened our focus.

Following the focus group, ACWS, in partnership with the Whitemud West Minor Hockey Association, began the development of a curriculum for bantam-level hockey coaches. A committee of dedicated coaches at Whitemud worked with ACWS and Jackson Katz (MVP Strategies), to create a program for coaches to better understand domestic violence and how daily behaviours contribute to a culture of gender abuse. Katz delivered a workshop with the committee members in the spring and fall and has written a unique "Playbook" and workshop content that gives Whitemud coaches the tools to harness daily teachable moments with their players. Our first workshop with the bantam coaches happened this October with really positive results. We will continue to work with these coaches through the season and evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness.

What's needed

It has become clear to us that:

1. We need to continue building upon the work we started with the Breakfasts and the Whitemud pilot.
2. ACWS needs a sustained staff position dedicated to working with men to end violence against women that can galvanize a province-wide movement.

The Whitemud curriculum will need to be revised next spring based on the outcomes of the pilot, adapted for different age ranges and then rolled-out to other levels of play in the minor league. Once the curriculum is proven, it is ACWS' aim to share the curriculum with other minor sports leagues (baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, etc.) across Alberta.

To achieve the roll-out we envision and to have the best possible buy-in to the content, ACWS requires a male staff member, focused on this project, stationed here in Edmonton. The position would need to be filled by a male with experience, stature and connections. Someone capable of gaining the attention of and mentoring men of influence. The core activity of this position will be to map out a strategy to engage men across the province including:

- Attend intensive training with Jackson Katz and other Coaching Boys Into Men leaders
- Work with ACWS, Whitemud Minor Hockey and Katz to adjust the curriculum based on the pilot testing
- Adapt the curriculum to other sports leagues in the province
- Mentor coaches
- Prepare and offer educational awareness presentations to men's groups, sports leadership and business leaders
- Work with ACWS on the continued roll-out of the Domestic Violence in the Workplace toolkit, specifically recruiting male leadership
- Assist with the ticket sales for our annual *Breakfast with the Guys* events
- Provide input on the Engaging Men website, quarterly e-newsletter and development of a provincial recognition program

We require \$400,000 over three years to make this position a reality. This will cover all costs associated with required training, salary, travel, printed materials, website updates, etc.

If you or your organization would like to make a contribution to help us fund this 3-year position to work with local sports agencies and men in the community on gender violence prevention initiatives, there are a few different ways you can become involved. (*Please see the funding form on our website for details*).

How we'll measure & report success

It's a difficult thing to measure the outcomes of a prevention program. And yet, prevention activities are critical to make real change; otherwise, we're going to be putting band-aids on the problem forever.

For the Whitemud pilot, we have established an evaluation framework so we can incorporate learnings and demonstrate results. A core goal of the *Taking a Stand* activities is to create a successful model for community sports programs that can then be disseminated as widely as possible. The reach is the key.

The media support for this initiative has been positive. When launching the pilot with Whitemud this fall, we garnered significant participation from the local television and print media. The new, positive way of looking for a solution to domestic violence (through men) combined with our approach with a sports organization (Alberta loves it's hockey!) seems to attract more attention than our other domestic violence initiatives.

Should you choose to participate at the Project Funder level, we give you the option of having your name or company name recognized in materials created through this project that are distributed in the public.

ACWS is a registered charity #118780634RR0001 and has been supporting shelters in Alberta for more than 25 years.

For more information, contact:

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