

**Address by Teri Nicholas, Executive Director
Annual General Meeting – September 18, 2003**

I'd like to welcome you tonight and take a moment to welcome some special guests...

Tonight I have the pleasure of introducing an agency video. It represents the essence of what we do and who we are in this, our 75th year of service to our communities. I want to thank the staff for the pictures you submitted and I want to thank the clients for sharing their words with us.

This 75th year has been one of continuous change. Now, change is a word so commonly used in our work that it has become cliché as a descriptor. And usually, change is a word we prefer to use to describe a process others must go through. This is because, as a rule, people don't like change. It brings disruption to security and routine, no matter how good for you it may turn out to be.

And we at Family Services are not exempt from the demands of this word. This last year, we have asked many to change, not just our clients, but staff and board as well. We have asked many staff to change roles, workspaces, even jobs. Those who haven't had to face direct change have had to cope with possible or impending change, working at times in limbo with no certainty about the continuance of their work or their client goals.

Some examples of this:

- We've asked our youth services staff who at the St. Paul's hospital site to stay there yet another year while we continue to find a permanent home for our youth services in the Downtown South Area of Vancouver.
- We are restructuring our Richmond services, and have asked staff to move locations, share space, and in some circumstances change jobs.
- We've asked staff to repackage their skills in new ways
- We've had to let go of some of our tried and true methods and take on new models of service delivery.
- We've lost some programs and gained new ones
- We've asked staff to learn and use a new database program – HOMES – a client management system, so we can track client outcomes
- I've asked the board to absorb massive amounts of information within very short time frames
- Board and Staff struggled to create language to develop a strategic plan that captured the essence of who we are as an agency and where we are going.



And still, in the face of such enormous change, we operated a full year as a CARF accredited agency, adhering to the highest performance and governance standards. Our staff served 47,000 clients last year, having to work with so many who are dealing with the hard edge of change every day, people who don't have enough to eat, nowhere to live and who are sometimes unable to care for their children.

Please join me now in watching this short video and look as though through a window into the world of this valuable and beautiful work.

