



CAPACITYCANADA

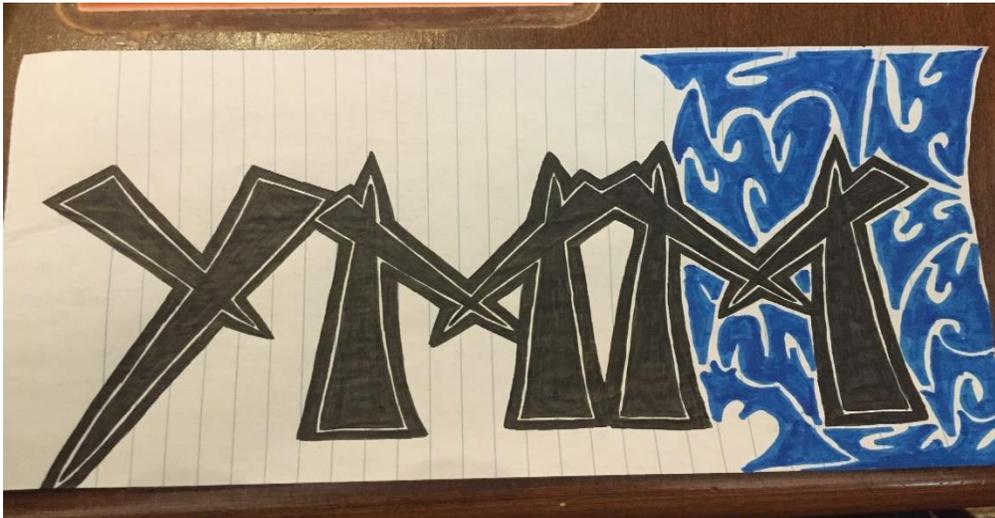
## Explorers, Pathfinders and Leaders

A Report from the Planning Day with Social Profits from Fort  
McMurray  
May 27, 2016

Prepared by: Lynn Randall, Capacity Canada



On May 27, 2016, more than 60 representatives from the Social Profit sector attended a gathering at the Santa Maria Goretti Centre in Edmonton. The purpose of the session was to reconnect, reflect and talk about a shared future as a social profit sector. Over 60 participants attended the day-long session that was convened by FuseSocial and facilitated by **Lynn Randall**, Executive in Residence with Capacity Canada. Generous Support for the day was provided by Suncor Energy Foundation.



Art by: Joanne Angel

## OPENING THE DAY

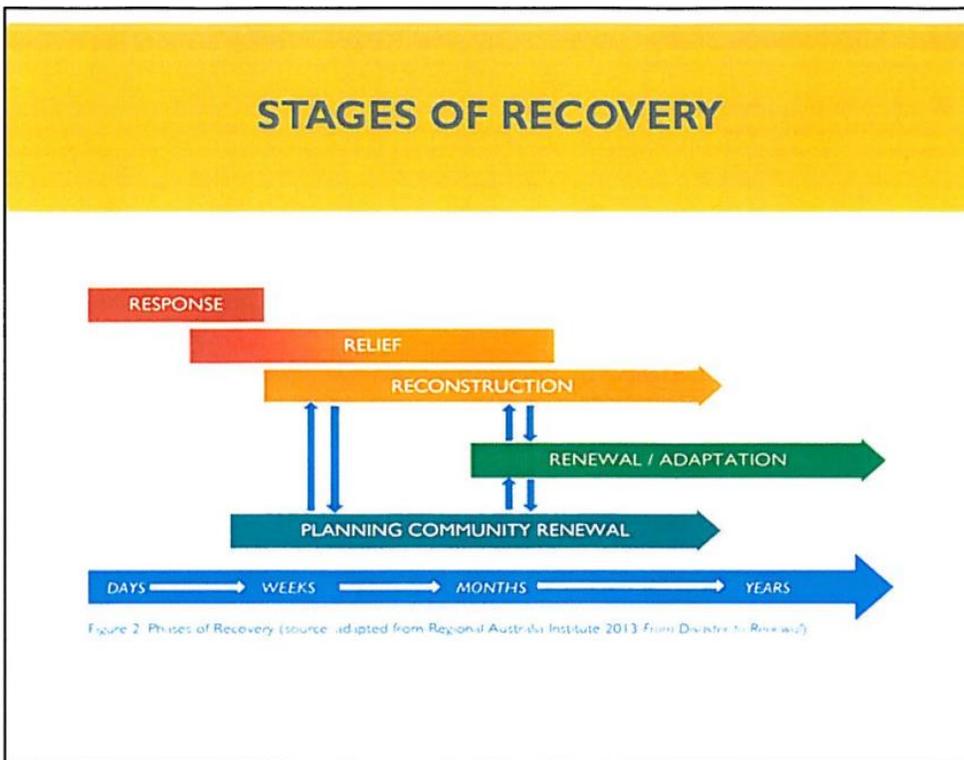
The session was opened with remarks from **Bonnah Carey**, Chief Social Entrepreneur with FuseSocial. Bonnah set the tone for the day by speaking from the heart. She identified that the day was an opportunity to take stock, to reconnect, and to learn. FuseSocial is available to support the social profit sector to come together to make an impact. Bonnah challenged the group to think about how best to respond to the complexity of the new circumstances, to embrace the uncertainty of the work together so that the sector can move forward, putting the people of Fort McMurray in the best possible position to rebuild. In Bonnah's words "let's be explorers, pathfinders and leaders so that we can write the next chapter of the social profit story in Fort McMurray".

## PART ONE: YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION

### Emergency Preparedness

**Matt Sawatsky**, Emergency Preparedness Specialist with Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) provided “Shared Learning from the 2013 Southern Alberta Floods”. The Emergency Preparedness Initiative of Calgary was launched in 2015. It builds on two pillars: the capacity of non-profit organizations to provide continuity of services during emergencies and effectively respond to and recover from emergencies; and increase collaboration and coordination between the public and non-profit emergency response systems.

The information that he provided included: stages of emergency management; stages of recovery; emotional stages of disaster; recent case examples followed by best practices in developing and maintaining strong interagency partnerships.



## Information Sharing and Updates

Following Matt's presentation there were a number of short presentations on various topics as follows:

**Matt Baden**, Community Initiatives Manager, provided an update from the Red Cross. He also focused on the soon to be announced Community Organization Partnerships Program that would be announced. This program provides funding for community as part of the recovery process.

**Brandi Gartner**, Community Relations Director with the Oil Sands Community Alliance spoke on behalf of Reegan McMullough (executive Director) regarding the role that OSCA can play to support community.

**Nick Noik**, General Manager at Community Futures Wood Buffalo spoke about the role of the organization to support small businesses in their process to get re-established.

**Dr. Brenda Sautner**, Associate Superintendent Education & Administration at Fort McMurray Public School District provided an update on the schools, indicating that all 25 schools in the public system were not impacted by the fire and would be ready to receive students August 23, 2016. Brenda also spoke about the supports and tools that she has been developing to support students cope with the aftermath of the fires.

**Kim Nordbye**, Community Investment with Suncor Energy Foundation spoke about the update from the Funders Circle. She recommended a book called "Healing Your Grief When Disaster Strikes – 100 Practical Ideas". She also noted that Pro Bono Law AB also had a number of free resources and tip sheets. Kim quoted from an article that she happened to come across which has become the mantra for SEF about what to do in the time of disaster.

"What these experiences call for is a sort of passive activism. We have a certain tendency, especially in an achievement oriented culture, to want to solve problems and repair brokenness. But what seems to be needed is the art of presence – performing tasks without trying to control or alter the elemental situation. Allow nature to take its course, grant the sufferers the dignity of their own process. Sit there through moments of pain and uncomfortable darkness. Be practical, mundane, simple and direct."

Kim spoke about the Funders' Circle which was established similar to what was done after the Calgary floods. The intent is to convene a group that will work together over the next year to 18 months or longer to help funders and community supports groups/agencies coordinate and collaborate on services & funding: a forum to discuss and support funding needs (cash & in-kind) through various phases (immediate, re-entry, long-term); a forum to coordinate & discuss volunteer needs in Wood Buffalo through re-entry & rebuild; currently includes reps from Red Cross, 5 top oil sands companies, RMWB, United Way, FuseSocial, Ministerial Association, Community Foundation of

Edmonton and others; and they meet once per week by phone to discuss and share information.

Kim also noted that IBM will be developing a business to business platform that will match needs with resources. This will be in place soon and will remain for the next couple of years as well. Both FuseSocial and the United Way have had input on the design.

## **REBUILDING IS A TEAM SPORT**

**Cathy Brothers**, CEO with Capacity Canada spoke about this being a moment in history where boards of social profits are in a position to make an impact on long term outcomes and the impact of the social profit sector. This is an incredible opportunity to determine the future. Cathy warned about CEOs/EDs jumping into fixing everything on their own. This is not the time to be a lone ranger. This is where the Board ought to be playing a fundamental role in deciding the direction that the agency is going to go in.

Cathy also prepared a Blueprint for Board's role in setting up immediate and recovery processes. It is the Board's role to make decisions and set directions and priorities for the organization. The Blueprint includes: emergency/immediate needs (start up, service delivery, moving forward); Board of Director Questions; and re-entry and Authorities to Act. Cathy encouraged all social profit boards to read the document and determine which questions the Board ought to be asking regarding Risk Oversight and Generative Thinking (Visioning).

In addition, Cathy also spoke to the need for a mature partnership between the CEO/ED and the Board. The tone at the top and the culture of the organization is very important. The extent to which the CEO is supported and the extended to which the Board can trust the CEO (healthy relationship), is of primary importance.

Finally Cathy spoke about the importance of collaboration, that you can't vision a future in isolation. This is the time for Board to look at who is doing similar work, who should be partnering, and how should that look. Boards should be talking to Boards. A coordinated response is in the best interests of the community.

## **BOUNCING FORWARD – COMPASSION FATIGUE TO RESILIENCE**

**Charmaine Hammond**, an expert in leadership, resilience and conflict management provided a session on compassion fatigue from the workplace perspective. She highlighted the importance of accessing the network of colleagues; to reach out, share, and connect. She talked about the need to have a plan, even a mini plan, to invite staff to be a part of it and to communicate it a lot. She also spoke about the need for leaders to provide facts and data to bust assumptions. The audience were invited at various points to respond to images on the PowerPoint slides and to talk about their experiences going through the disruption and changes that the fire has provoked.

Charmaine also provided tips to avoid compassion fatigue:

- Identify realistic attainable goals for each program area and staff
- Communicate often. Communicate regularly. Have times to check in.
- Continue to support staff to maintain personal growth both personally & professionally
- Where possible, allow a degree of flexible working conditions on the job
- Meet with your staff individually to better understand their situation, capacity around work hours and their needs
- Help staff set boundaries, many people throw themselves into their work ... leadership should also model healthy boundaries
- Encourage staff to personalize the work environment with meaningful pictures, objects, colors, etc.
- Encourage staff to be comfortable setting limits how far to become involved with clients and colleagues
- Encourage innovative thinking, solution focussed approach, and support to doing business differently
- Provide opportunities for staff to decompress (e.g. walk at lunch, meditation, etc.)
- On a continual basis provide information to staff about resilience, coping, wellness, etc. for themselves, their families and clients
- Build support, mentoring and a venue for staff to discuss problems and help each other look for solutions together to build healthy environment and supportive relationships.

## **PART TWO: OUR SOCIAL PROFIT SECTOR**

The afternoon session was spent in reflection and generative thinking. To this end table facilitators were assigned to each of the table to support the discussion and to record the information that was shared.

The first conversation that was an opportunity to reflect and to create shared experiences. The group was prompted with the following question:

*“Please share with others at your table what stands out most for you from your experience of evacuating and re-establishing your organization?”*

Notes were taken to capture the positive & not so positive experiences as well as ideas and opportunities.

Theme 1: Support, care/self-care, faith

Comments were made that there was a network of support, family support, helpful offers from people, and organization that reached out. There were also comments that there was an overwhelming response from staff and others.

Theme 2: Resilience

Comments referred to staff as more than co-workers; that they would give a 9/10 resiliency score for the community; that the community has staying power. While the resilience was noted, others reflected the confusion about roles and making the right choices. They also talked about the need to take on new roles

Theme 3: Communication

There were comments made about the use of social media, cellphone and twitter as helpful as well as doing daily check-ins with staff. Others felt that the images of the fire on social media misrepresented the actual extent of the damage.

Theme 4: Safety

People commented that everyone is safety and fire smart, that facilities were evacuated safely and that everyone was safe. They also mentioned that there is a bond between staff because everyone made sure that everyone was safe. On the flip side others felt that there was a lot of direction and the evacuation was “crazy messy”.

Theme 5: Technology

This theme is related to the comments about having computers and cloud backup which allowed work to continue.

Theme 6: Uncertainty/unknowns

Of course there were a number of comments about the uncertainty before evacuation, during and following. Organizations are in limbo; staff are uncertain about their futures

and whether they will return to work. There are many unknowns about how their organizations are going to meet the increased demands for service, what are the next immediate steps, what is going on. There was also a lot of personal uncertainty expressed related to recovery (family, home, insurance).

As part of the conversation the groups also identified ideas and opportunities. They talked about specific things that would have been supportive to the evacuation and to re-entry. There was mention of a single point of access for resources, such as housing. The need for a data base to track staff and volunteers was also mentioned.

There were a number of comments and reflections about collaboration. It was felt that there is a need to collaborate on rebuilding; to build better infrastructure with better design processes; to be thoughtful and strategic; and to create a new vision for YMM.

There was also a notion that there is a need to capture what was learned through this experience and to set precedence. This could possibly take the form of a questionnaire or key informant interviews with social profits once they have re-established in Fort McMurray.

The second conversation was meant as a way of looking forward individually and collectively. The group was prompted with the following questions:

*“How can we move forward as leaders? What are our organizational needs? What are the immediate next steps?”*

The themes that emerged from the first question, how we can move forward as leaders are:

- ED peer support - agency to agency; ED to ED; shared vulnerability;
- Board support – show interest; show strength; support CEO/ED;
- Support to staff – trauma training; support to ready for re-entry
- Resources – sharing information;

With respect to organizational needs, the responses are grouped under the following:

- funding/information/flexibility
- basic infrastructure
- resources sharing
- help with clean up (heavy lifting)
- central communications
- payroll; audit paperwork; CRA reporting
- mail/email/social media
- HR - staff recruitment; volunteer bank; leadership coaching

Comments were also made about the needs of the sector:

- Collaboration

- re-entry masterplan for social profits
- inventory/status of organizations and program offerings
- organizational assessment and gap analysis

## IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

The last conversation was the identification of some immediate next steps. The group spent some time talking about what should be their next move. Some were unable to imagine returning to Fort McMurray and felt that it was too soon to talk about it. Others were more comfortable with talking about the new normal. The conversations pertained to connections, planning, and collaboration. This is just a list of suggestions and has not been vetted or ranked.

- FuseSocial to continue to connect social profits with further conversations
- Plan an August event
- Board and leaders ensure that they share a common vision, goals and agenda
- Organizations ensure they don't mission drift to follow the money
- all social profit boards review the Re-entry Blueprint document prepared by Capacity Canada and posted on the FuseSocial website
- FuseSocial to develop accurate information to inform planning
- FuseSocial to coordinate discussions with funders
- FuseSocial to develop an assessment of capacity of social profits
- FuseSocial to connect with RMWB and their efforts (recreation centres, information centres, etc)
- Community Futures to launch small business incubator

## CLOSING THE DAY

**Jeanette Bancarz**, FuseSocial Board Chair closed the session with a number of reflections and remarks. She overviewed 6 key learnings from the day:

1. Know your fit as an organization and stick to your mandate. There will be funding opportunities that will be very appealing however pass these along the opportunities that are a better fit for others.
2. Take the opportunity to get crisp on the organizational role and the expectations of the organization.
3. Strategize, develop a plan and stick to it. Check in often.
4. We are all in this together; support each other the best we can.
5. Is there an opportunity to engage in transformative Scenario Planning? This would drive planning for different results where a collective agenda trumps individual agendas.
6. We are Fort McMurrayites first and organizations second. We need to collaborate and work for impact in the new normal.

FuseSocial is here to support the sector in whatever way possible. There are two priorities that have been identified today: mental health for teams and clients and building strategy to support re-entry.

Videos of all of the sessions can be found on the FuseSocial website under the Working Together to Stay Strong tab – May 27<sup>th</sup> planning day. All of the materials that were referenced or share can also be found on the site as well.

FuseSocial will continue to convene the Social Profit sector organizations,