

NWT DISABILITIES COUNCIL
KEYNOTE ADDRESS AS PRESENTED BY
MS. JUDITH WRIGHT-BIRD

GOOD EVENING TO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, HONOURED GUESTS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS IT IS A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO BE INVITED HERE TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK NWT DISABILITIES COUNCIL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCES.

I STARTED WITH THE NWT DISABILITY COUNCIL AS A BOARD OF DIRECTOR IN FEBRUARY 2012, IT HAS BEEN A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE TO SEE ALL THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT THE COUNCIL PARTICIPATES IN TO CREATE AWARENESS AND FUND RAISE FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

THESE ARE ALL GREAT INITIATIVES BUT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE REMOTE ISOLATED COMMUNITIES WHERE THERE IS A GREAT NEED.

I ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE WORK THE COUNCIL DOES BUT THEY HAVE A LIMITED BUDGET THEREFORE THEY ARE DEPEND ON FUND RAISING INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE BETTER PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- I LIVE IN THE SAHTU REGION WHERE THE POPULATION IS 2800, I LIVE IN A COMMUNITY CALLED TULITA, WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF 520 PEOPLE,
- TULITA LIKE ALL SMALL COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTH HAS LIMITED RESOURCES AND FUNDS WHICH ARE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT
- FAMILY AND FRIENDS STRUGGLE PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE A DISABILITY
- LACK OF PROPER TRANSPORTATION IN THE COMMUNITY TO HELP PEOPLE IN WHEEL CHAIR TO HAVE ACCESS TO ACTIVIES AND SERVICES- CHURCH, SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENTS
- LACK OF SUPPORT AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL AND HAVING TO REMOVE THEIR LOVED ONES FROM THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IS A STRUGGLE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY, THIS CAUSES MORE ISOLATION – LONELINESS IS THE ULITMATE POVERTY

- NEED TO ASSESS THE INDIVIDUALS NEEDS AND DETERMINE HOW WE CAN ASSIST THEM TO HELP IMPROVE THEIR DAILY LIFE
- WE NEED TO DO MORE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL AND CREATE MORE SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

MY EXPERIENCE IS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO STRUGGLE ON A DAILY BASIS AND SOMETIMES THEY JUST NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO AND HELP THEM WITH A REFERRAL FOR ASSISTANCE OF SOME SORT

MY SON HAS A DISABILITY AND WAS DIAGNOSED THREE YEARS AGO WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES, HE HAS A DIFFICULT TIME MANAGING HIS DIABETES SOMETIMES AND HE NEEDS SOMEONE TO HELP MONITOR HIS DIABETES TO ENSURE THAT HE IS TAKING HIS MEDICATION, DAILY INSULIN AND EATING A BALANCE DIET

CHALLENGES:

- AS A FAMILY WE NEED TO BE SURE THAT SOMEONE IS HOME WITH HIM TO CHECK ON HIM DAILY
- MY JOB REQUIRES ME TO TRAVEL , SOMETIMES IT IS A CHALLENGE TO CARE FOR MY SON
- MY HUSBAND WORKS OUT OF TOWN, SOMETIMES IT IS A CHALLENGE FOR HIM AS WELL
- SOMETIMES WE DEPEND ON EXTENDED FAMILY TO CARE FOR HIM
- ITS DIFFICULT FOR MY SON AS WELL, HE DOES NOT LIKE PEOPLE INTERFERING AND TELLING HIM WHAT TO DO, WE ACKNOWLEDGE HIS FEELINGS BUT NEED TO EXPLAIN WHY WE NEED THIS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
- HE RECOGNIZES HE NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF HIS MEDICATION ETC,
- HE WOULD NOT WANT TO LEAVE THE FAMILY , SO WE MAKE IT WORK FOR US AS FAMILY AND ALL DO OUR PART
- MY AUNT HAD A LEG AMPUTATION A FEW YEARS AGO DUE TO DIABETES, NOW SHE IS IN A WHEEL CHAIR AND I HAD TO HELP HER WITH HER NEED FOR A WHEEL CHAIR
- MY FRIEND HAS MUSCULAR DISTROPY, SHE STRUGGLES EVERY DAY RAISING HER THREE DAUGHTERS,



NWT Disabilities Council

- I CAN GO ON AND ON, THERE IS SO MANY PEOPLE IN NEED AND THE GOVERNMENT IS TALKING ABOUT CUTTING BACK SOCIAL PROGRAMS THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS DEPEND ON TO ASSIST THEM IN THERE EVERY LIVES
- I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT NWT DISABILITIES COUNCIL NEEDS MORE FUNDING TO PROVIDE MORE PROGRAMS THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE THE LIMITED FUNDING THAT IS PROVIDED