

For Immediate Release

Choices for Youth Hosts Annual General Meeting and Appoints New Board Chair & Vice-Chair

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador – December 05, 2024 – Choices for Youth (CFY) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 2023-2024 fiscal year on December 5th, 2024, at the organization's new Social Enterprise and Innovation Hub, providing attendees with a preview of the vibrant space set to open in 2025.

As a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering children, youth, and young families through stable housing, mental health supports, primary care, education and employment, CFY aims to eradicate cycles of poverty and homelessness. The AGM welcomed approximately 50 attendees, with Geoff Davis, CFY's Board Chair, and Dionne Howe, Co-Chair of CFY's Youth Leadership and Advisory Council, offering a warm welcome and invitation to attendees to experience delicious pizza from CFY's Crust Craft Bakery social enterprise.

Following an overview of the agenda, Choices for Youth's Executive Director, Jen Crowe, presented CFY's [Annual Report \(2023-24\)](#) to the audience. The AGM also featured impactful storytelling from Kenneth Gellately of CFY's RallyForward housing program, a financial summary from Lori Whitt, CFY's Senior Director of Business Operations, Finance, and Education, Employment, and Social Enterprise, and an update on the important work the Youth Leadership and Advisory Council has overseen this past year that was shared by Dionne.

Jen Crowe presented CFY's five-year strategic plan, underscoring the organization's commitment to core program sustainability, investing in staff, program and service innovation, and prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Geoff announced his departure as Chair of the CFY Board following a maximum Board term of six years. CFY is deeply grateful for Geoff's immeasurable contributions on the Board of Directors. Throughout Geoff's tenure on the Board of Directors, he provided strategic oversight to the development of 19 units of supportive housing for young moms and their children, the development of CFY's Social Enterprise and Innovation Hub, and the development of CFY's first five-year strategic plan. CFY extends our sincere thanks Geoff, who will be remaining on the Board of Directors as *Member Emeritus*.

Bruce Belbin was elected on December 2nd by the Board of Directors as the incoming Chair of the Board of Directors. Bruce is the Director of Student Residences and Ancillary

Operations at Memorial University and has decades of experience in senior leadership roles in both post-secondary institutions and within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Bruce has been in the Vice-Chair role since 2021 and brings a wealth of governance, public policy, and housing development experience to his new role as Board Chair.

With Bruce moving into his new position, CFY is pleased to welcome Sean Ryan as the new Vice Chair of our Board of Directors. Sean is the Vice President responsible for Regulatory Services with the Newfoundland Labrador Liquor Corporation (NLC). Sean's career in Law Enforcement includes more than 25 years' experience in senior leadership roles as an Officer with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Oil Investigations Officer with Environment Canada, and his current position with NLC.

CFY is excited to embark on this new chapter under Bruce and Sean's leadership and remains dedicated to making a meaningful difference for youth and families in the community.

Quotes

"It has been a highlight of my career to serve as Chair of the Choices for Youth Board of Directors for the past six years. I am continuously inspired by Choices for Youth's outcomes in addressing the needs of youth in the community. Together, we are not merely providing support; we are fostering hope, resilience, and a brighter future for over 1000 youth every year. I must commend the leadership team and all employees for their unrelenting dedication to the organization. I also wish to extend a sincere congratulations to Bruce Belbin as he steps into his new role as Chair and know that we will continue to see the organization thrive under his leadership."

Geoff Davis, Outgoing Board Chair, Choices for Youth

"Choices for Youth's dedication to listening, learning, and growing with the young people we support is what makes this organization so special. As we rise to the occasion of addressing a mounting housing and homelessness crisis, I look forward to working with the Board of Directors and staff at Choices for Youth to invest in housing and wrap-around services for the young people in our community who most need them."

Bruce Belbin, Board Chair, Choices for Youth

"Reflecting on what we have been able to achieve together in the last year fills me with hope, optimism, and determination. From successfully housing and employing hundreds of youth, to supporting hundreds of youth access mental health supports, our staff

continue to see the potential in young people while working in the spirit of innovation and continuous improvement to meet their unique and diverse needs. Despite a challenging few months, our commitment to children, youth and young families is unwavering – thank you to all our staff, partners, and youth leaders who help make this work possible.”

Jen Crowe, Executive Director, Choices for Youth

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