From the CEO's desk

ISSUE #281
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Good Governance Makes A Great NGO

On Monday, November 16th, 2026, our AVENS volunteer board members took part in a unique **Non-Profit Governance Training** workshop—because even the best teams benefit from a little time out to sharpen their playbook.

> ***"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other"***
>
> ***John F. Kenndy***

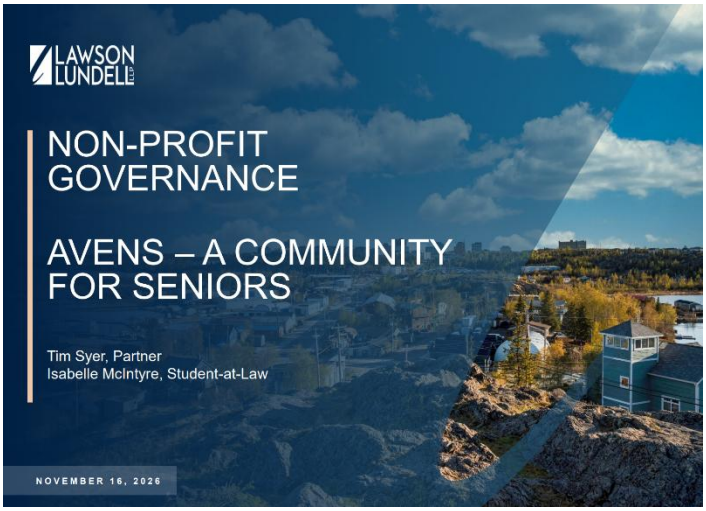
Facilitated by our corporate solicitor and partner at Lawson Lundell LLP, Mr. Tim Syer, the workshop also welcomed articling law student Isabell McIntyre, who assisted with the session. Together, they helped us explore the roles and responsibilities that keep a complex organization like AVENS working well.

Good governance may not always sound important, but it matters every day. When everyone understands their role, we're better able to serve our residents, support our staff, and be accountable to our stakeholders and funders.

We're grateful to Tim and Isabelle for sharing their expertise—and to the **GNWT NGO Stabilization Grant** for helping make this training possible. A stronger board helps build a stronger AVENS, and that's something worth investing in.



(Inset) Lawson Lundell LLP partner, Tim Syer, talking with AVENS Board Member & Chair of the AVENS Governance Committee, Gillian Moir



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(L to R), Lawson Lundell LLP articling law student, Isabelle McIntyre and Partner, Tim Syer



A summary of the topics reviewed with our AVENS Board Members at this particular session. We also were happy to host this group lunch at our Aven Pavilion

AVENS Alumni Wisdom

On Wednesday, November 18, 2026, we welcomed former AVENS board members to meet with current and new members for an **alumni-style forum**. It was a wonderful chance to share stories, reflect on the work that has shaped AVENS, and offer a little wisdom to those carrying it forward.



(Top L, clockwise) AVENS Board Alumni-Taig Connell, Ron Allen, Lani Cooke, Lynda Koe, Wanda Roberts, and Marion LaVigne

A big thank-you to everyone who joined us—and to the new board members who brought thoughtful questions.

In one exchange, new Board Member, Wanda Roberts asked, **"What advice could you give us new board members?"** Former board

member Marion LaVigne answered quickly: **"Don't be scared to take on risk."**

That's advice worth keeping close. Progress takes thoughtful decisions, fresh ideas, and sometimes the courage to try something new. Marion summed it up beautifully—and we're grateful she shared it with us.

AVENS And Housing NWT Partnership

On Thursday, November 19, 2026, we welcomed two key GNWT partners to AVENS: **Housing NWT President Terence Courtoreille and Associate Deputy Minister Mike Saturnino.**



(L to R) Housing NWT President, Terrence Courtoreille and Associate Deputy Minister, Mike Saturnino

I've known Terence for many years and have watched him make successful transitions into different agencies whenever he's been called upon. He brings a wealth of experience to every role—and, needless to say, he's one smart cookie.

Terence and Mike got the full AVENS tour, taking in our housing and care services. We had plenty of information to share, including some new developments, and it was a great chance to show how our different services work together to support older adults. We were also fortunate to introduce them to many of our operations staff and several Board members at the Pavilion.



(L to R) AVENS 1st Vice Chair, Taig Connell, Housing NWT President, Terence Courtoreille and Associate Deputy Minister, Mike Saturnino, share a handshake in our AVENS UpHere Pub/Coffee shop



(L to R) Housing NWT Associate Deputy Minister, Mike Saturnino, AVENS 2nd Vice Chair, Lani Cooke, and Housing NWT President, Terence Courtoreille, stopping in as yoga instructor, Lani, finishes up her Yoga class

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I see a strong, renewed partnership taking shape with Terence at the helm of Housing NWT. We're looking forward to what's in store for both our organizations in 2027.

Stay tuned—there's more to come!

Teamwork, Winter Magic, Treats

In just a couple of hours on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, our wonderful **AVENS Management Team** worked their magic and transformed the Aven Pavilion into a winter wonderland!



"Yes, everything has a home, there is a plan!"

Their creativity, teamwork and festive spirit brought a little extra sparkle to the space that day—and we're so grateful for the care they put into making it special for everyone to enjoy for the remainder of the holidays.

After all that decorating, it was time for a well-deserved thank-you. I was honoured to treat the team to coffee and pastry goodies at the AVENS UpHere Pub and Coffee Shop. Thank you to everyone who helped make the Pavilion feel so welcoming and ready for the season!



Its not every day I get to say thank you to this great crew with a coffee, hot chocolate and a pastry! They deserve this every day!

Community Corner

