

Everyone has role to play in woman abuse prevention

We recently completed a 6 month, Scarborough - wide violence prevention initiative in partnership with the Scarborough Mirror. The workshop series, Scarborough Women's Safety Education Project, was designed after Scarborough residents expressed growing concern about the high number of sexual assaults taking place in Scarborough in recent years. Countless women shared how fear of violence had limited their freedom. We felt that a violence prevention initiative which explored the causes of violence against women and offered practical strategies for prevention was needed.

In exploring the continuum of violence against women, the project looked at topics such as: Community Safety, Sexual Assault Prevention, and Personal Safety and Self-Defense. By providing a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their experiences, we sought to raise awareness and examine the links between types of violence. There was a strong emphasis on providing participants with skills for violence prevention and intervention through interactive discussions and demonstrations. Participants were given a range of

strategies to prevent, respond to and/or avoid potentially violent situations.

We are encouraged by the interest and participation in the project by women of various class, age, racial, cultural and religious backgrounds. But focusing on getting women to prevent violence by themselves is not enough. What is needed now is the involvement of all stakeholders, including our neighbours, friends, children, educators, public officials and business leaders. We need to motivate action at every level of public life toward abolishing attitudes, ideas, beliefs and activities that promote violence against women. Individual and group efforts must be supplemented with government-sponsored violence prevention initiatives that encourage our community capacity to advocate positive relationships and attitudes towards women.

The Scarborough Women's Safety Education Project is a great example of the exemplary work that is being done throughout our city to improve the safety of women. We are proud to have partnered with the Scarborough Mirror and received the support and assistance of several community organizations and local businesses, and volunteers. Our heartfelt thanks to the City of

Toronto, for funding the project through the "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" Program.

Roma Beckles, Woman Abuse

Outreach Coordinator

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 11th/2001, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at the Scarborough Civic Centre. Everyone is welcome! Our keynote speaker is Ms. Vicki Bismilla, past SWC Board President, who will recognize the International Year of Volunteers. There will also be small group discussions about the future of the Centre. Light refreshments will be served. Childcare is available (if you pre-register!) Members are especially requested to attend. Exercise your vote! Catch up on SWC progress and plans for the future. **RSVP by September 6th/2001.**

Have you seen our Website?



It's full of information re programs, volunteering and special events.

Visit us at:

www.

scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hello members! It has been about a year since the membership sub-committee was first established and we've carefully explored both sides of the membership issue: why a woman would become a member as well as why the Centre needs members. Perhaps the most startling discovery is that many of you already considered yourselves members because of your participation in the Centre's programs and activities. Well, we always considered you members too, however, as an organization we discovered we needed to create a new membership registry. For the 2001 membership campaign we produced a membership package that included a membership card and for new members, information about the Centre as well as a coupon to be used towards one of our courses.

Do you know why your membership is so important to the Centre? Because you, our community, are the ones who tell us where we are going. We need your involvement to ensure that the Centre and its programs continue to be relevant and of good quality. For this reason, we also conceived a Consumer Advisory Group, which will be made up of program participants. Thanks to the hundreds of women who already dedicate their time, we are continuously improving. Don't forget one of the most significant ways you can fulfill your responsibilities as a member is to participate in the Annual General meeting on September 11th at the Scarborough Civic

Centre. We look forward to seeing you there!

*Lynn Fournier-
Ruggles
Chair, Membership
Committee*

Our 20th ANNIVERSARY!

The year 2002 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Centre. On this exciting date, it is important to make others aware of the services provided by the Centre and spread the word into our community that resources are available.

To celebrate this special year, a Women's Centre Calendar will be printed. This calendar will provide valuable information and contact numbers about activities sponsored by the Centre. There will be a nominal fee for the calendar as this is also one of our fund raising projects. Why not plan on buying 2 calendars in support of other women; one for yourself and one for a friend!

There will also be several Fund Raising Events throughout the year for which we may need your help. If you have some time to volunteer, or know of someone who might sponsor an event, please contact the Centre.

A unique Anniversary Day Celebration will be held at the Scarborough Civic Centre in September 2002. These celebrations will respect the diversity of the community we serve. Further details to follow!

*Dorothy
Clark*

*Chair, 20th Anniversary
Committee*

WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

is a publication of Scarborough
Women's Centre.

Submissions, letters and
suggestions are very welcome.

Please forward to Lynda

Kosowan, MSW, RSW

Executive Director.

WELCOME, NEW CASE MANAGER

Tahereh Barati has recently joined our staff. With a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology from Tehran University in 1996, Tahereh has been a counsellor for over 10 years. Since 1998, as a Registered Family Therapist, she has been working towards clinical membership with AAMFT, and has also been trained to work with women who have experienced woman abuse through the Assaulted Women & Children Advocacy /Counsellor Program at George Brown College. She has conducted groups for women concerning marital and family aspects of depression and other forms of mental illness in relationships while working as a volunteer for a number of organizations.

As our Case Manager, Tahereh provides individual support and solution-focused assistance for women in transition who want to use the Centre to change their lives. Women are assisted to clarify their goals. They receive ongoing support through the process. Please call her if you would like to know more about the Case Management service.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS



This year, we were thrilled to attend an Ontario Volunteer Recognition Award ceremony hosted by Marilyn Mushinski, MPP where six of our volunteers received awards for 5-9 years service at the Centre.

They are:

Dorothy Clark - Board member, 20th anniversary chair, ESS advisory, support volunteer,

Janet Cocklin - Past President, Program Evaluation chair

Isolyn Holung - support volunteer, information referral

Beverley Dixon - support volunteer

Shirley Kandappu - ESS advisory, fundraising

Darlene Watman - ESS advisory
Congratulations and thank you!



HOPE BLOSSOMED HERE
....
AN ESS
PARTICIPANT
SHARES HER
EXPERIENCE

After a long time living in a disastrous relationship the wheel of fortune has turned in the right direction. It seems that I just lucked out with the help of some warm hearted women. Women who are victimized by

unscrupulous abusers are really in need of this kind of wonderful service to break the cycle of brutality, cruelty and control.

For a long time I was apathetic about life. I did not think of the aroma of life. When my entire dream was about to shatter, hope appeared in front of me with heartfelt love and information - which began a new life for me. Now I can dream, I can laugh, I can see things the way I want to see, I can express my feelings. Most of all I can sleep without any tension or dismay. My iceberg has melted with the warm service of two women from Scarborough Women's Centre, Program Coordinator Rishma Mirshahi and the facilitator, our sweet Vivienne. I stood up on my feet to know the new world of having fun and reaching my goals. The optimism came back to my thoughts and plans. I learned the signs of abuse and how to break the cycle of abuse. Most of all I learned how to save myself and my feelings. I am proud of myself for joining the ESS program, which is fruitful and necessary for women who have left abusive relationships and are helplessly stressed out. The facilitator has provided specific tools to face reality with boldness and courage. The strength of the Program Coordinator can not be expressed in words.

This is the first time I have been involved with an organization where I got more than I expected. This is what is meant to me as light at the end of the tunnel. I hope this courage and enthusiasm will take me through my journey.

I would like to see myself through to success and joy. The ESS program inspired me to have this dream. I would love to live a long life to enjoy the light and beauty of the world.

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ESS UPDATE

This year as usual has been rewarding for the Economic Self Sufficiency Program. During the 2001 year, we said good-bye to Nora Angeles, Group Facilitator for three groups at SWC. Nora provided invaluable inspiration and motivation to the women in the ESS program. Her contribution to the organization is appreciated and the graduates of the program speak highly of her. We wish her well in her future endeavors! Since February 2001, the group has been facilitated by Vivienne Kendry. Vivienne brings a very warm and approachable style of facilitation combined with years of expertise in the field of violence against women. Welcome!

The ESS program works with women who have left an abusive situation and want to develop economic and emotional independence. A 20-week group is followed by mentoring and if needed further training. If you would like to be involved as a participant, or mentor, or to provide a job placement, please feel free to contact me.

Rishma Mirshahi
ESS Program Coordinator