

MAYOR'S COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARD



We were honoured to receive this award in May 2003, in recognition of our work with abused women and their children.

Lynda Kosowan, Executive Director, accepted the award on behalf of the Centre in a ceremony at Toronto City Hall. She prepared the following remarks:

“We are very proud to accept this award. The Centre’s mission is to empower any woman who wants to leave an abusive or isolating situation, so that she can make long term positive changes with confidence. We provide information, education and support services to women in their transition to economic and emotional independence. We are currently celebrating our 20th year of service, and started to work on the issue of community safety 15 years ago, beginning with a safety audit of the surface routes of our public transit system. This project was especially

timely as women were being assaulted after leaving transit by a stalker who we now know was Paul Bernardo. We had noticed that women were afraid to participate actively in the community as employees, volunteers, students, friends, consumers, because of their fear of using transit.

Over the years we have continued to undertake public education projects, which empower women in the face of violence. Some of these projects have been inspired by public events in the Scarborough community, which could have discouraged women from continuing their efforts to become independent and free from abuse.

This grant was related to our recent work in the Economic Self Sufficiency Program; Safe Motherhood Education; Mothers & Children at Risk; and Children: The Battleground projects.

We are very grateful to our funders, volunteers, staff and community members who have supported the various initiatives.

We believe that with knowledge, information and support, women can empower themselves to take control of their own lives, making a brighter

future for themselves and their children. When they are supported to take this action, our entire community becomes stronger and safer. Thank you for recognizing and supporting this work.”

FRIENDS INDEED!



On a sunny Saturday morning this past June, members of the Malvern Cricket and Social Club joined in a walkathon through Milliken Park. For the third year, they chose the Centre as a beneficiary of the event. We are very grateful for their help in making Scarborough Women’s Centre a good place for women.

Did you know that 1/3 of our income has to come from fundraising? If you or your group would like to hold an event to support the Centre, we would be thrilled! We are also looking for sponsors for Centre-run events. Call Lynda Kosowan for further information.

21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 16th 2003

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the
Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Drive
(McCowan & Ellesmere)

Everyone is welcome! Light refreshments will be served.

Members are especially requested to attend. This year we will hold a special activity to recognize the important work done by our volunteers. Childcare is available (if you pre-register!)

RSVP by September 5th, 2003.

BUILDING OUR AGENCY CAPACITY



The Centre is honoured to have been selected to participate in a unique pilot project funded by Trillium Foundation; Maytree Foundation; and United Way of Greater Toronto. Five agencies which serve disadvantaged and newcomer communities across Toronto were chosen, because of the good work they were already doing, and their desire to improve their capacity to serve. Following a self-assessment process which involved Board and staff of the Centre, we selected the priority areas we will focus on over the next three years: financial sustainability; human resources; policy development; strategic planning; and accessibility. We will

be able to obtain assistance to work with various consultants and technical experts to address the areas we want to improve in. The ultimate goal is to be able to respond to the needs of our community because we are strengthened as an organization.

SAFETY PROJECTS

Here is more information about the projects recognized by the Mayor's Community Safety Award.

☐ Safe Motherhood Education Project

This was an outreach to pre and post-natal women and the service providers who work with them, on the subject of woman abuse.

During pregnancy is often when many women will experience abuse for the first time in a relationship. The theme of the project was "When a pregnant woman is being abused, two lives are in danger". In addition to trainings and workshops for individual women as well as service providers, we also developed an information kit and a poster for display in doctor's offices. Some copies are still available.

☐ The Battleground Project

This was an outreach designed to help women protect themselves and their children, particularly in that first, often dangerous year after leaving the abusive situation. A public forum in April 2003, called "Stop the Hurting, Start the Healing" examined legal issues and assisted women to develop safety planning skills. As well an information kit was distributed.

☐ Mothers and Children at Risk

An outreach to survivors of woman abuse who are parenting children with disabilities. It includes a support group.

☐ The Economic Self Sufficiency Program

An ongoing program designed for survivors of woman abuse who are at risk of returning because they are not economically and emotionally independent. The program focuses on assisting women to heal from the abuse, develop life skills they need for successful living, and plan for the future. Mentors provide ongoing support, and case management assistance is provided by staff.

SPEAKING OF WOMEN

Mark your calendar! Our annual fundraising event will be held the evening of **Thursday November 6th, 2003**. Fascinating speakers will discuss what they've learned along their life journey. A great opportunity for networking. Stay tuned for further details.



HAVE YOUR SEEN OUR WEBSITE?

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

Visit us at:

www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Economic Self-Sufficiency Program

Did you know that the estimated cost of violence exceeds \$4 billion annually in Canada? As well, women are beaten an average 33 times before contacting the police.

These statistics affect numerous women across Toronto. As a result the Centre has developed a unique prevention program addressing the systemic causes of violence. The Economic Self-Sufficiency Program is in its fourth year. It is designed to assist women who have left abusive relationships by addressing the many barriers women face in rebuilding their lives. Women participate in a 40-session group focused on healing from violence, building life skills and self esteem, and goal setting for the future. Women are provided with ongoing case management services, support from a trained volunteer mentor for up to one year and ongoing workshops and practical assistance.

In April 2003, a detailed program evaluation was submitted to the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The evaluation provided an opportunity to assess the success of the program and areas for future development. 50 women have graduated from this intensive program. The graduates have moved forward to full-time and part-time employment, some women have returned to school and others are pursuing further training. The women who completed the program describe themselves as being more assertive, self confident and better mothers. This program has also created new partnerships for SWC. Through our common interests in supporting women we have worked

with Agincourt Community Service Association and Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre. The program also received special project funding from the Children's Aid Foundation and the Canadian Women's Foundation. At this point in our journey, we are seeking ways to sustain the ESS program financially. We are confident that funders and donors will recognize the value of giving women a second chance to rebuild their lives and provide children with an opportunity to live free of violence. If you would like to become involved in the program or make a donation towards the program, please contact me, Rishma Mirshahi, ESS Coordinator.

INVITATION TO SELF- DISCOVERY



People carry many stresses in their lives. Sometimes their stresses can cause difficulties in personal functioning in couple or family relationships as well as in work or social contacts. There could be many possible reasons for stresses such as past or present emotional, physical or sexual abuse, current relational strains, personal or relational development and adjustments to new or difficult life situations.

The Case Manager (C.M.) is professionally trained to help women with their personal and relationship difficulties. If she identifies that additional services are needed outside

of what the Centre has to offer, she can also make an appropriate referral.

During weekly or biweekly meetings with the Case Manager, you're supported to discover, enhance and use your own strengths to accomplish your personal goal plan. With her facilitation, you discover and realize your goals and dreams. The C.M. empowers you to regain your personal voice and power while assisting you to improve your sense of being in charge of your life in order to take steps towards your ultimate goals.

Sometimes the C.M. utilizes one of our complementary services, such as the one-to-one support program, to provide you with extra support in a friendly informal setting as well. The C.M. would introduce you to this program if she thinks that it will help you to implement your goals. Then if you agree, she sets up a time to meet the volunteer. The volunteer's role is to provide support and encouragement in order for you to feel comfortable and gain confidence to improve your skills. In the first meeting with the volunteer, the C.M. encourages you to discuss the specific goals that you would like to accomplish in the next six months or year.

The Case Management Service assists you to be aware of your self and to learn more about your strengths. As a result, you will be able to manage stresses better and protect yourself more effectively. We welcome you to this journey and support you in each step to accomplish your goal of well-being.

Tahereh Barati
Case Manager