



Scarborough Women's Centre

2100 Ellesmere Road, Suite 245, Scarborough, Ontario M1H 3B7

TEL. (416) 439-7111

FAX. (416) 439-6999

TDD (416) 439-7321

email: ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

web: www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Women at the Centre FALL 2005 Newsletter

OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE!

If you've ever visited the Centre, chances are that you met a friendly volunteer at the door. She gave you information about our programs and services, or listened while you explained a problem or concern. Did you know that there are many other ways that volunteers are involved in the Centre? They provide mentoring or tutoring support to women in transition, participate in committees, organize fundraising events, and sit on the Board of Directors. Without the efforts and energy of these dedicated volunteers, it would not be possible for the Centre to touch the lives of 3,000 women each year.

A recent grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation has made it possible for us to launch a project called "Strengthening our Scarborough Community: Serving Those Who Serve". Through this two year project, we will have the opportunity to review and revise the volunteer program, with feedback from service users, volunteers and the community.

Our first step was to hire Lata Patel, who is the first Coordinator of Volunteers the Centre has had in 10 years. Lata brings great experience with volunteers and women's agencies to her work, and is already a lively and respected colleague.

She will be working with staff and volunteers to improve the Volunteer program, including training, ongoing development opportunities and support. We also want to look at ways to recognize the contributions made, and make sure that our volunteers know that we think they are THE GREATEST!

By the way, we think that the Ontario Trillium Foundation is wonderful too. www.trilliumfoundation.org Thank you for making this project possible! For further information about how you can get involved as a volunteer, please call Lata.

SPECIAL MENTIONS AND THANKS!

IBM Canada has very generously provided us with a ThinkPad T41 laptop for use by the Executive Director in her work with the community. Board member Xiaolin Ni is a staff at IBM, and was able to access this equipment donation through the IBM Community Grants Program. Lynda is very impressed with the Thinkpad, and thanks IBM for making it possible for her to be efficient and effective in her work. www.ibm.com/ca

We were delighted to receive a \$5,000 donation from the **Scarborough Rotary Club**. These

funds are being used to offer the Rebuilding Our Lives program which supports women to move away from abuse towards economic and emotional independence. This is the 100th Anniversary of Rotary International, and we wish them a very happy birthday! To learn more about the wonderful work that Rotary does all over the world, visit www.rotary.org Thanks to our friend Professor Aysan Sev'er for inviting us to meet with the good people at Scarborough Rotary Club. www.rotary7070.org/scarborough

Green Shield Canada, recently provided a \$10,000 Community Programs grant to support our mentoring programs. "Women Supporting Women" is an initiative that matches trained volunteers on a one to one basis with women who are going through transitions in their lives. Women using the program are matched through the Case Management Service. With support of their volunteer, women can feel less isolated and vulnerable, achieve their goals for change, and build their support networks. They may want to improve their conversational English or literacy skills; or build stronger lives for themselves. For more info about the health and dental benefits plan provided by this corporate. Visit www.greenshield.ca

23rd Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, September 14,
2005
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Scarborough Civic Centre
Rotunda
150 Borough Drive
(McCowan and Ellesmere)

Everyone is welcome!
Refreshments will be served.
Members are especially
requested to attend. Angela
Boucher, Professional Organizer
will speak about:
**“Clean Start: Get Rid of Your
Clutter”**.

Childcare is available at no cost if
you pre-register.
R.S.V.P. by September 9th
2005

5th ANNUAL SPEAKING OF WOMEN EVENT

This wonderful fundraising event
will be held on Saturday, **October
22nd, 2005 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.**
at Ellas Restaurant.

There will presentations on 2
Women's Health Issues:
Menopause and Postpartum
Depression. Silent auction and
mini massages!

A great opportunity for
networking. \$30 per person.
Please call 416-439-7111 to
register.



REBUILDING OUR LIVES NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION PROJECT: WOMEN FROM THE PROGRAM SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS...

In Fall 2004, the Centre was
delighted to receive a grant from the
National Crime Prevention Strategy –
Community Mobilization Program.
The grant allowed us to provide 2
intensive support and training
programs for women who have left
abusive situations but were at risk of
returning because they needed to
build their economic and emotional
independence skills. After a brief
word from Vivienne Kendry, the
program facilitator, some women in
the program share their thoughts.
They interviewed each other for this
purpose.

The Facilitator Speaks

As our “Rebuilding Our Lives”
program grant draws to an end, I
must say that the results are
incredible. The women who have
graduated from the group see a
future without violence for
themselves and their children. For
some women, this is the first time
since childhood, that they have lived
lives free of violence.

Police and the courts were once a
large part of these women's
relationships. For all of the women,
this has become a thing of the past.
Instead, women find themselves
registered in employment training
programs, upgrading classes, and
some are even registered for college.

Fifteen of their children are currently
receiving counselling to overcome

their past, break the cycle of
violence, and move forward. They
can get on with the business of being
children free and clean of stress,
abuse and sadness.

It is wonderful to see how this group
of women and children has been
able to implement long-term positive
change into their lives. Thank you
for making this possible,
Vivienne Kendry, Facilitator

Women from the Winter/Spring Group Speak

Seven women walk into a room,
each feeling the same things:
depression, sadness, alone, anger,
hopeless and nervous, to name a
few. We look at each other and
realize that we're not alone in our
feelings. Our facilitator is there to
greet us with a warm smile and
bubbly attitude. Later we are to learn
that she was once like us and that
there is hope for our futures – a
future without violence.

Each Tuesday and Thursday we
gather to listen and talk about how
the violent past we've left can affect
our future and the futures of our
children - but only if we let it. Each
passing week, the women in our
group open up a little more and in
doing so gain not only confidence,
but also the ability to move forward.
Little by little we take back what was
taken from us without our
permission.

Kayla, a young beautiful woman with
two children who was still in love with
her abuser before starting the
program, can now look beyond her
abuser's charming smile. She has
the confidence to understand that
even though he promises change, he
will never change his abusive ways.
Before starting the program. Kayla
didn't have the confidence to do the
every day things that others take for
granted, such as banking, grocery

shopping and making an appointment with a doctor. Like a newly hatched chick, Kayla continues to find strength and confidence every day. She has not only broken the cycle of violence, she has the tools to recognize the signs of it for the future.

Sally is the single mom of a pre-teen daughter. Once a successful businesswoman, she lost all of her confidence and much of her coping strategies because of the effects of abuse. She no longer thinks that she wasn't "really" abused because now she knows the different forms that abuse takes. By coming to the program, Sally can move forward in her once stalled career. Her daughter doesn't have to grow up thinking that what her mom and dad had was a "normal" relationship. Sally can recognize that not every day is going to be perfect, but she no longer lets anyone choose what her emotions should be, except herself. She has the right to be angry, but from that anger comes the power and knowledge for her and her daughter to live a life abuse-free.

The mother of two infant children, Dahlia now realizes that she has her whole life ahead of her for her choosing. Where once there was anger, there is now hope. Where once there was depression, there is now the ability to be happy. Like many abused women, Dahlia had a lot of self-doubt. Because of the help she received through attending the program she now has the confidence to return to school and pursue a career in Nursing.

After leaving a relationship that some are surprised she survived, Silma became the single mother to three small children. Having been left with feelings of fear, depression, anxiety and worthlessness Silma could have returned to the only life she knew – a

life full of beatings, name calling, with threats and abuse against her children. Beating all the odds, Silma now provides a safe warm home for her children free from abuse. Because of the program Silma can now understand the effects that abuse has had on her and her children and has access to programs for them that she would never have known about. Because of the program Silma no longer considers herself a victim of abuse, but a survivor.

Pamela and her son's flight from abuse was like something you would see in a movie or read in a book. She and her son escaped through a second floor window in the middle of the night and drove over 3000 km to escape their abuser. Left feeling severely depressed and with no self-confidence, she came to the program not knowing what to expect or what she would get from the group. She has since been able to draw the links from an abusive childhood to how she would be drawn to partners who abuse.

She now has regained the spark in her personality that was taken from her. She now knows that abuse also comes in different forms other than physical. Where once Pamela had difficulty seeing tomorrow, the program has helped her realize she is worthy of living a life abuse-free and has definite school and career goals.

Janine has beat odds with a super-human ability. Before starting the program Janine felt low self-esteem, fear, frustration and exhaustion. Being a single mom to five children and teens, instead of giving up and returning to her abuser, she has instead chosen to attend the program to soak up the information provided and incorporate it into her every day life. Janine now says she

has regained the confidence she lost, and the ability to move forward with school or a career of her choosing.

All of us in the Rebuilding Our Lives program can say without hesitation that it has changed our lives and our futures. If asked if we would recommend the program to others, we would all say, "Yes, without a doubt". We all felt like we were cared about and treated with the equality that some of us had never received before. We can now walk with our heads held high with confidence. When we started our group the smiles and laughs were far and few between, but now you can hear them resonating off the walls of our meeting room. Because of the Rebuilding Our Lives program, we now know what healthy relationships are and that we are each worthy of having one. The program teachings will carry forward not only in our lives but also in the lives of our children.



WOMEN AT THE CENTRE is a publication of Scarborough Women's Centre.

Letters and suggestions are very welcome.

Please forward to
Lynda Kosowan, MSW,RSW
Executive Director.
ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR WEBSITE?

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

Visit us at:
www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Acknowledgements & Appreciation

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SWC thanks the following **Individuals** for their generosity:

Donations: Up to \$99: Sarah Ahmed; Donna Arnett; Janet Astwood; Brownyn Atkinson; Ramratie Autar; Sheila Badcock; Roxanne Brown; Gloria Costello; Gordon Coutinho; Clarissa D'Cunha; L. Paschal D'Souza; Lise Dandy; Susanna Doma; Debbie Forrester; Richard & Anne Gillies; Helen Giraudel; Catherine Hanbidge; Eva Halter; Margaret Holyday; Keith Kayel; Xiaolin Ni; Kim Aitkins; Lorraine Bell; Mary Billinghamurst; Heidi Jean Gollert; Karen Grimshaw; Vera Elaine Taylor; Janet Astwood; Marie Linzon; Lorraine Mackie; Ada Murray; Vicki Bales; Diane Pendock; Lynn Fournier-Ruggles; Darcy Miller; Sarojdai Harduwar; Sasha Khan; Doris Maida; Kelly Manning; Alessia Presotto; Gladys Rose; Elizabeth Seres; Laura Snider; Lynette Spence; Courtney Steeves; Penni Stuart; Jeanette Thompson; Marilyn Tom; Susan Tucker; Danny Yamashita. **\$100 - \$249:** Darlene Watman; Monica Davies; Julie Sagara; Anthonet Grazia; Rebecca Griffith; Marcela Kupfer; Joyce Archer; Mandy Paradkar; Sheryl Dyke; Marie Veitch; Nan Kosowan ; Evelyn Hill; Susan Dandy; Bert Dandy. **\$250+:** Lynda Kosowan;

SWC gratefully acknowledges our **Corporate, Group and Service Club** supporters:

Donations: Up to \$2499: Royal Canadian Legion; FNF Canada Company; Hydro-One Employees; Scarborough Full Gospel Assembly; IBM Employees Charitable Fund; Metrosport Marketing Ltd; Myron Corporation; LeeTak Wei Foundation; Scotia Bank; OPG Employees; Eli Lilly Canada Inc; Walker Lynch Foundation; TD Canada Trust.

Donations: \$2,500 - \$9,999: Rotary Club of Scarborough; Aegon Canada Inc; RBC Financial Group; F.K. Morrow Foundation. **\$10,000+:** Green Shield Canada.

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Make a donation, become a member, or volunteer

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Phone: _____ E-mail _____

I would like to be a member of the Centre. _____ Please send an information package. _____

My donation of: \$35. _____ \$50. _____ \$200. _____ \$500. _____ Other _____

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____ payable to Scarborough Women's Centre.

Visa Card _____ Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

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Yes, you may acknowledge my donation in your newsletter and website. Please keep me informed of Centre activities.