



**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 2006 Newsletter

MOVING TOWARDS 2009

Women throughout the Centre have been involved in thinking about future directions for the agency over the past year. With feedback from the Consumer Advisory Group, volunteers, staff, Board and committees, new strategic directions have been set for the period 2006-09. These directions help staff, volunteers, and Board think about the work they are doing so that we are all working towards the same goals.

Our mission is to facilitate the empowerment of any woman who wants to leave an abusive or isolating situation, so that she can make long term, positive changes with confidence. In order to accomplish this mission, we will be focusing on growth in these 5 areas in the coming 3 years.

- Increase sustainability of the Centre – to make sure we have the resources we need to accomplish our goals and continue to serve the community
- Expand accessibility of existing services to meet the needs of diverse Scarborough women - includes a concern regarding space for programming, and accessible space for women with disabilities
- Build effective partnerships/collaborations where appropriate
- Strengthen our human resource base
- Raise the profile of Scarborough Women's Centre in the community

We look forward to the opportunity to serve more women, work with more partners, and learn together how best to serve women in Scarborough who want to move forward in their lives. When we work together strategically, we can make a difference!

Fall Fundraising Event and Silent Auction

This event will be held the evening of Thursday, October 19th, 2006. More information will be provided on our website:

www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

A great opportunity for networking.

Please call 416-439-7111 to register.

24th Annual General Meeting

**Celebrating Lynda Kosowan's 20th
anniversary with the Centre**

Thursday, September
14th, 2006

6:30 – 8:30 pm. At the
Scarborough Civic Centre
150 Borough Drive
(McCowan and Ellesmere)

Refreshments will be served. Childcare
is available at no cost if you pre-register.



WE ARE RESOURCEFUL!

It has been 6 years now since the Case Management/ Counselling Service has been available to women using Scarborough Women's Centre, and served 2045 women who want to move forward in their lives. Since May 2001, I have had the honour to witness women's growth and to stand with them at times of difficulty.

Women who used the Case Management/ Counselling service were referred by their family physicians, social workers, EAP workers, CAS workers, and other agencies. They received counselling and support on issues such as grief, domestic abuse, harassment, and communication. The goal of our service is to support women as they move towards economic and emotional independence.

Here is a summary of what we talked about and how women learned to have access to their internal and external resources to enrich their lives.

Women who had experienced loss shared with me their memories of beloved ones - mainly parents and spouses - who passed away in the last 10 years. They talked about the impact of the socially accepted process of grief on their lives. They experienced depression, anxiety and isolation due to the social pressure to "let go of" the people they had lost, causing them to feel pain and an obligation to "move on". During our therapeutic conversation, they explored ways of "moving on" without cutting off the impact of their beloved ones' memories in their lives.

Women who experienced abuse spoke of the effects of abuse on their identity, and their motherhood and womanhood. During our conversations, they discovered parts of their identity that were overshadowed by abuse. They recognized and identified patterns of abuse and were able to take a different stance. They realized that they have strengths and abilities that could support them to move towards their preferred way of living their lives.

Women who faced sexual harassment in the workplace discussed their issues and became more aware of their legal rights. Due to harassment at work, some weren't able to continue their jobs and received no support from the company they worked for, and some got laid off and lost their jobs. During our conversations, we addressed the underlying reasons for sexual harassment in the workplace and explored the effects of patriarchal views on women's rights issues.

Women with communication difficulties were able to talk about what constrained them from voicing their thoughts and feelings when they interact with others at home and at work. We looked into these constraints and how they have been reinforced in society and discovered ways of opening up space for their voices as they listen to other voices. As a result, they increased their ability to express their thoughts and feelings, view themselves positively, and value their own voices, while hearing others more clearly.

Please feel free to visit our website, where we have posted "Interesting Reading". These are articles I have written in past newsletters, reflecting on my learning with women. You may find some of the ideas helpful. You are also welcome to contact me if you would like to meet and discuss your own situation.

Tahereh Barati, Case Manager/Counsellor.

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE AWARD-WINNING!

The Centre is fortunate to have talented and dedicated women volunteer to enhance our services to women in transition. Our volunteers perform many tasks. In this issue, we focus on direct service volunteers who provide:

- Information referral to women who phone or drop in to the Centre
- Supportive mentoring with women in transition from isolated or abusive situations
- Tutoring with newcomer women who want to improve their conversational English

This spring, six of our Direct Service volunteers received the Ontario Volunteer Service Recognition Award for long term service. They are: **Loretta Fines** – 5 years Information Referral; **Bharati Guha** – 5 years Information Referral; **Kalia Musha** – 5 years Mentoring; **Loretta Traynor** – 5 years Mentoring; **Patricia Vienneau** – 10 years Mentoring; **Resham Karna** – 10 years Tutoring, and Information Referral. **Together, they have provided 40 years of service!** We checked in with two of these very special people:

For over 5 years, **Loretta Fines** has penciled in SWC on Tuesdays on her calendar. She is an Information and Referral Volunteer who is often the initial contact, in person or by phone, for service users as well as providing administrative support wherever needed. A former teacher, she remembered the Centre from having called “several years back looking for support for the troubled mom of one of my students.” She says that being an Information and Referral Volunteer is “a good match for me. I especially enjoy the “problem solving” part of the role... assessing the information given to me by callers and using it to put them into the hands of those who can provide the support they need, be it at the Centre or elsewhere. Nor do I mind stuffing envelopes, defrosting the fridge or any other job that may need doing. And most important, I enjoy being in the company of a group of wonderful women intent on supporting other women.”

Kalia Musha, another five year “veteran” has been both an English Conversation Tutor and a Supportive Mentor. When Kalia arrived in Toronto from Albania, she went to the Centre for Volunteers. “After I reviewed a long list of organizations I could volunteer for, there was one that caught both my eye and my heart even though they were located very far from where I lived.”

Kalia on the training she received from the Centre: “The training helped me gain a better understanding of the issues women face. The need I saw was not only to help them with the language barrier but also to try to help them build their self-confidence and esteem in coping with the reality of a new country.”

Kalia, on some of the challenges of volunteering: “You are tired of the weather, it is winter, you see your friend after working in the office for 9 hours and before you meet up with her, you cannot wait to go home and relax....But my training reminds me of how much I am needed to help women in transition...It is that time that I go back to the vision of Scarborough Women's Centre and that renews my commitment to keep going. I have had the privilege to be friends with some great women from whom I have learned a lot.”

Finally, **Loretta** again: “ I often host workshops offered at the Centre and am elated when I over-hear women chatting about the positive role the Centre has played in their lives.”

Our thanks and appreciation to all the wonderful women who volunteer. With your support, women can move forward to build a brighter future for themselves and their children!

Wendy Halse, Coordinator of Volunteers



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 and Editor of this publication
ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

Acknowledgements & Appreciation

December 2005 – August 2006

We gratefully acknowledge the following government and foundation funders for grants made to the Centre: City Of Toronto for their financial support through the Community Service Partnership Program; Service Canada - Summer Career Placement Program; Maytree Foundation; Ontario Trillium Foundation; United Way Of Greater Toronto; The Government Of Ontario through Ontario Women's Directorate

SWC thanks the following **Individuals** for their **generosity**: Rabeya Ahmed; Sarah Ahmed; Tamara Akopcan; Joyce Archer; Tracey Aucoin; Yvette Bailey; Ursula Bell; Lisa Benvenuto; Aruna Bhagwandin; Karen Boniface; Angela Boucher; Sylvia A. Brooks; Marie Campbell; Eileen Chalk; Andrea Chisolm; Ida Chiu; Gloria Costello; Elaine Dandy; Ari Dassanayake; Lynn Fournier-Ruggles; Helen Giraudel; Micheline Gravelle; Lisa Hamel; Kerri Harris; Mary Heinmaa; Debbie Herridge; Francine Hickman; Sheryl Hinds; Melanie Hubbard; Mitzie Hunter; Nigel Jagan; Nan Kosowan; Lynda Kosowan; Larry Kosowan; Sunita Kossta; Linda Locke & Vito Greto; Kelly Manning; Alice Matassa; Dawn Michie; Ada Murray; Jan Preston; Carol Robertson; Martin Ross; Samantha Singh; Janise Smith; Nadine Spencer; Darlene Watman; Kate Wicik; Dr. Donald Wright

SWC gratefully **acknowledges** our **Corporate, Group and Service Club** supporters: **Donations: Up to \$2,499**: BMO Fountain of Hope; Chinese Ladies Golf Association Of Onatrio; Chum Charitable Foundation; Eli Lilly Canada; Hydro-one Employees; Lee Tak Wei Fdn; OPG Employees Charitable Trust; Public Service Alliance of Canada; Ram Power Systems; Royal Canadian Legion; Scarborough Full Gospel Church; Scotia Bank; Teva Novopharm; Toronto Maple Leaf Foods Inc.; Ipsco Saskatchewan Inc.; Rotary Club of Agincourt **\$2,500 to \$4999**: IBM Employees Charitable Fund; **\$5, 000 to \$10,000**: CIBC; Royal Bank Fdn.

Special Thanks for In-Kind Donations to: Barbie's Basement Jewellers; Big Stretch Yoga Centre; Bradley Paint and Wallpaper; Christina Demeester; CN Tower; Connie Jilesen; Factory Theatre; House and Home Media; Kids can Press; Mandarin Restaurant; MDR Design Consultants; Aaron Rugs n Décor; Ontario Science Centre; Orexis Catering; Paramount Canada's Wonderland; Shoppers Drug Mart; Sue Firth; Tarragon Theatre; TDL Group (Tim Hortons); The Keg; Tiffany and Co.; Timex Canada Inc; Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey Club; Toronto Raptors; Vertibelle Creations Inc.; Vonage; Wild Water Kingdom; Winners Merchants Inc.

SUPPORT THE CENTRE!!

Make a donation, become a member, or volunteer

Name: _____ Address _____

Apt. # _____ City/Province _____ Postal Code _____

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: _____

Registered Charitable # 10795 9660 RR0001

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