



Women at the Centre

Fall 2007 Newsletter

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN TRANSITION

The Centre offers a Case Management and Counselling service to support women who want to improve their lives by addressing barriers to success and joy. They may be recovering from divorce or loss; dealing with depression or anxiety; building support networks; or getting settled in Canada. The Case Manager provides 1:1 support to help women identify their goals, and make plans to achieve them. She continues to meet women regularly for solution-focused counselling and support through the journey.

During her 6 years at the Centre, Tahereh Barati supported hundreds of women to achieve their goals. She recently took a new position at another agency working with families with young children. We wish her well in her new challenge!

In our search for a new Case Manager, we wanted to make sure that the quality of service, and the focus on women's assets and strengths was maintained. We are pleased to announce that Jacynth Fennell joined the Centre in April 2007. We will hear more from her in the future, but here is an opening hello to you from Jacynth....

"I would like to introduce myself as the new Case Manager and Counsellor. I hope as we work together we can focus

on prevention, growth and exploring our own resources. I look forward to working with those who want to work together to achieve their goals. I hope that supportive networks can be established that include agencies, institutions and the various cultural groups that we are a part of. All the best as we go into the Fall." Jacynth Fennell, Case Manager/ Counsellor

Please call Jacynth at ext. 2 if you would like to make an appointment.



Silent and Live Auction Fundraising Event

Sunday, Nov 25th, 2007

1- 3 pm.

Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
93 Birchmount Rd
(at Kingston Rd.)
\$10 per person.

Watch our website for further information

25th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, September 11th, 2007

6:30 – 8:30 pm.

At the **HP Science Centre**, Centennial
College Room #203
(Ellesmere and Morningside)

Vicki Bismilla,

VP Academic and Chief Learning Officer
Centennial College

will speak on

**"Women in Leadership: Inspiring
Success, Celebrating Diversity"**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – July, 2007

Well, here I am at the end of four years of Board membership with Scarborough Women's Centre. It has been four years of learning, growing and – yes – even having fun!

As a member of the Board, I have learned about the inner workings of a successful organization, and now realize how much time and energy goes into keeping the doors of our great Centre open to the women of our community. Chairing the Board for the last two years has allowed me to grow personally, by giving me opportunities to develop leadership and management skills. As a volunteer, I have had the great satisfaction of knowing that I have had a hand in helping a woman in need.

But, the most enjoyable aspect of the last four years has been meeting and getting to know the numerous volunteers, staff, users and supporters of the Centre. The women of the Centre are generous, talented and dedicated women, and I am very privileged to have had the chance to know so many of them. Even though I will not be returning to the Centre's Board of Directors, I will always have a place in my heart for the women of the Centre.

Samantha Singh, Board President

OUTREACH TO WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Women with disabilities are often more vulnerable to abuse. About 13% of Canadian women have a form of disability, and it is estimated that 60% experience abuse in a trust relationship. The experience has much in common with the experience of women in general, but there are added dimensions that are profoundly unique, including abuse at the hands of caregivers or medical staff, and the added vulnerabilities that a disability can create.

Issues such as healthy relationships, self esteem, assertiveness, and dealing with anger are crucial to women in many different life situations. We wanted to

make our educational services more easily available to women with disabilities. In partnership with the Disabilities Program at Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre, a series of workshops will be offered this fall and winter. Watch our website for details.

Thank you so much to **Green Shield Canada Foundation** for making this possible!

REBUILDING OUR LIVES

Women who have left an abusive situation may be at risk of returning. It's difficult to feel that you have to choose between paying the rent, or feeding the children. Rebuilding Our Lives is a program focused on supporting women to develop economic and emotional independence skills, so that they can move forward in their lives. An 11 week group will focus on healing from abuse, developing life skills for personal and work success, and planning for the future. In partnership with Centennial College, women will receive academic assessments and begin career planning. Following the group, supports will continue to be offered to women as they implement their plans for independence. Women will return to school, obtain employment, volunteer in the community and/or start their own businesses.

Groups will start in October 2007 and February 2008. If you are interested in knowing more about the program, please leave a message at extension 4.

We are deeply grateful to the **Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Victim Support Services** for making this possible.



WOMEN AT THE CENTRE is a publication of Scarborough Women's Centre.
Letters and suggestions are very welcome.

Please forward to
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YOUNG WOMEN ON THE MOVE

Did you know that 42% of young women between the ages of 15 to 24, reported experiencing intimate partner violence? Almost 1 in every 2 women will experience abuse in her life. For many years, the Centre has been working with adult women to help them recover from abuse. They have often told us that as young women they lacked support and knowledge, self-esteem and the ability to recognize signs of abuse. For many young women, growing up can be difficult and sometimes confusing, as they try to form their own identity, make decisions about their future and learn to form healthy relationships. Women said they wish there had been supports like our Centre available when they were in their teen years. Based on feedback from service users, our Consumer Advisory Group and community partners, the Centre is now working with young women in hopes of helping them secure a future for themselves by living a life free of violence.

Last summer, research was conducted to learn about the services available for young women in Toronto. Although there are many services for young women in recreation, and for teen mothers, there was a gap in support services for young women.

The Young Women's Outreach is a youth-driven program involving young women to bring awareness on the issues they face. We recruited peer volunteers from various high schools in Scarborough to join the team; which also gave them the opportunity to earn volunteer hours. Volunteers were trained with the essential tools of outreach: positive communication and active listening skills, which are also transferable skills that can be used in their own lives. After training, the volunteers completed two projects, exploring issues they found important and wanted to share with their peers. The volunteers created educational materials that focused on young women's issues. The first project

creatively explored the impact of body image on young women through collages, pictures and art that were put together into a zine. The second project was a healthy relationships pamphlet, educating young women on their rights in a relationship, statistics on abuse and myths about relationships.

A survey to gain an understanding on the needs of young women was distributed by peer outreach volunteers to friends and peers from their high school, or post-secondary institution. Results showed that young women were interested in learning about violence against women, self-esteem and healthy relationships, and to have a safe place to speak and learn about the issues they face, realizing that they are in the process of becoming adult women with adult responsibilities.

So what's in the future for the Centre and young women? Research has shown that through group work and group reflection, young women learn to become empowered individuals, where they are able to make the right choices in their lives. This statement will be the mission we will work with, providing young women a place to learn and become empowered, where they are supported and accepted. This fall we will offer educational workshops, as well as continuing the Young Women's Outreach in schools. We hope by expanding our services, we can offer a safe place for young women to meet with their peers where they can discuss the issues they are confronted with and ways they can share their new found knowledge with others. We are delighted with this opportunity to benefit from the energy and interest of young women, while supporting them to dream of a bright future for themselves.

Thank you so much to **Alcoa Foundation, The Junior League and Women's Inter-Church Council** for making this program possible.

Sophialigaya Santos, Young Women's Outreach Worker

Acknowledgements & Appreciation

December 2006 – August 2007

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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. _____

Enclosed is my donation of: \$35. _____ \$50. _____ \$200. _____ \$500. _____ Other _____

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

Visa/MasterCard _____ Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

You may process this donation annually on _____ [date]

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

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