



**Scarborough
Women's
Centre**

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Women at the Centre

Fall 2008 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This year, Scarborough Women Centre celebrates 25 years of service to women wanting to leave abusive situations and institute long term positive changes in their lives. It is indeed a milestone and an occasion for celebration.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, not only have we been successful in maintaining our core services, but we have had several successes during the year. We received funding for the Business Development Project, which will help increase sustainability, build partnerships, and connect with high priority neighbourhoods. We expanded our services through the Young Women's Outreach program, which will better prepare young women to make positive choices in their lives. We also partnered with Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre to provide a program for women with disabilities, where they can explore issues such as self esteem, assertiveness and building healthy relationships.

We even took our annual event to a new level. The fashion show and auction, at the downtown Manyata Courtyard Café, sponsored by The Indulgent Foodie was a great success and a step in the direction of raising the level of our events.

The Centre must be commended for touching the lives of over 150,000 women and their children in the last twenty-five years. Thank you to the staff and volunteers who have worked so hard to deliver the programs and to make a difference in the lives of many women, who are now able to celebrate their lives and move forward with confidence. Congratulations!

Yvette Bailey
President, Board of Directors

PURSUING HEALTH

One of the interesting things to note about Fall is that the health habits we may have developed during the summer seem to evaporate. We get busier, the days are shorter, and the weather is colder. This is just a personal reflection! I notice the food I eat changes and the thought going into meals is less. My immune system is not as robust and my overall well-being deteriorates. The idea comes to mind that perhaps I should do something about this pattern.

This happens in many areas of life until each of us decides to change.

Information, exploration of feelings, and then action is needed. It is not enough to have information.

Nor is it enough to know and feel that one needs to change. We need to take steps for change to be realized. The frustrating part is that the progress is not constant. One can take one step forward, then ten backwards! The process is often painful and hard work. It means setting limits and boundaries or denying ourselves something we want that is clearly not beneficial. Until this is done we will not have the discipline needed to take necessary steps.

When goals are set, their achievement may take a while, sometimes even years, but the important thing is to keep going forward. The joy comes from enjoying the health that develops as a result of these steps being taken. I wish those who want to pursue health this Fall continued success and enjoyment of life!

Jacynth Fennell
Case Manager/Counsellor

*We are delighted to invite you to our
Annual General Meeting celebrating the 25th
Anniversary of Incorporation*



Guest Speaker

Senator Vivienne Poy, The Senate of Canada
(First Senator of Asian Descent)

When: September 10th 2008,

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Where: Main Rotunda, Scarborough Civic
Centre 150 Borough Drive,
Please **RSVP by Sept 4th**
contact: 416-439-7111

"SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER"
Silent Auction - Fall 2008



Start your holiday shopping early -

Good company, silent auction.
Bring family and friends!

When: Saturday, Nov 8th 2008
Time: 1- 3 pm

Where: Scarborough Village Theatre
Check our website for details.

For our **25th anniversary of incorporation**, we asked staff, volunteers, service users, friends, and Board members to share their thoughts about what would go into a list of

“25 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT SCARBOROUGH WOMEN’S CENTRE”.

Here are some of their suggestions.

❖ **SOME BACKGROUND**

1. Formed in 1982 following a community consultation on the changing face of Scarborough.
2. Our mission is “to assist any woman who wants to leave an isolating or abusive situation, so that she can make long term, positive changes with confidence”.
3. Our mandate is to provide information, education and support services to assist women in the transition to economic and emotional independence.
4. Serves women 15 to 75+ years of age, originating from every continent of the world.
5. The Centre has touched the lives of 150,000 women and their children.
6. Women participating at the Centre, reside in every postal code in Scarborough, as well as surrounding communities like Downtown Toronto, Durham Region, and York Region.
7. Received the Mayor’s Community Safety Award in 2003 in recognition of our work with abused women and their children.
8. One of 5 agencies serving newcomers in Toronto chosen to participate in the 4 year Building Agency Capacity project (2003-07), improving our ability to respond to community needs.
9. We were first located in Cedarbrook Community Centre at Markham and

Lawrence, and have been located at Markham and Ellesmere since 1994.

10. Our office is located in the very centre of the former City of Scarborough. This central and accessible location is served by 4 different bus lines, close to the RT and Highway 401, with free parking at street level, making it convenient for many women to participate.

❖ **PROGRAMS**

11. The Centre represents what is best about Scarborough - the ability to engage all women regardless of their ethnicity, their religion or their circumstances.
 12. The Centre is a place where women feel welcomed, and can connect with others from the community. Building networks, women can feel supported and strong.
 13. The Centre started out as an information referral line for newcomers to Scarborough. Over the years, we have added educational workshops, 1:1 mentoring, counselling, and specialized programs for particular target groups, e.g. young women, women with disabilities, newcomer women.
 14. Our history of innovation includes the development of the Rebuilding Our Lives program for women at risk of returning to abuse.
- Our programs:
15. Focus on helping women identify their own assets and strengths, and building on those strengths to achieve their goals.
 16. Help women enjoy or regain their freedom by the choices they make.
 17. Provide women the opportunity to learn in a non-intimidating manner.
 18. Network within the community to address the holistic needs of women.

19. Partner with community based organizations in every corner of Scarborough to provide service to women.

❖ **PARTNERSHIPS**

20. Worked with TTC to improve women’s safety on surface route transit. Recommendations implemented include the Request Stop program and redesigned bus shelters. These innovations have been duplicated as far away as Australia.
21. Actively involved in the establishment of community partnership projects, including Women’s Place at Malvern Town Centre; and the Scarborough Access Centre, a co-location of agencies working on violence against women issues.
22. Each year, 80 volunteers contribute their energy and experience as mentors, tutors, information referral providers, committee and Board members, and fundraisers.
23. Provide placements for students at York University, University of Toronto, George Brown College, Centennial College, Seneca College, Humber College, Toronto District School Board and Toronto District Catholic School Board.
24. Member of the Ontario Association of Women’s Centres, ACTEW, Ontario Women’s Health Network, and Volunteer Toronto.
25. Receive funding from every level of government (federal, provincial, municipal), and also enjoy the support of Ontario Trillium Foundation, private foundations, corporations and individuals. 1/3 of our expenses to deliver programs are covered by fundraising activities.

“The Centre has helped me to be the woman I am today, assertive with much self esteem. I have realized my dreams and am catching up with lost opportunities.”
~an SWC service user



A BRIGHTER AND SAFER FUTURE FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Many young women witness violence every day in their schools, communities and media. Who can they speak to about their feelings and experiences? And where can they go to learn more about these issues and obtain skills and knowledge to stop violence? The Centre is committed to strengthen young women's abilities in identifying and escaping violence, through the Young Women's Outreach program. Young women acquire life skills and knowledge to recognize and leave unhealthy relationships. Volunteer opportunities to take action in avoiding and stopping violence are also offered.

High school students work with our staff to create a zine about issues of concern to them, such as teen dating violence, and do information tables during lunch hour at school to tell their peers about support and resources available for young women. We have also delivered workshops in schools.

The Centre would also like to thank a group of young women from David and Mary Thomson C.I for obtaining a \$5,000 grant for our project from the Toskan-Casale Foundation. As part of the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative, they developed a presentation about the Centre, competing with their peers to win the award. Students tell us that it was an excellent learning experience that they will never forget.

They realize that the Centre has done a lot to help the community by tackling problems and barriers that women face, and are proud that their

presentation provided more resources for the Centre to continue to support and equip young women to pursue a brighter and violence free future.

Karen Leung

Young Women's Outreach Worker

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

1983 was a year of possibility. The City of Scarborough found a new identity as a place people were drawn to. Formerly a "bedroom community" which sent office workers to downtown Toronto for several decades, it was now a destination of choice to newcomers and those who were trying to get on their feet. A wonderful mix of newcomers, long-timers, elders, and youth began to define our issues and our face.

The Centre was incorporated as an agency determined to support women to move forward in their lives. Over the past 25 years, we have had many opportunities to impact the community: providing information about resources; identifying needs for service; improving women's safety on transit; working in partnership with key players; raising awareness about women's issues and concerns; and providing individual women with the opportunity to obtain support and education to address their own issues.

I am so proud of our Board, volunteers and staff for the way they have helped make Scarborough a better place for women, and helped women make better lives for themselves and their children. The entire community has benefitted. I am so grateful to our funders, donors and friends who have made the resources available to do this work. And I am especially proud of the women who have used our services. They are courageous, determined, and hopeful. 2008 is still a time of possibility!

Lynda Kosowan, MSW, RSW
Executive Director

WOMEN TALK ABOUT THE CENTRE

"I am so happy I found this place."

"Now that I feel better, I can help others."

"Please continue to do what you are doing. You are changing lives."

"WHAT IF-2009"



You are invited to our wonderful
**What If Fashion Show and Silent
Auction Fundraiser**
at Manyata Courtyard Cafe
sponsored by
www.theindulgentfoodie.com

Enjoy a **spectacular array of
beautiful clothes & accessories**
Bring family and friends!
Everyone is welcome

When: Sunday, April 26th 2009
Time: 1 - 4 pm
Check our website for details of
how to purchase tickets.



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 2007 – August 2008

We gratefully acknowledge the following **government funders** for grants made to the Centre: The Government Of Ontario through Ontario Women's Directorate; The Government of Ontario through Ministry of the Attorney General – Ontario Victim Support Services; Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario; Service Canada - Summer Career Placement; City Of Toronto for their financial support through the Community Service Partnership Program

SWC thanks the following **Individuals** for their **generosity**: Sarah Ahmed; Joyce Archer; Yvette Bailey; Jules Bedeau; Marie Belanger; Karen Boniface; Carolina Cameron; Jenny Kitsum Chan; Kimberley Cochrane; Gloria Costello; Bert Dandy; Elaine Dandy; Lynn Fournier-Ruggles; Damian Grieves; Karen Grimshaw; Maureen Harding; Kerri Harris; Debbie Herridge; Evelyn Hill; Heidi Johnson; Vivienne Kendry; Neva Kotsopoulos; Larry Kosowan; Lynda Kosowan; Nan Kosowan; Lyn McDonell; Christine Miranda; Kalia Musha; Kelly Paterson; David Pauli; Irene Rey; Nadine Spencer; Lambrini Soulos; Roslyn Shields; Penni Stuart; Darlene Watman; Dharshika Watson

SWC gratefully acknowledges our **Corporate, Group and Service Club** supporters: **up to \$2,499**: Canadian Federation of University Women- Scarborough Chapter; Comark Inc; Chum Charitable Trust; Eli Lilly Canada Inc; J.P. Bickell Foundation; Lee Tak Wei Foundation; Mastermind Toys; OPG Employees Trust; Royal Bank of Canada; Scarborough Full Gospel Assembly; St. Mark's United Church; TD Financial Group; TD Canada Trust; TD Meloche Monnex; Telus. **\$2,500 to \$4999**: Aldgate Construction Ltd.; Malvern Christian Assembly; SKF Employee Charitable Fund; **\$5,000 to \$9,999**: CIBC; RBC Foundation; St. Andrew's Society; **\$10,000**: The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation.

Special Thanks for In-Kind Donations to: Arthur Mendoca Inc; Bulova Watch Company; Canadian Tire (Warden & Eglinton); Chambers and Sons; Christina Demeester; Daag and Stacey; Diesel Canada Inc.; Druxy's Inc; Estheticare; Gaetane Ouellette; Great Glasses on Danforth; Gsus Industries; HBC Foundation; Hibebe Designs; House and Home Media; Tim Howe; Il Fornello; Jeremy Laing; Jessica Rust, RMT; Judith Richardson; Juma; K.Welly; Keg Restaurants Ltd.; Lee Tak Wei Fdn; Linda Lundstrom; Lorraine Green; M.A.C; Nada; National Ballet; Peach Berserk; PJ's Pet; Raffaello Salon; Saniya Khan; Shirley Kandappu; Soupppper Theatre; Sutherland Chan School and Teaching Clinic; Tatsuaki Inc.; Textile Museum Canada; The Bradford Group; The Fairmont Royal York; Timex Canada; Toron Capital Markets; Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club; Toronto Symphony Orchestra; Walmart; Wild Water Kingdom; Winner Merchants(Home Sense); Winners Merchants International L.P.; Yamaha Canada Music Ltd; Zoran Dobric

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. _____

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: _____

Registered Charitable # 10795 9660 RR0001

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