

SAYING GOODBYE TO SWC

For the past five years, I have had the privilege of volunteering with Scarborough Women's Centre (SWC) as a member of the Board. It was a friend, past Board member Nadia Taylor, who approached me about joining the team. I had previously worked as a Policy Advisor to the Secretary of State for the Status of Women and have always been passionate about women's issues. Not being from Toronto, I was not immediately familiar with SWC, but after seeing the passion Nadia had for the Centre and then doing some of my own research, I was eager to get on board.

Once I met Lynda Kosowan and began to learn about the rich 35 year history of the organization I got a true understanding of the real impact the work of the Centre has had on women's lives. What can one even say about Lynda – she is the lifeblood of SWC and one of the most well respected, most effective and most passionate individuals dedicated to women and families in the city of Toronto! I am inspired by her wisdom, her judgment and her quiet passion and feel lucky to have worked with her.

It has been an honour working on the Board with my fellow members and Lynda. Each woman I have met and sat across from each month has enriched my life experience – sharing their perspective, bringing their own life experience and ideas to the table, reflecting on the challenges women and their children continue to face and working to find solutions to better enable the Centre staff and volunteers to help empower the women of Scarborough to transform their lives. In particular, I enjoyed the AGMs where I got to meet the women and men who have impacted or been impacted by SWC. What a wonderfully diverse, generous and committed community of people!

Recently, my family has made the decision to move to another city and as a result, I have had to retire early from the Board. I know, that with Lynda and the dynamic group of women on the Board, SWC is in incredibly capable hands. I will continue to do what

I can to contribute to SWC and I look forward to applying what I have learned through SWC to other causes in my new city of Ottawa.

Janice Nicholson,
 SWC Board of
 Directors,
 2013- 2018



SAYING HELLO TO SWC



It's hard to believe that more than twenty years have passed since I first began my work with women as a social worker. What I learned back then has not only proved to be relevant for that time, but equally so today. As women, we have very specific needs and experiences that (quite often) are best understood and supported by other women. We are still trying to reduce the silence about issues that continue to have tremendous impact on our potential. We are still voicing our vulnerabilities while, at the same time, shouting about our

enormous strengths.

My name is Carol Soares. I am pleased to have recently joined Scarborough Women's Centre, on a part-time basis, as a counsellor. Thank you to United Way of Greater Toronto for making this position possible! Counselling is not the only way that women are supported to experience transformation through challenging periods in their lives, but it definitely can play a very key role. The mission, wide-ranging workshop topics, and the peer-based mentoring program for women is one of key reasons that I've joined the Centre. I am happy to be part of services which are comprehensive and offer a variety of modalities to suit the needs of each individual. Scarborough Women's Centre provides connections, a sense of community, and counselling.

I look forward to my contribution in this setting. My background includes several years of working with women in the addiction, trauma/gender-based violence, and refugee/immigrant sectors. I believe that each person is unique and, while the valuable clinical frameworks can serve as guides, intervention is as specific as every woman who accesses our counselling services and programs. I am pleased to lend my experience to the range of existing responsive Scarborough-based services.

Carol Soares, RSW, Counsellor
 416-439-7111 x 6 or
uwcounsellor@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

WALKING THROUGH "HELL"

The definition of "Hell" is different for each person. Some think that it is a literal place, others think it is a person, experience, or traumatic situation. For the purpose of this article, let us call it difficult circumstances. Why does one have to go through "Hell"? It is a deliberate choice! You are deciding to deal with the difficult, control what bothers you or just survive the turmoil if you can. Sometimes your resources are so limited that you crack and break. Walking through Hell is the decision to allow yourself to be remade or healed. No matter how many "missiles" have targeted you, or how many bombs have gone off near you or have hit you. If you are still alive after all of that, you choose to continue. You rebuild, heal, and move out of the war zone or chaos. This is not based on feeling. You might not feel like moving or getting up, but tell yourself if you stay in this physical or emotional environment you will die. Breathe, relax, survive, and then go back to enjoying life.

Consider making sure you set off the mine fields in your life to make sure they are no longer active. Clear them, deactivate them by working through the feelings and separating from unsafe situations as best as possible. Choose wisely. Consider your decisions. Some have lasting effects.



Jacynth Fennell, Counsellor

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Please join us for The Scarborough Women's Centre **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Wednesday, September 19th from 6:30 - 8:30 PM at the Scarborough Civic Centre Rotunda, 150 Borough Drive

Please RSVP by Wednesday, September 12th via email: adminassist@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca or phone: (416) 439-7111

Attendant care will be available, so please let us know if you require any accommodation. **SEE YOU THERE!**

CREATING A WORKFORCE THAT IS INCLUSIVE OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

The Expanding the Reach: Outreach to Women with Disabilities program is currently facilitating a three-year project aimed at promoting the economic security and inclusion of women with disabilities in the workforce. This will be achieved by organizing community consultations, developing resources, and sharing project learning with women with disabilities, employment agencies, employers, and other committed stakeholders.

We have learned through our research and community consultations to date that some of the most significant barriers to promoting the inclusion of women with disabilities in the workforce are employer assumptions and perceptions of disability. People with disabilities are believed to be not interested or capable of working based on their perceived

limitations. We asked women with disabilities what is needed by employers to create a workforce that is more inclusive of women with disabilities. Here is some of what they had to say:

- Adopt policies and procedures that clearly outline your organization's commitment to diversity, accessibility, anti-discrimination, and anti-harassment
- Promote (both internally and externally) your organization's

commitment to diversity and accessibility

- Provide ongoing disability awareness training within your organization that is facilitated by people with disabilities
- Increase employer and staff awareness of what can be considered a workplace accommodation. Accommodations may include: attendant services, ASL interpreters, adaptive technology, workplace furnishings, a quiet workstation, frequent breaks, and flexible work arrangements
- Note that not all accommodations are expensive
- Look beyond traditional and mainstream sources for job applicants
- Post job ads in alternate formats and in places where people with disabilities go
- Discuss accommodation needs with all of your employees whether they identify as having a disability or not

Creating a workforce that is inclusive of women with disabilities requires both a personal and financial commitment by employers. However, this investment will not only benefit women with disabilities. This investment will lead to workplaces that are more reflective and responsive to the communities they serve, increase productivity, improve workplace satisfaction, and reduce employee turnover.

If you are interested in becoming involved in our project, please contact Melissa Simas by phone at 416-439-7111 x3 or by email at program@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca.

Melissa Simas, MSW, RSW

Expanding the Reach, Program Coordinator



WOMEN AT THE CENTRE IS A PUBLICATION OF SCARBOROUGH WOMEN'S CENTRE.

LETTERS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. PLEASE FORWARD TO:

LYNDA KOSOWAN, MSW, RSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND EDITOR AT ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: KALUM PERERA

**FIND US
ON SOCIAL
MEDIA!**



A NEW GENERATION OF "WOKENESS"

As Program Coordinator for Building Strong Futures, I've noticed a trend when it comes to young women. Each year, I encounter more and more young women that know "what's up", meaning that they are aware of not only what social issues are going on around them but have an understanding of where they play a role in making a difference.

This "wokeness" (being awake; well-informed; aware of social discrimination and injustice) has been gradual. Few years back, a conversation on feminism and misogyny would've looked different with a group of 17 year olds than with a bunch of 15 year olds, but now that same conversation is starting at a much younger age. Now, gr. 7 & 8 girls are asking the exact same questions on healthy relationships as the 17 year olds.

I've been witness to heated debates on consent and healthy relationships where young women have not been afraid to stand up with confidence, speak their minds, prove their point and then sit back down and act as if they did not just give an Oscar worthy performance. Are there still young women who are shy, struggle with self-esteem and may not be 100% sure about what a healthy relationship is, or struggle with self-efficacy and the negative impact of social media culture and how misogyny has a role in all of this? Of course there are.

What's shifted? What has caused this change in self-awareness at a younger age? Social media and phone apps to the obvious TV shows; experiencing life at an earlier time or maybe it could be those subtle not so subtle changes in our society. Whatever it is, our young women are learning about and developing intersectional lenses at a much younger age and educating others as they pass on by.

Priscilla Arias, Program Coordinator,
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OUR SUMMER STUDENTS

Scarborough Women's Centre was delighted to receive a grant from Service Canada to hire 4 summer students for 8 weeks, at 30 hours per week. Thanks to the Honorable John McKay, Liberal M.P. of Scarborough-Guildwood and Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ), these students are able to develop their skills, gain valuable work experience they need to be successful now and in the future, while earning money for their tuition.

Canada Summer Jobs is an incredibly important program. Most entry level positions require at least one year of experience, and although students have the knowledge and education in their field of study, the reality is that they're not always guaranteed a job. The Summer Work Experience program initiative provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, public-sector employers, and small businesses to create quality employment opportunities for secondary and post-secondary students.

It not only helps young people, but it enables organizations to bring a variety of new and exciting projects they might not have been able to do without extra staffing. Last year, 27,978 jobs were created in the province of Ontario as a result of Summer Work Experience projects. It's a win for everyone.

At Scarborough Women's Centre, our summer students brought new initiatives and ideas to move forward with our vision. These were some of their accomplishments:

- created outreach to meet the needs of marginalized communities.
- worked with our social media platforms to raise community engagement and participation.
- developed promotional materials such as brochures for mentoring programs and flyers for workshops.
- supported our systemic change project focused on promoting economic security for women with disabilities

By investing in youth, we activate leaders, invest in creating healthier communities and building brighter futures. It's great that a program like Canada Summer Jobs exists where students can achieve a different outlook, stronger self-identification, and prepare themselves for the workforce.

Daycia Patterson, Communications Coordinator

OUR GENEROUS DONORS - THANK YOU!

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Status of Women Canada, Service Canada, The Government of Ontario, City of Toronto-Community Service Partnership Program, City of Toronto-Investing in Neighbourhoods Program

FOUNDATIONS & N.G.O.s

J.P. Bickell Foundation, Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation, McCarthy Tetrault Foundation, Ontario Realtors Care Foundation, salesforce Foundation, Shoppers Drug Mart LIFE Foundation, St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation, The McLean Foundation, Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, United Way of Greater Toronto, Women's Xchange - Women's College Hospital

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SCARBOROUGH
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Scarborough, ON M1H 3B7

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

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Please keep me informed of Centre activities.

FALL 2018