



# WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

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SCARBOROUGH WOMEN'S CENTRE

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WEBSITE: [www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](http://www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)

## REFLECTIONS OF A RETIRING BOARD MEMBER

What makes a woman strong? Confidence. A deep belief in herself. Fairness and kindness. We often forget that a strong woman can inspire many women around her.

I have been blessed to witness it first hand in my mother. I lost my dad to a road accident in India. I was two years old. My mom, a high school graduate, at 23, was left to raise two daughters when she could barely comprehend her own life. Failure and fear are not things she is familiar with and so she raised her daughters to be strong and fearless, educated and conscientious, kind and loving. She continued to complete her studies while working fulltime and seizing opportunities along the way. All this in a country where being a woman is not easy, let alone being young, single and beautiful. In her forties, when she could have sat back and let her daughters take care of her, my mother decided to move to Canada to be closer to her family and provide even more opportunities for her daughters.

Most of you know the new immigrant story. My mother, sister and I worked in various jobs – call centres, gas stations, restaurants, department stores while continuing to get experience, education and skills. Like many of you, we walked for hours to save on bus tickets, worked odd shifts and saved every cent to buy that first car. In addition, break ups, career ebbs, and societal pressures continued to make their presence felt.

What got me through all this? The relentless support of my mother and sister, positive thinking and divine inspiration. My mother taught me to roll with the punches that life throws at me. I also learned from reading stories of successful women; creating a strong support network that included good friends and mentors; and finding my passion in dance. When times get rough, I emerge stronger and more resolute because I have the support of women who are cheering me on.

Six years ago, empowering women is what led me to join the Board of SWC. I wanted to help those who needed it because I know that we not only have the ability to encourage and inspire but we also understand each other through our failures. I joined this Board because I wanted to give back to the community and the country that gave me so much.

I feel privileged to have had the honour to serve on this Board and am thankful for all the love, support, inspiration and knowledge I have received. I will always be grateful to Lynda, the Board members (past and present), volunteers, support staff and service users who have made me a better person. This experience has taught me that We the women, are our strongest allies. We have the power and we can achieve the impossible. You are all stronger than you think you are and the universe loves you. Tell this to yourself, believe in it and watch the magic unfold.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity!



**Neeti Sharma, Board Member (2010-16)**

### Don't miss our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

We will be celebrating Lynda Kosowan's 30th year with the Centre

**Monday,**  
**September 19th, 2016**

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Scarborough  
Civic Centre  
Main Floor  
150 Borough Drive

Please [RSVP](#) by  
Wednesday,  
September 14th, 2016

at

[adminassist@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:adminassist@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)

or

416-439-7111

*Please let us know if  
you require any  
accommodations.  
Attendant care will be  
provided.*

This year we will be creating a short video about why people choose to get involved with SWC. If you'd like to take part, give some thought as to what you want to say



## SCARBOROUGH WOMEN'S CENTRE

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# OUR NEW LOGO AND WEBSITE

Have you seen them? After consulting with participants, volunteers, staff, Board and committee members and community partners, we are very pleased to launch our new logo. The Communications committee worked with graphic artist Sarah Khalid to find a fresh way to convey the Centre's mission and vision. We are thrilled with the results!

We were also very fortunate to work with Lelia MacDonald of Management Advisory Services and Jorge Orozco to design and launch our new website. Former webmaster Simi Lachman suggested the Wordpress platform as a way to develop our in-house capacity to keep the website current with less dependence on outside expertise. We hope you will find it easy to navigate, and interesting to review. Your feedback and participation are welcome – we're always looking for images and content to share. Contact Lynda Kosowan, Executive Director at [ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)

## REAL TALK: A Candid Discussion about Sexual Harassment

Our Building Strong Futures: Young Women's Outreach Program recently partnered up with students of the Safe School Action team of a local high school. We were asked to facilitate several workshops about sexual harassment with their peers.

We wanted to make sure students engaged in discussions with each other, became aware of the different forms of sexual harassment, what constitutes consent and where they can seek support in their school and community. Facilitating these workshops, we've witnessed students challenge each other and vocalize frustrations from their own experience with sexual harassment. These discussions have created a safer school environment and are leading to a culture change on a topic that is very taboo amongst youth.

Sexual harassment may not always seem so obvious. One of the biggest breakthroughs in our discussions was when students acknowledged the "blurred lines" between what may seem as flirtatious behaviour and harassment. Including both young women and men in the conversation of what real day to day experiences look like is instrumental in deconstructing stereotypes, encouraging peers to not become bystanders and questioning the assumption that young men don't experience sexual harassment.

With the continuation of these open discussions, we are on a path towards a better environment for all.

**Priscilla Arias, Building Strong Futures: Young Women's Outreach Program Coordinator**  
416-439-7111 x 4  
[specialproject@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:specialproject@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)



**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](mailto:ed@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: KALUM PERERA





## WHY DO YOU THINK GENDER BASED VIOLENCE OCCURS?

Gender based violence is more likely to occur at home, by someone known to the individual. Violence or assault can occur in public spaces as well. At a recent workshop, women with disabilities were asked why they think violence occurs. Here is some of what they had to say:

Violence occurs because:

- The system does not encourage survivors to come forward; it diminishes and devalues our stories
- Many programs and services are not accessible to women with disabilities
- Women are blamed for the violence they experience. "If they just dressed more conservatively and did not go out at night, they would be okay."
- Many do not know that what they are experiencing can be considered violence
- Women with disabilities are led to believe that what they experienced was someone 'helping' them and not assault
- They fear they will not be believed

These realities can be hard to express, especially if you have not had many opportunities to do so. Many participants who come to our workshops say they attend them because they know they will be supported and their experiences will be validated. They feel a sense of empowerment as they gain access to knowledge and skills that will help them find their voice and make changes in their lives.

If you know any women with disabilities who would be interested in participating in our program, please contact Melissa at 416-439-7111 x 3 or email [program@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:program@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)

## CREATIVITY AND DEALING WITH REALITY

To deal with daily challenges, do you need to be creative or just look at the harsh realities of life? What if you are surrounded by entirely negative attitudes and chaos in the environment? Do you begin to be creative and generate options that are not present around you or do you just look a fact straight in the eye and accept things the way that they are? On the other hand, if you see only nice things and the environment is organized and smoothly running, what skills would be needed when things get chaotic?

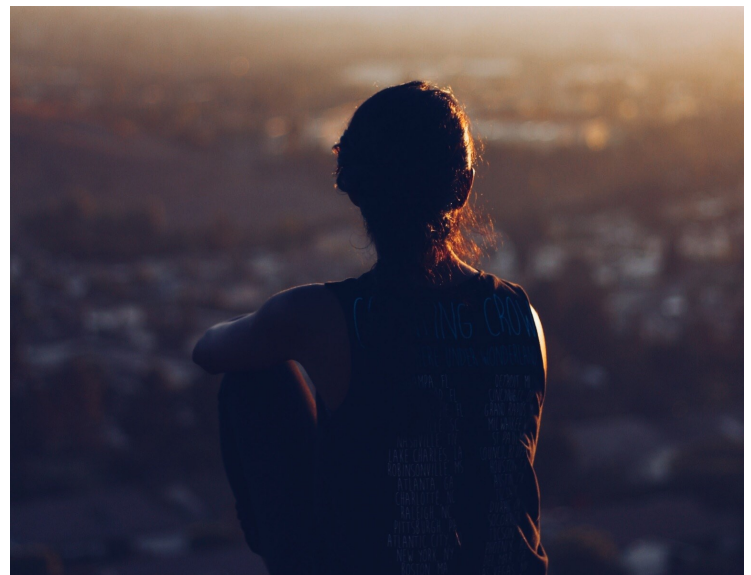
Why is this relevant anyway? I find that there are people who constantly immerse themselves with the negative and it becomes part of their way of thinking. The reverse is also true. If they immerse themselves in only positive things without dealing with the negative, their position can be unrealistic. The idea is to be both creative and realistic. To look a fact straight in the face but also explore ways to do things differently when needed. Creativity should always be present in any view of reality because it helps you to address the unknown and unexpected.

This helps us to be resourceful. By using all our sources of information, the obvious as well as the obscure, and being creative enough to generate ideas to solutions, we can deal with most of what comes our way.

**Jacynth Fennell, Counsellor**

**416-439-7111 x 2**

**[counsellor@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:counsellor@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca)**



# OUR GENEROUS DONORS - THANK YOU!

## GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Service Canada, The Government of Ontario through Ontario Women's Directorate, City of Toronto-Investing in Neighbourhoods Program, City of Toronto-Community Service Partnership Program, City of Toronto-Recreation Program, City of Toronto-Access, Equity & Human Rights Program, City of Toronto-Community Safety Investment Program

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Make a donation, become a member, or volunteer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email\*: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation of: \$50  \$100  \$200  \$500  Other (please specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

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

Visa/Mastercard #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Or, donate from our website clicking on the CanadaHelps.org button. <http://www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca>**

Registered Charitable #: 10795 9660 RR0001

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You may acknowledge my donation on your newsletter and website.  Please keep me informed of Centre activities.