



WELCOME TO "OUR VOICE"

We are very excited to introduce "Our Voice". The purpose of the newsletter is to keep all members of the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto Community informed of the most current activities and initiatives of the Council. At last year's AGM Council members stressed the importance of keeping the VAW community connected in order to keep track of emerging trends and upcoming events, we look forward to addressing this need through our newsletter.

WACT was created in 1991 with a mandate to develop a coordinated community response to woman abuse. One of the basic principles upon which the organization was founded, was that the voices and experiences of women survivors inform the work of the Council. "Our Voice" will create a mechanism that will ensure that the voices of women survivors are far-reaching and integrated into the VAW sector.

In future issues of "Our Voice" you will expect to see regular updates of WACT's standing committees including, PAR, Shelter, Support Services and Health Committees, as well as current news briefs, and our feature "In Focus". We are encouraging the VAW community agencies to regularly submit any upcoming events, meetings or call outs which will be included as part of our "VAW Community: News and Updates" section.

The WV4A committee sends a special thank you to our newest members for their hard work and dedication to the committee and we are looking forward to new and exciting initiatives this upcoming year! We would also like to thank The Ministry of Community and Social Services as well as the City of Toronto for their continued support of the Women's Voices for Action Committee.

Women's Voice's For Action Members

IN THE NEWS

Oliver Turcotte, 5

Anne-Sophie Turcotte, 3

February 2009

A 36-year-old doctor from Quebec's Laurentians was charged with first-degree murder in the deaths of his two children. The police discovered the bodies of Oliver and his sister Anne-Sophie Turcotte on Saturday, February 21, in a house their father was renting. (National Post, 2009)

Jessica Neilson, 25

March 2009

Jessica disappeared on Dec. 8 and her body was found March 27. Boyfriend has history of domestic violence and was acquitted May 29, 2008, after he agreed to a court order to keep the peace for a year. As part of the agreement, he was ordered to continue taking anger management courses and was required to make an appointment at a domestic violence clinic within 10 days of signing the agreement. (The Montreal Gazette, 2009)

From April 13th to May 10th, 2009 The Canadian Women's Foundation will be hosting its annual **Shelter From The Storm Campaign**.

Jinane Ghannoum, 38

March 2009

"Jinane Ghannoum is dead. Her estranged husband, Mahboub El Hage, killed her in the family home despite a court order that he stay away. Then he killed himself. This tragedy is a failure, a horrible and fatal one, for the Quebec justice system."

(The Gazette Friday, March 27)

Natalie Novak, 20 UPDATE!

May 2006

The former boyfriend of a 20-year-old Ryerson student was convicted of second-degree murder this week in her 2006 stabbing murder. The Novak family is outraged and in a statement called on Premier Dalton McGuinty to do more to protect victims of domestic violence. (National Post, 2009)

A COWARD'S CLOAK

By Rachel Traugher

Cruel - biting words,
A push becomes a shove:
"Oh my darling, I'm so sorry,
I swear it will never happen again,"
A slap becomes a blow.

He wears his deceitful love
as a coward's cloak,
A hollow guarantor.

The haunting sound of a woman's tears
Her heart and body left broken by
An empty promise,
Alone she weeps -
isolation to mask the unspeakable truth.

She lives here in this dark place
Where even simple words are dangerous
and thoughts are forbidden things.
Tears are born,
Blood runs down her face,
She has no voice,
Fear holds her captive,
misery binds her soul.

Desperate pleas fall on ears
deafened by rage.
Drowning in an agony delivered
by hands - hardened as to steel.

He places culpability on her alone,
The cycle of violence renewed once more.

He strikes again and again
Until the darkness appears.
Will this be the time she
doesn't live to tell?
To lie, to make the excuses...
To forgive yet again?

Genuine love holds no cost;
this cannot be love at all.
The only hope is liberation.
My sisters you are not alone:

The Members of the **Speaker's Bureau** are available for speaking engagements, presentations and talks at high schools, community agencies, faith groups and community organizations.

ATTENTION ALL SPANISH SPEAKING SERVICE PROVIDERS

We are currently seeking Spanish Speaking Service Providers to sit on the advisory committee of the New "Stop the Violence/ Pare la Violencia" Campaign

See more information on page 2

April 25th is the 4th Annual Parental Alienation Awareness Day

Help spread the word and raise awareness and education.

www.PAAwarenessDAY.org

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN FOCUS

Dispelling the Myths

As part of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, women in Duluth, Minnesota, who had been abused by their male partners, developed a Power and Control Wheel, which has resonated with the experience of battered women worldwide.

The Wheel establishes a visual representation of an abusive relationship and is based on methods an abuser will typically use to maintain control over the victim. Characteristically, physical and/or sexual violence may resort when the methods listed in the spokes of the wheel fail to ensure the

abuser's need for power and control over the victim. (Adapted from A Safe Place website, Alberta)

Last year, the Health Committee adapted the wheel during the Health Cares About Woman Abuse Campaign and distributed it to over 30 health care facilities in the Toronto area. Each issue of "Our Voice" will feature one of the various forms of Power and Control indicated on the wheel with the goal of expanding on the information already part of the wheel and more importantly dispel the myths associated with them.

We encourage all social service providers to provide us with any information, examples or stories that you would like included in one of our upcoming features.

Source: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project



Myth: Domestic Violence is usually a one time isolated occurrence.

Fact: Battering is a pattern of coercion and control that one person exerts over another. Battering is not just one physical attack. It includes the repeated use of a number of tactics, including intimidation, threats, economic deprivation, isolation and psychological and sexual abuse

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/domviol/myths.htm>

WACT UPDATES

Joint Support Services and Cultural Issues and Shelter Committee:

The Support Service and Cultural Committee would like to thank the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for approving the Spanish Campaign "Stop the Violence/ Pare la Violencia". WACT is currently seeking Spanish-speaking service providers for the campaigns advisory committee; please contact the WACT office if you are interested. 416-944-9242. The SS/CI and Shelter Committee are also working towards the completion and acceptance of the Police Shelter Memorandum of Understanding. They have been working closely with the Toronto Police Service and the final draft and signing ceremony is expected this fiscal year.

PAR

Partner Abuse Response Program

The PAR committee is on the verge of embarking on its 09/10 fiscal year. This is a very exciting time for the committee as we have many items on our agenda. This year the committee plans to continue strengthening relationships with other community stakeholders by working in partnership. In doing this, PAR programs can be offered from various locations throughout the GTA in an effort to make the programs accessible to communities in need. Additionally, PAR agencies will work together to create a curriculum for existing ethno-specific PAR agencies to focus on female offenders. This initiative stems from a need to better serve women who have come into conflict with the law. When the curriculum is in place, women will then have the ability to access cultural and linguistic specific services.

Any questions regarding PAR programs please forward them to: shannonc@womanabuse.ca

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VAW COMMUNITY: NEWS AND UPDATES

The Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign:

Funded by the Ontario Government and the Ontario Women's Directorate the Neighbours, Friends and Families is a campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so people who are close to Communities or organizations that are interested in organizing a local campaign or that would like to distribute

resources are welcome to visit the following webpage:

<http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca>



Communities or organizations can also request a member of the Council's Speakers Bureau for a speaking engagement related to the Warning Signs to Identify and Help Recognize Women at Risk of Abuse. Call us at 416-944-9242 Ext 224