

Workshop for 'Women in The Local Economy' Set

A workshop, planned for Antigonish area women on November 28 and 29, is geared to help them learn about basic economics, and discuss ways of working together to improve their "personal and collective economic condition."

The event is under the sponsorship of the Antigonish Women's Resource Center, with funding from the Status of Women Canada, Women's Program, and donations from local groups and individuals.

The workshop will also include a video featuring Marilyn Waring, an economist who looks at the role of women's local economies world wide and shows how standard measures of economic prosperity (e.g. the Gross Domestic Product) have no bearing on the "productive and necessary daily activities" of many women — activities which "maintain the economic workings of societies everywhere."

"Antigonish Area women are familiar with many of our local economic strengths and weaknesses," AWRC spokesperson Katherine Reed notes. "To cite a few examples, there is long-standing, high unemployment here (currently 13.1%), although our area is much better off than most of Newfoundland and Cape Breton; our living standard here is higher than many other Maritime communities, but housing is expensive, regardless of whether one rents or owns one's residence."

She points out that the two largest employers in the area — St. Martha's Hospital and St. F. X. University — anchor the local economy. "The rest of the economic base is made-up activity which is mostly seasonal, low-waged

and resource-based (raw resources like fish and pulp, are extracted and sold with no local processing)."

Reed notes that, according to the study, "In Profile: The Economy of Antigonish County," prepared by St. F.X. professor Ian Spencer, "57% of all the personal income of Antigonish town and county residents comes from government sources."

"One of the pertinent questions, then, is 'How can we keep that income circulating locally?'" Reed asks.

Women interested in participating in "Women in the Local Economy: Making It Work For Us" are encouraged to call Katherine Reed at the AWRC at 863-6221.

Child care and transportation expenses will be covered by the economic justice fund called "PLURA."