

Inviting parents to ask questions about Inspire Program

Dear editor,

As the executive director of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, I would like to invite any parents who have questions about the Inspire Program to please call us at 863-6221 or visit us at 219 Main Street (2nd floor). The Inspire Program is designed to provide adolescent girls with a safe, supportive, girl-friendly venue to explore issues in their lives and to learn and practice positive problem-solving, decision-making, and coping skills. Inspire uses a multidimensional teaching approach which enhances personal growth and helps young women better understand themselves and their world. Participants are encouraged to set healthy boundaries, to practice self-care, to develop critical thinking skills, and to seek support when they need it.

Inspire was developed

in 2001 by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) in response to an increase in the number of adolescent girls coming to the AWRC seeking support services. A number of these young women were experiencing personal difficulties that were making it difficult for them to focus on their education, and some were considering leaving school. The Inspire Program focuses on providing participants with information about issues they are facing in their lives and on helping them to develop the supports and skills they need to continue with their education and to pursue their life goals.

In an evaluation of the Inspire Program, participants were asked to identify changes they had made in their lives during the time they were participants in the program. They told us that they "always" or "most

of the time" were able to communicate more clearly with friends, family and teachers; were more aware of how personal issues affect themselves, friends and family; to stand up for themselves and to say "no" to things they don't want to do; to think of better ways to handle difficulties in their lives; to know where to find help with a problem when they need it; and to ask for help when they need it. As well, they told us they had participated in more activities in their schools and in their communities.

On June 20th, 2007, at the invitation of the Strait Regional School Board (SRSB), the AWRC executive director, along with the Healthy Relationships for Youth program coordinator and the outreach worker/Inspire Program facilitator, attended a meeting of the working committee of the board. At

the request of the board, we provided an overview of the work of the AWRC and the programs that we deliver in SRSB schools – namely, Healthy Relationships for Youth and Inspire. The AWRC welcomed the opportunity to talk about the programs and to clarify and respond to questions from school board members. Senior SRSB administrative staff spoke to the value of

the programs and noted they are provided with the support of the principals in the schools in which they are delivered. I believe that overall this was a helpful and productive meeting and that the majority of the school board members were both genuinely interested in the presentation and are supportive of the programs.

The Antigonish
Women's Resource

Centre values very much the mutually respectful, positive and productive working relationship we have developed with SRSB staff and with the schools in the Strait Regional School Board.

Sincerely,

Lucille Harper
Executive Director
Antigonish Women's
Resource Centre