

Celebrating International Women's Week

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A march — in so many ways — is a perfect way to mark International Women's Day (March 8).

It not only provides an opportunity to raise awareness, but it is also symbolic of the many steps women have taken, yet a reminder of the many more yet to go.

More than 50 people did just that March 8, as they left the StFX campus and wound their way through downtown Antigonish.

"I think it is really an opportunity for us to come together and celebrate the work that women do on a regular basis to make our community better, and to really show the amazing strength that women have, and all of the great things that they do in our community," Sheena Cameron, one of the organizers of International Women's Week, said.

"But also to really show and to demonstrate the importance of even pushing further, to really push more for equality and for justice for women and for women's voices to be heard more."

"So, this week is really an opportunity to highlight some of the work that women are doing in our community, but also to address some of the challenges that we continue to face," she added.

Featuring the theme 'Feminist Futures,' as organizers described, the week focussed on 'events that encourage community discussion on healing, justice and equality for women,' with topics highlighted including reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, mental wellness through the arts and the Syrian refugee crisis — with a focus on the lives of women, both locally and globally.

"We are really looking to the future of the younger generations — what does that look like? What does feminism look like in the community and how can we come together to really ensure that we do have a really safe and strong —

creative — and really wonderful community for women," Cameron said of the theme.

Along with the traditional march, the week's events included a breakfast with young women in the community sharing their thoughts on their 'feminist futures,' a family sing-a-long; and a cabaret showcasing the musical and performance talents of feminists in the community.

"The issues that have faced women seem to be issues that still come up in our lives," Annie Chau, another of the week's organizers, said, when asked about the importance of International Women's Day (and Week), prior to the march.

"To mark the week and today — to highlight both the resilience and resistance that women show against the challenges in their lives, to live lives free of violence,

to live lives without poverty; all those issues are still ones that are very real and very experienced by women here in our community and across the world.

"Because these are still relevant to our lives, today is a day to mark that resistance and resilience and celebrate that we are still fighting and we are still working towards a more healthy, more just society for not only ourselves, but also for future generations," she added.

Both agreed the support from the Antigonish community continues to build, from year-to-year, for the week.

"Over the years, this has just continued to grow more-and-more," Cameron said, noting in Antigonish, it is marked for a week, not just one day.

With a wide smile, Chau said the festivities "continue to build

— year-after-year."

"People continue to create and generate their own ideas for events that would be really important for women in the community," she added.

Chau described the week as "a testament to the community."

"Bringing ideas to the table and wanting to mark women's week and women's day themselves; we wouldn't be able to do this without interested community members, who want to take part and join us in the celebration, and join us in the challenges, and work towards a better community," she said.



The traditional International Women's Day March (March 8) winds its way through downtown Antigonish.

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