

International Women's Day celebrated

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A week-long celebration of women was punctuated Wednesday March 8 with International Women's Day 2017.

In Antigonish, two events organized by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) took centre stage; starting with a rally and march which began at the Coady International Institute, weaved its way through the downtown core and back to St. F.X.'s campus with another small rally in front on the Bloomfield Centre.

"I think it was a great turnout ... I'm so impressed that people came out despite the weather," Wyanne Sandler from the AWRC said, referencing a light, but cold and steady, rain which fell for the duration of the rallies and march.

Sandler, talking at the end of the event, also noted a good cross-section of participants for the rally and march including students and community folks - both young and older.

She talked about the importance of the local gathering, and day overall, when considering current events, both at home and abroad.

"I think it's always important, as noted, but with what we've seen happening south of the border, in the U.S., the women's



Participants march up West Street as part of a rally and march to mark International Women's Day March 8.

Richard MacKenzie

march in Washington and other marches that happened, I do think people are seeing women's rights, equality, ending violence against women, as really important issues right now," she said.

"And then, certainly, with what has been in the news just recently here in Nova Scotia, with Judge [Gregory] Lenehan; I think that people are certainly feeling

we need to demonstrate that this isn't OK and we want justice for women, equality for women."

Speaking at the rally were AWRC executive director Lucille Harper, Town of Antigonish Mayor Laurie Boucher and Naima Chowdhury - women's leadership and gender specialist at the Coady.

Harper gave a very inspiring

speech which, among its messages, noted the day and week as being a great opportunity to honour women who have spoken out against inequality and injustice.

"And our voices will continue to rise in the pursuit of justice for women," she said, concluding on the line, "we're the women who are transforming the world," which was met with loud and enthusiastic applause.

Boucher talked about the recent municipal election which saw her claim the mayor's chair, as well as female mayors take office in New Glasgow and Port Hawkesbury, and encouraged women to continue to "get involved" and "have a voice," while Chowdhury talked about the challenges around the world and, like the previous two speakers, noted while much has been accomplished, there is still a lot more work to be done.

The other event on the day was the exhibition opening at the St. F.X. Art Gallery of Creative Resistance: A Collective Exploration of Women's Stories, which featured artwork by local artists "reflecting on gender, justice and joy."

A, literal, overflowing crowd took in the opening with people standing in the doorway of the already filled gallery.

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