

ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 1998-1999

Submitted to:

- ◆ **The Board of Directors,
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre**
- ◆ **The Department of Community Services,
Nova Scotia**
- ◆ **The Women's Program,
Status of Women Canada**

Submitted by:

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INTRODUCTION

This past year has been a particularly productive one for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC). We have undertaken initiatives at the community, regional and provincial levels that have addressed poverty, violence and health - all issues affecting women. Poverty, violence and health remain core focus areas for our work. Our approach is one that emphasizes prevention while understanding the concurrent need for advocacy, intervention and public policy change.

We remain committed to creating a society that values women at all stages of our lives, that is committed to social justice for all and that is active in developing and maintaining healthy communities. To this end, we are involved in providing direct service to women in the community; developing, organizing and facilitating programs and community public education events; writing and presenting briefs to government departments and committees; initiating and participating in community development endeavours that will improve the lives of women and children; and celebrating the many efforts and accomplishments of women individually and collectively.

The numbers of women and children living in poverty is increasing at an alarming rate. On a daily basis we see women who are struggling to provide for themselves and their children and falling farther behind in their efforts to break free from poverty. Women living in poverty have many faces. They are young women who have left dysfunctional homes and are trying to make it on their own. They are single mothers. They are women in their 50s who have stayed home to care for their children and now do not have "marketable" skills. And they are elder women living on meagre social security incomes. The barriers to "escaping" from poverty are many. The social solutions are complex and require the "buy-in" from government, business and the general public as well as a cooperative, collaborative approach that involves government, business, service providers, the general public working together to address poverty.

The AWRC has been working at the local, regional and provincial levels this year to bring poverty to the public attention, to take action on it, and to press for public policy change. Our Status of Women Canada project this year, *Coordinating A Community Response to Women's Poverty*, involved us in interviewing women living in poverty along with staff and volunteers from social service and volunteer agencies. The experiences, needs and challenges identified by both the women and the service providers, along with recommendations for change, were documented in the report, *A Community Response to Women's Poverty*, and distributed to policy makers, service providers and anti-poverty organizations. Some of the women brought together by the project to discuss their

experiences subsequently decided to form a low-income women's caucus, *Women Standing Up in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties*.

Along with the information, advocacy and support we offer women struggling with poverty, we offer programs that give women information about financial planning and help them with income tax preparation. At the community level we worked through both Antigonish Coordinated Services and the Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice to address individual and systemic poverty issues. Affordable housing is a huge concern for women and one which is difficult to address. This year we revived the Society for Affordable Community Housing in Antigonish and hope to work with members of the community to develop a strategy for affordable housing.

In pressing for public policy change, the AWRC joined with other women's centres in the province to respond individually and collectively to the Department of Community Services' Social Assistance Restructuring Initiative discussion paper, *Rebuilding the System*, as well as to the Provincial Standing Committee on Community Services. At the provincial level we are working with Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy and Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health Nova Scotia Reference Group on Economic and Social Inclusion to positively influence public policy.

Violence against women is another area of concern for the AWRC. We work to address violence through the provision of support to individual women, through prevention, through programming, through cooperative community development endeavours, and through calling for public policy change. Our therapy groups provided survivors of sexual violence with a safe place to further their healing. Teens Take Action, our peer education group, took sexual assault and dating violence prevention workshops into local schools.

Through our work with the Antigonish and Area Inter-Agency Committee on Family Violence, we were able to look at the poverty of violence, racism, and the need to increase accessibility to services. With Women Leading Action on Violence Against Women we produced *Sharing the Talk, Sharing the Work*, a resource for communities who want to coordinate action on violence against women. In collaboration with other women's centres in the province we submitted a brief to the Joint Committee on Custody and Access, calling for the inclusion of analysis of the effects of violence against women on children when determining custody and access arrangements.

Women's health and the health of our communities are concerns of the AWRC. Women are primary health care providers to members of our families and, as well, we are deeply involved in organizations addressing the determinants of health - education, human services, environment, recreation, etc. AWRC programs and involvements were

numerous this past year. Through our programs we provided body image, assertiveness and decision-making workshops for junior school students in grades 5-7. In our For Young Women: Exploring Our Lives program high school women explored issues in their lives and learned from each other's experiences. The Women and Self-Esteem program facilitated women in working through issues that negatively affect their self-concept and in taking more direct control over their lives.

We partnered with St. F.X. University to sponsor public education events that spanned the broader determinants of health, looking at racism and women's health, discussing the need for a feminist perspective in community development, and examining the role women can play inside and outside of large "P" politics.

As a partner in community and regional endeavours, the AWRC was involved on the steering committee that set up the Antigonish Community Health Board. The process used in setting up this board was inclusive and has given the Board a solid footing from which to move forward. As well, we continued to work with the PATH (People Assessing Our Health) Network to look at the broad spectrum of factors influencing the health of our communities and to find ways to support communities in assessing the impact of programs and policies on their health.

Our challenge this year has been to access stable, core funding. With the elimination of core federal funding by Status of Women Canada, we were left one year of transition funding. Although we are actively engaged in a long term planning process with the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and are hoping our need for adequate core funding will be addressed for the year 2000-2001, we were not able to secure adequate funds or adequate staff for this fiscal year. This has been particularly frustrating in that the ongoing workload required to address the funding shortfall has called for an undue amount of staff time to meet with government and to fundraise. This staff time is taken away from the provision of service and from program planning.

In the ongoing daily struggles women face, we find many opportunities for celebrating hard work well done, for sharing tears and pain, for moments of reflection and learning and for deep and spontaneous laughter. What remains constant with our Women's Centre is the commitment of staff and board members to meeting the diverse needs of women coming to the centre, to improving the lives of women and their families, and to putting forward an analysis that supports our vision of social justice.

FUNDING

During the fiscal year 1997-99, the AWRC received funding from both the federal and provincial governments.

- The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services provided core provincial funding at \$54,058. An additional one-time supplementary grant of \$4,000 was provided in January 1999 to enable us to provide full time hours to our Office Manager. Provincial funding covers our direct service work to women -- support, counselling, information, advocacy, referral -- as well as our outreach services and community development work. From this budget, we contribute \$5,000 to Connect!, the provincial association of women's centres.
- Federal core funding from the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada, was eliminated April 1, 1998. However, to ease the transition from program funding, we were allowed to apply for project funding at \$37,000, approximately the same amount received the previous year. The AWRC used this funding to document women's current economic reality and the effects of poverty on women's lives from discussions with women living in poverty and with community organizations serving them.
- To help cover the costs of our programs the AWRC sought donations from the public and from the corporate sector. Individuals and small businesses have been particularly supportive of the AWRC donating \$7,220. The following corporations responded positively to our request for donations:
 - Cara Operations Ltd. @ \$1,000
 - Bergengren Credit Union @ \$1,000
 - Maritime Tel & Tel Ltd. @ \$250
 - General Motors Acceptance @ \$250
- Community service clubs and religious congregations also supported our work. Contributions included:
 - Srs. of St. Martha, Adsum Community @ \$50
 - Sisters of Charity @ \$25
 - Sisters of St. Martha @ \$300
 - Antigonish Lions Club @ \$250
- Community businesses demonstrated their support of our work by donating items for fundraising raffles, and beverages and food trays for various AWRC events.
- Individual community members donated books, items of clothing, typewriters, a printer, women's emergency kits and other goods for the use of the Centre or for women who use the Centre.

STAFFING

i. AWRC Core Staff

In spite of our plea to the province for adequate core funding, our budget did not increase and we were not able to increase the hours of the Director. Nor were we able to add a desperately needed crisis intervention worker. We received some emergency funding in January 1999 to increase our Office Manager position to full-time.

The workload of the centre cannot be accomplished with current staff numbers and hours. To meet the demand for direct service, requests to participate in community development endeavours and the need for increased fundraising, AWRC staff worked a total of 567 unpaid overtime hours. We are fortunate to have staff who remain committed to social justice ideals and to providing services to women in our community.

As Director, Lucille Harper is responsible for overseeing the administration and direction of the centre, as well as for developing programming, writing grant proposals, liaising with government, working with Connect!, representing the centre on community and regional committees, providing crisis counselling and client support, planning centre fundraising, handling public relations, and presenting workshops as requested by community groups and organizations.

Katherine Reed, our Women's Program Coordinator, is primarily responsible for our Women's Program programming. Along with the her project work *Coordinating A Community Response to Women's Poverty*, she worked with board members to coordinate annual AWRC events, facilitated volunteer orientation programs, represented the Centre on community committees, and provided crisis counselling and client support. Katherine is our resident expert on community services and is an invaluable resource to women dealing with poverty issues. Because of funding limitations Katherine was laid-off from June 8 - August 3.

Vangie Babin provides essential office management. Vangie is responsible for greeting women as they come into the centre, handling the phone lines (no small task), bookkeeping, payroll, statistical record-keeping, clerical assistance, organizing fundraising events and library maintenance. She also assists with supervising volunteers and women in the Centre on work experience placements. We used some funding raised in 1997-98 to employ Vangie over the summer and with a small grant from the Department of Community Services increased her hours in January to full time. This has been a huge support to the Centre.

Because of the limited budget with which we are working, professional development opportunities for staff are limited. However, staff were able to take advantage of the following:

- Lucille attended a **Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) Workshop** sponsored by the Strait regional School Board and HRDC. REBT presenter Mark Terjesen, a Psychotherapist for the Albert Ellis Institute in New York, focussed on using REBT with adolescent clients. The method is limited but has some practical applications for encouraging behaviour change in a relatively short period of time. Barbara attended the second day which focussed on working with parents. We were able to attend at the invitation of the school board.
- Vangie took a 6-week **Quickbook Computer Course** at St. F.X.U.
- As opportunities arose, all staff took advantage of opportunities to learn some specifics about computer programs from Ian Austen.
- Patricia Delorey attended an **information session on the new provincial Income Assistance Program**. The changes for the New Social Assistance policy were presented by Peter Barteaux, a senior bureaucrat who has been responsible for the adjustment from a municipally administered social assistance program to one administered by the Province.

ii. **AWRC Summer Staff**

The AWRC received a grant from Human Resources Development Canada summer Career Placement Program to hire a student for 8 weeks over the summer. We hired Laurie Jessome to re-organize the library and to help with office management.

iii. **Work Experience Placements**

The AWRC provides women with the opportunity to gain the workplace experience required to complete community college courses. Often, women choose the centre because they are interested in working in the community services field. During 1998-99 two women were assigned to the Centre:

- Patricia Delorey: Human Services Worker Core Program, Nova Scotia Community College, Strait Area Campus. Patricia worked with Katherine doing some basic research on poverty and the cost-of living as well as advocating for and supporting women coming to the Centre with poverty concerns.

- Ruby Johnstone: Community Services Program, Nova Scotia Community College, Pictou Campus. Ruby was involved in providing direct service to women as well as assisting Lucille with program planning.

While it requires considerable staff time to supervise and develop appropriate tasks for work placements, the Centre feels this time is an important contribution to supporting women who are retraining or returning to the workplace.

iv. Alternative Measures/Fine Options

The AWRC cooperates with Probation Services in providing a workplace for women and young female offenders with court mandated community service hours. This past year three women completed their community hours through the Centre.

v. Service Learning Students

The Sociology and Anthropology Department of St. Francis Xavier University initiated a Student Internship program where the students complete a 40 hour work term with a community organization. With support from the AWRC Vanessa Parsons undertook some preliminary research into *Peer Sexual Harassment Among High School Students*.

vi. Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of the AWRC. It is only through the work of our volunteers that we are able to accomplish all that we do. High school and St. F.X.U. students volunteer at the Centre as do a core group of community women. Katherine facilitated three orientation sessions for new volunteers on an as needed basis throughout the year. Volunteers helped with office support, fundraising, library maintenance and the preparation of income tax returns for low-income women and their families. They also facilitated programs, served as board members and committee members. Volunteers logged a total of 3,500 hours.

The volunteer contribution of the members of our Board of Directors and the various committees is substantial and very much appreciated by staff and Centre users.

CENTRE USAGE

We record the number of contacts, (calls and visits) made to the Centre daily and tabulate them monthly. We do not record in our daily statistics the number of people using the Centre for meetings or other planned activities. During 1998-99 contacts totalled 8,955. Outgoing calls totalled 2,490 excluding outgoing calls made by volunteers. These numbers under-represent the actual work of the Centre because calls can be difficult to log during busy periods.

Table 1 shows the monthly contact totals. In Table 2 these numbers are broken down according to the reason for the contact.

TABLE 1

Monthly Contacts to AWRC

MONTH	CALLS IN	VISITS IN	TOTAL "IN" CONTACTS	OUTGOING CALLS
April	384	462	846	246
May	343	398	741	281
June	430	499	929	254
July	386	374	760	155
August	263	266	529	72
September	373	319	692	249
October	342	371	713	193
November	349	331	680	197
December	208	289	497	172
January	307	407	714	193
February	355	449	804	121
March	509	541	1050	357
<i>Year's Total</i>	<i>4,249</i>	<i>4,706</i>	<i>8,955</i>	<i>2,490</i>

Breakdown of AWRC Contacts

To better identify the nature of contacts and the issues with which people come to the AWRC, we categorized our calls to indicate the general reason people contact the Centre (Table 2) and to indicate the issue with which the individual is concerned (Table 3). This helps us identify how the Centre is being used, the issues with which women and the community were most concerned during the year, and to determine programming. This year's statistics reflect and support our concentration on poverty, sexual violence, health concerns and community development.

These statistics reflect individual contacts made to the Centre, including those from community members requiring information, women requiring direct service, people contacting the centre about AWRC programming and community committee work, and individuals using our facilities, as well as from board members, AWA members, volunteers, the media, and numerous local, regional, provincial and national groups.

TABLE 2

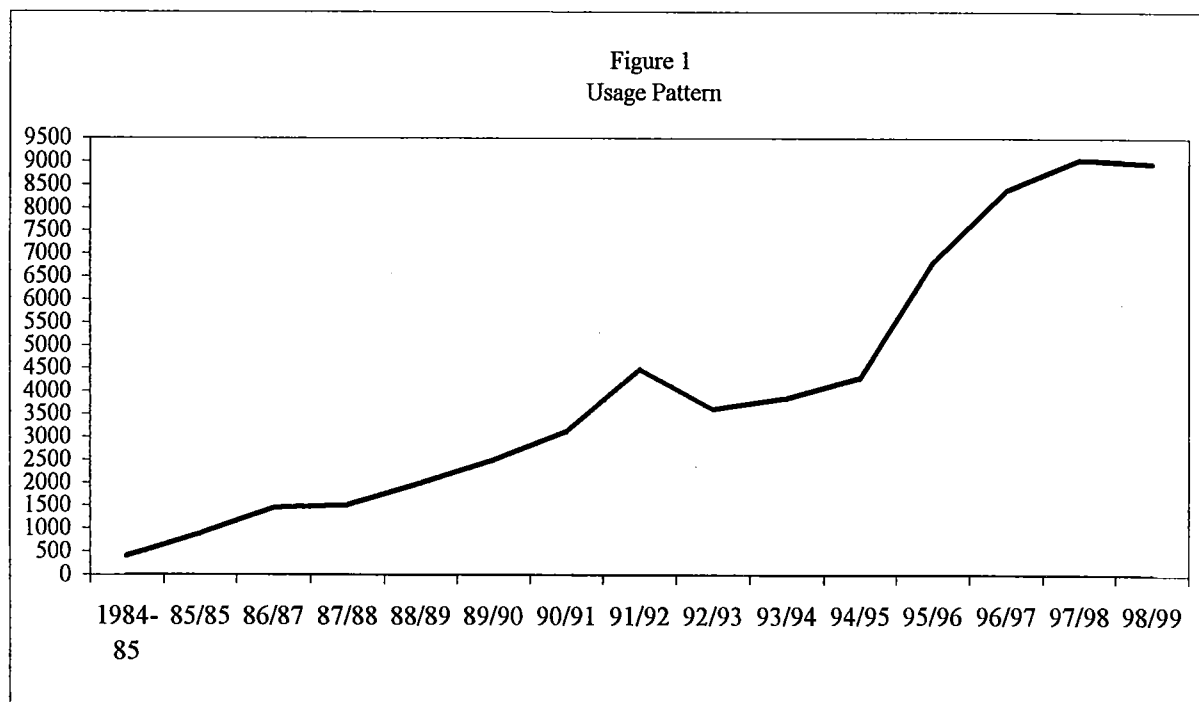
Description of contacts	direct service	inter-agency/ community development	staff/ board/ committee	general information	centre programs & services	other	TOTAL
- request for information	36	12	2	300	202	13	560
02 - help with problem complaint/peer counselling	357	6	0	37	114	2	511
03 - interview / presentation request	5	28	0	2	57	0	87
04 - check in	93	7	2	8	1412	2	1519
04A - staff, volunteer, board	5	15	666	49	12	0	742
05 - use centre facilities	8	1	11	0	1930	2	1945
06 - program development	6	129	51	0	178	0	359
07 - program info/registration	5	43	1	0	120	0	164
08 - library use	7	10	6	0	182	0	193
09 - fundraising	5	36	89	0	102	0	227
10 - advocacy	70	2	1	0	12	0	80
11 - networking	10	1892	4	1	19	0	1913
12 - other (describe)	0	1	0	83	68	425	577
TOTAL	607	2182	833	481	4408	444	8955

SUBJECT MATTER	Direct Service	Inter-agency/com Development	Staff/Board/ Committee	General Information	Centre Program & Services	Other	TOTAL
01 - abuse (spousal)	72	281	21	5	141	0	520
02 - sexual assault/abuse	56	295	24	5	219	0	599
03 - sexual harassment/discrim	9	8	0	0	18	0	35
04 - business/entrepreneurship	5	16	0	2	18	0	41
05 - child care	36	29	1	4	53	1	124
06 - education/training	34	83	12	10	79	0	218
07 - employment/job search	25	29	11	6	98	1	170
08 - financial management	21	29	2	1	23	0	76
09 - economics (macro)	12	226	27	2	46	0	313
10 - health (general)	75	702	40	11	353	0	1181
11 - health (reproductive)	12	6	0	4	12	0	34
11a- sexuality/orientation	7	4	1	1	14	0	27
12 - addictions	9	14	2	0	14	0	39
13 - housing	57	46	6	8	68	1	182
14 - legal	96	109	26	6	66	2	300
15 - social assistance	134	84	8	7	182	0	403
16 - poverty	160	252	25	19	451	0	907
17 - racial issues	1	36	2	0	8	0	47
18 - gender stereotyping	5	85	18	0	47	0	155
19 - disability	8	17	0	4	38	0	67
20 - parenting	62	34	5	3	41	1	144
21 - ♀ groups/movement	1	92	110	1	30	0	234
22 - women's centre(s)	0	388	652	28	384	0	1452
23a- photocopying	2	6	13	1	1049	0	1071
23b- leave/pick-up messages	0	12	2	12	235	2	263
23c- place to rest/ wait	1	52	4	0	146	1	204
23d- other services	1	187	2	36	119	0	345
23e- use equipment/facilities	0	1	25	2	543	1	572
23f- other	0	5	2	2	12	5	26

UTILIZATION INCREASE

During 1998-99, Centre usage remained fairly constant with the previous year. We saw a slight decrease in usage of 87 calls and visits over 1998-99. Table 4 shows the Centre usage statistics for the past fourteen years while Figure 1 plots the usage pattern.

Year	Calls and Visits	Total Increase
1984-85	410	410
85/85	898	488
86/87	1,444	546
87/88	1,514	70
88/89	1,993	479
89/90	2,503	510
90/91	3,123	620
91/92	4,482	1,359
92/93	3,610	-872
93/94	3,844	234
94/95	4,290	446
95/96	6,810	2,520
96/97	8,387	1,577
97/98	9,042	655
98/99	8,955	-87



REFERRALS

The AWRC offers women the information, support and assistance they need to effectively deal with concerns in their lives with as little bureaucracy as possible. We do not use intake forms, we do not keep personal records on women using the Centre and, generally, we do not ask women whether they were referred to the Centre. We, therefore do not keep accurate records of the numbers of referrals made by other agencies to the Centre. Women have told us, however, they were referred by:

- lawyers
- physicians
- therapists
- teachers
- Naomi Society
- Addictions Services
- Dept. of Community Services
- Kids First Family Resource Centre
- family
- St. F.X.U. Counselling Centre
- Victims Services
- Member of Parliament
- St. Martha's Regional Hospital
- St. Martha's Department of Mental Health
- Pictou County Women's Centre
- Antigonish Regional Library
- Antigonish Regional Development Authority
- friends

AWRC staff record all referrals made to other agencies and organizations in the community, region and province. When a woman comes to the AWRC, staff assist her in assessing her situation, help her develop a plan of action to deal with her concerns, refer her to places where she can find the services she needs, and support her in accessing them. This past year we made 209 referrals to agencies, organizations, and government departments that fall under the following categories:

- charities
- women's shelters
- employment counsellors
- financial counsellors
- social housing agencies
- legal services
- child & adolescent services
- health care professionals
- service clubs
- services for abused women
- economic development initiatives
- education & re-training centres
- Community Services
- police
- mental health professionals & services
- addictions services

STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA WOMEN'S PROGRAM FOCUS

Coordinating A Community Response to Women's Poverty

Through the fall and early winter of 1998 the AWRC conducted interviews with 30 women living on low incomes in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties and 16 helping professionals and volunteers who provide services to women living in poverty. (We had originally planned to survey 24 of the latter group, but time constraints forced us to reduce the number.) We asked the interviewees what, from their perspectives, are the needs and challenges faced by low-income women in this region. The issues identified were:

- a lack of money to meet the basic necessities of life;
- the need for more affordable housing;
- the need for an affordable system of public transportation;
- the need for sensitivity training and greater accountability by social assistance caseworkers and other service providers who interact with low-income women;
- the inadequacy of Legal Aid services (due primarily to short-staffing);
- the difficulty low-income women face when attempting to obtain and understand information about social assistance and other government and community-based programs and resources;
- the need for high quality, affordable and accessible child care (for work and respite);
- the lack of support for low-income women who want to train or study in order to improve their life circumstances;
- the need for non-stigmatizing support to enable low-income families to participate in recreational activities; and
- the need for adequate and stable funding for the women's organizations low-income women rely upon for a range of services and supports.

The Women's Program Coordinator prepared a report which detailed these issues and provided some facts and analysis about the economic system we are part of, as well as the role of government in addressing women's poverty. The report, "**A Community Response to Women's Poverty**" represents the perspectives of both survey groups. Profiles of the two groups are included in the appendices. The report includes recommendations aimed at the provincial departments of Community Services, Housing and Municipal Affairs, Education and Culture, and Labour. Some of the recommendations were directed at the Municipalities of the Town and County of Antigonish, Health Canada, and Human Resources Development Canada. There were also recommendations to local charities, church groups, and community organizations.

The report will be presented to the relevant government departments and local organizations and the news media. It has been circulated to survey participants and other interested persons.

The low-income women's caucus formed after the survey was completed. An average of 10 women have participated in this group, which has met approximately every other week beginning in mid-January, and plans to continue through 1999 and hopefully beyond. The low-income women spent the first few meetings getting acquainted, examining the issues they face, developing a process for meeting and deciding what they would do to begin addressing their issues. They reviewed the preliminary results of the survey and helped Katherine to keep their perspective in view as people responded to the draft of the survey report and it was revised.

The group took on the name "Women Standing Up! in Antigonish and Guysborough" and appointed their executive. As an initial action they decided to develop a booklet for women like themselves which would inform the reader of her rights vis a vis the social assistance system as well as where to go for advocacy, referral, and financial support. Much time was spent discussing the inadequacy of our social assistance policy, the problems with its delivery, and the Department of Community Services' restructuring initiative. Diane Heal, one of the caucus members, along with Georgia MacNeil, Connect! Coordinator, and Katherine Reed, AWRC Women's Program Coordinator, was a presenter of Connect's brief to the Province's Standing Committee on Community Services.

The group applied to PLURA for funding. PLURA is an ecumenical group who supports low-income people's initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty. This funding, if it is granted, will be used for production of the booklet, meeting expenses (child care and transportation) and miscellaneous expenses.

The formation of the low-income women's caucus, their growing sense of unity, and their heightened understanding of women's poverty in our social context, and their awareness of social policy played a key role in the day-long workshop where both groups of survey respondents came together to discuss working collaboratively to address the issues identified in the survey.

The low-income women's caucus helped develop some recommendations for the project survey report. They also created Appendix E, A Sample Budget for a Single Parent Family with Two Children which appears in the report and shows how much money a single mother would need to earn in order to support her family without relying on social assistance.

Two women in the group were nominated to the national board of the National Anti-Poverty Organization as a result of their involvement in the caucus. One of them was elected to the seat and the other, at the time of this writing, has been nominated as a member of the AWRC board of directors for the next three years.

The **AWRC/Status of Women Advisory Committee** met as needed throughout the year to steer this initiative. The group was diverse and included community development workers, a political leader, low-income women, and researchers. Some of the members of the 1997/98 SWC Advisory Committee elected to remain on the committee. Members of this committee provided problem-solving support, linkages with key people in the community, hands-on assistance with tasks related to the project (e.g. one committee member conducted two of the interviews and another helped develop a survey questionnaire), and helped keep the project on track and on time.

In March we organized a **one-day workshop for members of the low-income women's caucus and survey interviewees representative of the services working with women living on low incomes**. The original purpose of the event was to consider ways we could work together to address the problems identified in the survey. The advisory committee, as they planned this workshop, realized that a developmental step was missing. There was a need for the group to build a common sense of purpose and cohesion and to address some of the obstacles to working together before they could begin to address the issues.

In the workshop, the service providers came to understand some of the reasons why low-income women were reluctant to bring forward concerns and, often, were ineffective in doing so. The low-income women heard clearly from service providers that they are capable of imposing the same kind of negative judgements on people in helping roles that they feel are imposed on themselves. The tone was open and respectful throughout the day and the groundwork was laid for collaboration in the coming year.

During the interviews women revealed a significant problem with interactions they had with social assistance caseworkers. The project coordinator raised this issue with senior officials of the Department of Community Services and later met with the Regional Administrator and District Manager. The project coordinator attended six meetings where women who had raised these complaints met with the District Manager. The issues have been brought forward to the caseworkers and the women have been assured that their complaints have been and will continue to be taken seriously. We feel we have made some enduring and significant changes within this government department and among its clients as well.

Report submitted by Katherine Reed, Women's Program Coordinator

AWRC PROGRAMS

i. Groups for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

The AWRC offers a Stage One Support Group and a Stage Two Therapy Group for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. Group members are encouraged to work with an individual counsellor while they are attending the group. Both of these groups operate within a feminist framework and are offered when a minimum of 8 women have expressed interest.

• Stage I Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse Support Group

Facilitator: Brie Sawyer

Assistant: Judy Donovan Whitty

The major objective of this Stage One group was to address safety issues. Within this objective four areas were covered:

1. Control of the body:
 - meeting basic health needs
 - regulating sleeping, eating, exercise
 - managing post trauma symptoms
2. Control of the environment:
 - establishing a safe living condition
3. Social Support:
 - assessing support as a potential source of protection, emotional support or danger
4. Establishment of a therapeutic alliance and group atmosphere:
 - securing an alliance which preserves both autonomy and connection
 - encouraging and supporting a group atmosphere

Stage One uses an educational approach and focuses on topics of safety, confidentiality, the effects of sexual abuse, and so on. Participants were provided with handouts and suggested readings.

A Stage I Group was offered by the AWRC in the fall of 1998. Participants are interviewed prior to entering the group to make sure their questions about the group are answered and to introduce them to the facilitator. Eight women participated in this 12 week program.

• **Stage II Group for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**

Facilitator: Brie Sawyer

Assistant: Judy Donovan Whitty

Participants in this group all have completed the Stage I Group. This 12 week group was offered in the late winter/early spring. The objective for Stage Two was to transform traumatic memory and to integrate it into the survivor's life story. There is a shift in this group from an educational approach to an experiential one. The group met for 30 hours with two five hour sessions.

ii. Self-Esteem and Assertiveness Training Program

Facilitator: Barbara Hayes

The Self-Esteem Program is a seven session program that provides a woman-centred environment of trust and empowerment where women can build self-esteem. The sessions are designed to include an educational component on each of the topics covered -- sex roles and socialization, body image and eating disorders, depression, anger, addictions, sexuality and assertiveness skills. Each session presents opportunities for self-exploration through experiential exercises.

The program encourages women to explore emotional responses, to work with feelings, and to examine mistaken beliefs, childhood experiences, and fears from the past. Participants also examine and explore meaning, purpose and spirituality to increase their inherent sense of self-worth.

Many women who come to these sessions have experienced emotional, physical or sexual trauma in their lives. Very often the Self-Esteem Program is a first step in a healing process that may lead to further work in other groups such as the survivors' therapy groups. Women who are trauma survivors do not have to identify themselves as such in order to participate in the Self-Esteem Program and this makes it easier for them to attend.

The AWRC offered the Self-Esteem program twice in the fall. In their evaluation of the program women said they found it very worthwhile, enriching, affirming, empowering and inspiring.

iii. Young Women: Lives on the Line

Volunteer Facilitators:

Spring 1998: Stacy O'Rourke

Fall 1998: Christine Johnson, Mica Francis, Lisa Covin, Florence Gillis

Body-image is of major concern to adolescent women. Eating disorders, depression and low-self esteem can result from dissatisfaction with body-image. This program helps adolescent women examine issues around body-image and self-esteem and learn to appreciate their own uniqueness. The program was delivered in the junior school to 14 classes of grade 7 girls by St. F.X.U. students trained by the AWRC as volunteer facilitators.

iv. Teens and Decision Making

Volunteer Facilitators: Christine Johnson, Lisa Covin, Florence Gillis

The AWRC was asked by the St. Andrew Junior School to develop a presentation on decision-making suitable for grades 5 and 6. The presentation focussed on introducing students to the STOP model of decision-making (State the problem. Talk about the choices. Outline and select the best solution. Put it into action.) and on learning to resist pressure. Students used role plays to learn the differences in passive, aggressive and assertive responses. The program was delivered to two classes of grade 6 students and one class of grade 5.

v. Teens Take Action:

A Peer Education Approach to Dating Violence and Sexual Assault

Trainers: Barbara Hayes, Lucille Harper, Heather Carson

Peer Educators (1998-99): Melissa Berthiaume, Leanna Braid, Patrick Clancy, Kathleen Ives, Tanya Joe, Erin Klapstein, Jonathan MacDonald, Maggie MacDougall, Beth MacEachern, Katie MacInnis, Greg MacIsaac, Kyla Neary, Adam Teasdale, Shawn Wilkie

Funded with donations from the Bergengren Credit Union Staff

Using a peer education model, *Teens Take Action: A Peer Education Approach to Dating Violence and Sexual Assault* was designed for Junior High School students, grades 6 to 9. The program recognizes that teenagers' primary source of information on sexuality, dating relationships, and sexual behaviour comes from their peers and that using a peer

education approach increases the likelihood that students will be open to learning about the issues.

The program provides information about dating violence and sexual assault -- how to recognize it, what to do about it, and how to prevent it. We trained 14 grade 11 and 12, female and male high school students to facilitate dating violence and sexual assault workshops for Junior School students. They presented these workshops to 16 classes of students -- 2 classes of grade 6 students at the St. Andrew's Consolidated School, 3 classes of grade 8 and one class of grade 9 students at Antigonish East High School and 10 classes of grade 8 students at the St. Andrew Junior School.

At the conclusion of the program, the peer educators were presented with a certificate of achievement as well as a coupon for a pizza and a pass to the theatre. The AWRC has been asked to present the program at the National Crime Prevention Conference to be held in Truro in June 1999.

vi. For Young Women: Exploring Our Lives

Facilitators: Lucille Harper, Doris Gills

The For Young Women program is an 9 session program designed to facilitate high school women in exploring issues in their lives. Session topics were determined by the participants and focussed on belonging, stereotyping, identifying values, decision-making, anger, assertiveness, homophobia and body image. Seven students from grades 9 to 11 participated in the program. The program was well received by the participants. However, it would benefit from a follow-up session. We had just built a positive, open atmosphere where the young women felt they could talk about some of the more difficult aspects of their lives when the program ended. It was offered in the fall and will be offered on an annual basis.

vii. Income Tax Return Preparation Program

Volunteer: Carmel Gallagher

Again this year, we offered our Income Tax Return Preparation Program for low-income women. Volunteers completed approximately 50 income tax returns saving participants the cost of going to a for-fee service. This service is greatly appreciated and well-used. It depends on sustained and substantial volunteer commitment to ensure all forms are filed by April 30.

PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS

The AWRC developed and/or provided workshops and presentations in response to requests from women who use the centre, as well as in response to requests from the general public.

i. AWRC Programming

a. *Poverty, Financial Planning, Economic Concerns*

- **Information Session for Women on Social Assistance.** We discussed the new social assistance policy and presented the Social Assistance Bill of Rights which was developed by a coalition that included Connect!. Marla Gaudet, District Manager of Community Services for Antigonish was on hand to answer participants' questions about the new social assistance policy and other issues around the old policy.
- Patricia Delorey and Katherine
- **A group of women who are on social assistance in the Antigonish area** met with like women from women's centres in Bridgewater and New Glasgow to share information on social assistance issues to help Connect! develop a response to the Department of Community Services Standing Committee on Community Services and their document "Rebuilding the System" .
- **As an introduction to Connect!'s brief presented to the Standing Committee on Community Services** and in response to the Department of Community Services' discussion paper, *Response to Rebuilding the System*, Katherine and Diane Heal performed a wonderful role play of a woman on social assistance today and a woman on reformed and life-supporting social assistance in the year 2000. The brief itself was presented by Connect! Coordinator, Georgia MacNeil. The brief is well-written and thought-provoking. Connect! and the presentation were very well received by the Standing Committee members.
- **A letter-writing campaign** to impress upon the Minister of Community Services that social assistance recipients should not have their **National Child Benefit Supplement** deducted as income from their social assistance was initiated by Katherine. This concern has gone to the Deputy Minister of Community Services.
- **A Woman's Guide to Financial Planning** workshop was facilitated by Leonard P.D. and Betty MacDonald. The workshop gave women a good introduction to budgeting, tax strategies, mutual fund investments, alternatives to GICs and CSBs, children's educational plans, life and disability insurance, and estate planning.

b. Housing

- The AWRC co-sponsored a public information session, **Affordable Housing**, with the Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice. The featured speaker was **Grant Wanzel**, Past President of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, President of the Creighton-Garrish Development Society, and Vice President of the Affordable Housing Assoc. of Nova Scotia. He talked about housing initiatives underway in Halifax and discussed housing solutions generally. As well he looked at the effects of the massive federal and provincial cuts to housing funding over the past several years. Lunch was provided by the Society for Affordable Community Housing in Antigonish.

- Katherine

- The AWRC partnered with the Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice to hold a **follow-up meeting with Professor Grant Wanzel after the affordable housing information session**. Prof Wanzel talked at length about the possibilities for action in Antigonish on this issue. The Town and County planners attended the luncheon, as well as a local architect who was involved in the Society for Affordable Housing in Antigonish. The role of the university and the impact of the Sable Off-shore Energy Project were key to this discussion. At this time there are no specific plans, but there is certainly an awareness of the need to act on this issue.

c. Health Concerns

- **"Race, Racism and Women's Health: African and First Nations Canadians"**, a panel presentation was jointly sponsored by the AWRC and the Departments of Women's Studies, Nursing, Sociology & Anthropology, St. F.X.U. Funding was contributed by each of these groups, Dr. Brian Steeves, the St. F. X. U. President and the Academic Vice President. The panel was attended by approximately 200 people from both the community and the university. Panelists were Sally Johnson from the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, Carolann Wright Parks from the North End Community Health Centre, Dolly Williams from the Congress of Black Women of Canada, and Clotilda Yakimchuck of the Eastern Region Health Board, as well as a woman from Halifax who has been working with immigrant women.

d. *Violence Against Women*

- **December 6th Day Of Remembrance.** We organized a meditation to remember the 14 women murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique along with all women killed through or suffering from male violence.

e. *Equality Concerns*

- With St. F.X.U. Women's Studies, the AWRC sponsored a workshop, **Why a Feminist Perspective!**. The workshop was facilitated by **Angela Miles, Sheila Molloy, Shirley Thompson**, members of **Women for a Just and Healthy Planet**, and **Paola Melchiori** from the **Free University of Women in Milan**. The workshop gave a global overview of women's oppression and underscored the need to maintain an integrative, feminist analysis in our work. Small group discussion gave participants the opportunity to discuss the differences between gender analysis and feminist analysis and to look at examples of how gender analysis is not only limited in perspective but is often used to develop policies that work against women.
- The AWRC along with St. F.X.U. Women's Studies and the Canadian Congress of Black Women, Antigonish-Guysborough Chapter, invited **Yvonne Atwell, NDP M.L.A. Preston**, to speak about **Feminist Politics in Nova Scotia: Inside - Outside**. Yvonne spoke from her personal experience as a woman fighting for social justice, challenging all women present to involve themselves in the struggle.
- **Maria Luisa Gomes**, a physician from Mozambique, came to the AWRC to talk with women about the lives of women in Mozambique and to talk about the need to forgive third world debt. Her presentation **Let's Prepare for the Millennium: Forgive Third World Debt**, was delivered in Portuguese and translated by her husband.

f. *Legal Concerns*

- **Custody and Access Concerns Focus Group.** In preparation for preparing a brief for the **House of Commons and Senate Joint Committee on Custody and Access** we organized a focus group with women who had experienced abuse in their relationships and are experiencing controlling behaviour from their ex-partners with respect to custody and access. - Lucille

g. *AWRC/AWA Events*

- **Annual General Meeting.**

The AWRC/AWA held the **Annual General Meeting** in June. Nancy Wright, Field Worker, St. F.X.U., our guest speaker, talked about the struggles of women to keep the fishing industry and their communities alive.

- **Coady Picnic.**

Each summer we organize a summer gathering bringing together women from the Antigonish Women's Association with women from around the world studying at the Coady International Institute. This year approximately 100 women and children attended the event.

- **AWRC/AWA Board Orientation.**

We held a potluck supper and board orientation session for new Board members in the fall.

- **Fall Retreat.**

May Goring hosted our **AWA/AWRC Fall Board Retreat** in her lovely home overlooking South River. We discussed our current lobby effort, the lack of positive response to our request for adequate funding and how we might make up our projected 1999-2000 budget shortfall of \$57,000.

- **Volunteer Orientation & Training Sessions.**

- *Office Support* : A total of 14 women participated in one of three orientation sessions to prepare them to do general duties at the Centre. Katherine and Vangie organized and facilitated the sessions.

- *Program Facilitation:*

- Teens Take Action Peer Educators participated in two full day and five half day training sessions to prepare for delivering the program in the schools. Lucille and Barbara organized and facilitated the initial sessions. Heather assisted with the refresher sessions.

- The Young Women: Lives on the Line facilitators attended one full day and one half day training session. Lucille organized and facilitated the training.

- The Teens and Decision Making facilitators participated in one and a half days of training and program development organized and facilitated by Lucille.

- **Women's History Month**

Sue Adams wrote a press release for and submitted a **Women's History Month Quiz** to the Casket. First prize was \$25.00, second prize was a copy of *Cooking Over Time*. Winners were Charlotte Brosha and Betty Anne Carrigan.

- **Christmas Food Basket**

Once again this year, the **AWRC** assisted the staff of the **Oland Centre** in giving a **Christmas food basket** to a family in need. Katherine identified the family, made the contact, and then picked up an enormous car-load of groceries and delivered it to the family.

- **International Women's Day.**

For IWD this year we sponsored a women's dance featuring **Three Helens**, an all-woman trio from Halifax, and **Amanda White and Friends**. It was a great event - good music, wonderful women, lots of fun.

- **Sister Mary MacLeod Bursary.**

Sister Mary MacLeod Bursaries of \$250 each were awarded to Donna Currie, Liz MacMillan and Marian Brosha.

h. AWRC Committees

AWRC staff participated on the following committees:

- **Women's Program Advisory Committee** met on a regular basis with Katherine about her work on women and the economy;
- **Survivors' Therapy Group Policy Ad Hoc Committee** reviewed and revised policies concerning the survivors' therapy groups. Revised policies cover Determining the Appropriateness of a Group for a Survivor; Release of Confidential Information; the Therapist's Agreement; and Participant's Rights and Responsibilities. The Committee interviewed and hired a therapist to facilitate the Therapy Groups for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse.
- **Personnel Committee** hired for the summer staff position as well as for the Sexual Violence Prevention Education Outreach coordinator position.
- **Activities, Planning and Education Committee** worked with staff on developing grants, organized our 10th annual IWD celebration, Take Back the Night, and December 6 Commemoration;
- **Finance Committee.**

• **Ad Hoc Computer Donations Committee** determined who would receive the computer the AWRC was giving away. A 386 computer with word Perfect 5.1 was donated by Ann Sullivan to the AWRC and then passed on to Donna Boyle who has daughter with spinal muscular atrophy. We are looking for other computers that we can pass on to others.

ii. **Meetings with Political Representatives and Bureaucrats**

• **Alicia Nolan and Debbie Sullivan, Prevention Services, Department of Community Services** met with staff to familiarize themselves with our work. Alicia has responsibility for women's centres and is making an effort to visit each centre. We discussed the need to develop better tools for evaluating community development and prevention activities. - Lucille, Katherine

• **Nina Clark, Regional Administrator, Northern Region, and Marla Gaudet, District Manager, Department of Community Services**, met with Katherine regarding complaints women have about inappropriate treatment by social assistance case workers. The women were invited to bring their complaints to Marla and were assured of protection against retaliation by the workers identified. Katherine accompanied 4 women who came forward with their experiences.

• AWRC staff hosted the **NDP Women's Caucus**, **Rosemary Godin, Housing Critic, Helen MacDonald, House Leader, Yvonne Atwell, Status of Women Critic, and Eileen O'Connell, Education Critic**. We introduced them to the work of women's centres in general and the AWRC in particular and discussed with them some of the major issues facing women in Antigonish - housing, poverty, jobs. -Lucille, Katherine, Patricia Delorey.

• The AWRC was invited to an evening social held by the NDP when the NDP Caucus was in Antigonish preparing for the next session of the legislature. It was a good opportunity to meet some of the newly elected members. - Lucille

• The AWA/AWRC staff and board met with **Robert Chisholm, Leader of the Opposition**, to ask him to take action to support our need for adequate funding. A request for \$40,000 emergency, interim funding was submitted to the Department of Community Services. We did not receive this funding.

• **Peter MacKay, MP**, met with us to discuss the elimination of program funding by the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada. - Lucille, Caroline O'Connell

- **Hyland Fraser, MLA, Antigonish**, met with AWRC staff, board members and centre users who introduced him to the Centre, our work and our need for adequate funding. - Brenda, Nancy, Judy and Jessie represented the Board; Vangie, Patricia and Lucille attended as staff
- **Hyland Fraser, MLA Antigonish**. Lucille met with Hyland on several occasions to inform him about the work of the Centre and to ask his support for adequate funding.
- **Don Downe, Minister of Finance**, invited representatives of community-based women's services to meet with him. He informed us he would like to meet with us throughout the year to hear about women's economic situation, how women might be more involved in economic development activities, and how his Department could be useful. Representatives from some Transition Houses, Women's Centres, and Family Resource Centres attended. - Lucille
- **John Hamm, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of N.S. and M.L.A. for New Glasgow**, met with women from the Pictou County Women's Centre and the AWRC to discuss our request for increased funding for Women's Centres.

iii. Outreach, Presentations and Training Sessions

a. *Violence*

- the **Tri-County Committee on Sexual Violence Against Women** requested a presentation on the Sexual Assault Project Community Model, **Working Together to Address Sexual Violence in Antigonish County, at Responding to Sexual Violence Against Women: a Community Forum** in Kentville. - Lucille
- the **Sexual Assault Awareness at X (SAAX)** requested a presentation on the emotional and psychological consequences of sexual assault, and the services the AWRC can offer to a survivor of sexual assault. - Katherine

b. *Health*

- **L'Arche Antigonish** requested a presentation on **Self-Esteem** for their staff.
- Barbara Hayes

c. Women's Services

- The Yarmouth Empowering Women in the Economy group invited the AWRC to participate in a panel presentation, **Women's Centres: How they got started, how they function, successes and failures**, at their Empowering Women in the Economy workshop. There are a group of women in Yarmouth who are very interested in starting a women's centre for the tri-county area. - Lucille

d. AWRC Information and Volunteer Recruitment

Each year we are asked by organizations to do presentations on the work of the AWRC. This year we presented to:

- **St. F.X.U. Societies Night, AWRC Information Booth** - Vangie Babin
- **Ann Guerney** who would like to start a women's centre in the Grand Anse area, Cape Breton.
- **Jackie Ferdinand, Bonnie and Verna** who would like to establish a women's centre in Truro.
- A group of women from Indonesia who were visiting **St. Mary's University's International Activities Office** and visited the Centre to learn about the services and programs we offer. Jennifer Gosselin was the facilitator for the women's visit.
- Two **Coady students** who visited the AWRC as part of their course on economic development. They interviewed Katherine about the Centre's role in the local economy.

iv. Networking

AWRC staff attended and/or participated in community meetings and discussions, where we presented and/or represented concerns about poverty, violence and other issues facing women. The AWRC brings a feminist perspective. These meetings included the following:

- **Oona Landry, WEE (Women for Economic Equality) Project** met with staff to discuss how our work on women and economic justice could link with her work and how we could work together.

- **Molly den Heyer, Xavier Enterprise Development Centre**, came to the AWRC to discuss economic development initiatives. She is trying to keep in mind women's lack of participation in leadership in community economic development and keeping a watch for what can be done to encourage this. Part of her reason for meeting with the AWRC was to hear about what the Centre is doing in the way of community economic development. - Katherine

- **Patricia Delorey** participated in a **networking session sponsored by the Antigonish County Adult Learning Association** where she shared information about the Women's Centre. Organizations participating were Kids First, NSCC Richmond County Literacy, Naomi Society, Dept. of Community Services, Guysborough Adult Learning Society, and Tearnann Society.

- **Jean Crosby, Naomi Society** met with Lucille to discuss the current work of our organizations.

- **Debbie Sullivan** is completing her MSW. Her thesis "explores how women are able to identify and consequently build upon their individual capacities through group relationships in community based programs". Debbie's work supports women's centres as a model for supporting women. - Lucille

- The executive of the **Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women** invited women's organizations in the Pictou and Antigonish County area to discuss our work and issues affecting women. Issues discussed included women's poverty, proposed changes to custody and access legislation, and the Women for Economic Equality economic development initiative. The Advisory Council supports increased funding for women's centres. - Lucille

- **CRIAW, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, and MCEWH, Maritime Centres for Excellence for Women's Health** invited Lucille to participate in a workshop exploring **Community-Based Research Ethics**. The goal of the day was to explore with women from the Atlantic region with experience in community-based research, a process for community-based research ethics review. The workshop was useful in putting the need to establish a research ethics policy on the AWRC agenda.

- **AIDS Nova Scotia** invited the AWRC to participate in a **Strategy Renewal Pre-Consultation**. The goal of the consultation which will be held around the province is to involve the public as well as agencies and organizations in identifying community needs and creating a new strategy for preventing and responding to AIDS in Nova Scotia. - Lucille

- The Canadian International Development Agency and the Coady International Institute invited Katherine to participate in an event called "From Striving to Thriving: Building on the Assets and Opportunities of Asia's Women." The purpose of the meeting was to share information on strategies for alleviating women's poverty.
- The Xavier Enterprise Development Centre invited us to attend a presentation, "Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge Mining", with their Ideas and Entrepreneurship Class. - Katherine
- The Antigonish Regional Development Authority invited us to participate in a round table discussion on opportunities to create sustainable jobs in the Antigonish area. - Katherine

v. Research Interviews and Agency Evaluations

AWRC staff participated in research interviews and agency evaluations which included the following:

- A researcher with the Nova Scotia New Democrats interviewed Katherine regarding amendments to the Maintenance Enforcement Act. She urged the researcher to also interview a transition house worker to include that perspective.
- In a telephone interview with Phyllis Price, Lucille responded to a Sexuality and Reproductive Health Project, Health Canada Survey.
- Brenda MacKinnon, HRDC, interviewed Lucille and Katherine about challenges/barriers faced by low-income women who would be interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

vi. Support Actions

AWRC staff and board members participated in actions organized by other groups to address issues affecting women in Nova Scotia. As well we shared information about women's centres work and history.

- **RCMP Staff Sergeant Bill Spence, "H" Division Training Supervisor**, met with Lucille and Irene Smith, Director of Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, to discuss the need to improve the training members receive on handling sexual assaults and working with survivors of sexual assault.

- A special public meeting at the Town Hall was organized by a local resident who had organized this because of his concerns about the St. F. X. student population's effect on the Town's residential areas. There have been many problems with noise, drunkenness, etc. It appears that there is no specific follow-up for the time being.

- The new provincial **Access Centre** invited the AWRC to attend their **Open House**.
- Vangie, Heather Carson

- **Sr. Michelle MacDougall** retired from the St. F.X.U. Extension Department. Sr. Michelle has worked with the AWRC on free trade and women in the workplace and has been a supporter of our work in the community. Lucille and Vangie attended her retirement recognition event.

- **Rachel Harrison, SENCEN** (Strait East Nova Community Enterprise Network) approached the to AWRC to discuss putting a Grassroots computer in our Centre that would give women access to the internet.

vii. Consultations, Workshops and Conferences

AWRC staff and board members attended conferences addressing social justice concerns and status of women issues.

- **"Lunch and Learn" about Women, Heart Disease and Stroke** workshop with Karen MacInnis provided an opportunity to learn about heart disease and stroke deaths in Canada. - Vangie

- **Women, Work and Well Being in Atlantic Canada Conference**. - Nancy Forestell

- **Public Policy Strategy Forum** - a session for women involved in organizations actively involved in attempting to influence public policy development, legislation, and program development. The Forum was sponsored by the Standing Up and Speaking Out (SUSO) Committee. - Nancy Forestell

- **Coastal Communities Network provincial conference "Building Our Future: Respecting Our Past"**. The purpose of this gathering was to clarify the issues around economic development in Nova Scotia, share information about community economic development activities, tell the federal and provincial governments what people in coastal and rural communities need in order to develop our economies, and plan follow-up strategies and actions.
- Katherine
- **Annual Topshee Memorial Conference, People First: Pursuing A Just Economy.**
-Lucille, Katherine
- **The Department of Economic Development and Tourism** presented an overview of the provincial economy at a workshop sponsored by the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce. Katherine asked the presenters if there were any plans to increase the minimum wage and an interesting discussion ensued. (The short answer was "No" -- rationale: globalization)
- Katherine and Oona Landry
- **The Antigonish Regional Development Association** organized a meeting to discuss potential sustainable job development opportunities in our locality. - Katherine, Oona Landry
- Katherine attended a **public participation meeting put on by the Municipality of the Town of Antigonish**. The meeting dealt with issues surrounding the development of a modular and mini-home park between Bay and Adam Streets. It seems unlikely that there would be any opportunity for any of the low-income women we work with, since the units would be fairly expensive and require a substantial down payment.
- **The St. F.X.U. Enterprise Development Centre (XEDC)** organized a presentation, **"Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge Mining"**. Doug Logan of Idea House Group Development Inc. was the presenter. - Katherine

viii. Media

The AWRC runs a regular **News From The Centre** column in the local weekly paper, **The Casket**. As well the Casket is asked to cover many of our programming events. The AWRC is asked by the media to talk about current social and economic events affecting women locally, provincially and nationally. Media interviews included the following:

- **CBC Radio's "Mainstreet"** interviewed Katherine regarding the new social assistance policy in effect in NS as of April 1/98.

- **CBC Radio's "Mainstreet"** interviewed Katherine about the consultation process the Department of Community Services is using to discuss its plan to reform our provincial social assistance programs.

ix. Community Use of the AWRC

The AWRC is used by community groups for meetings, programming and other activities. It is also used by individuals who need a private space to meet with a service provider, a tutor, a friend or a family member.

LIAISON AND COMMITTEE WORK

AWRC staff and board members are actively involved at the local, regional and provincial levels with committees and organizations that address issues affecting women. The AWRC has been instrumental in the initiation of several of these committees and, in others, has been involved since their inception. This work provides opportunities for information sharing, community development, project development, and mutual support.

i. Community/Regional Level

a. Sexual Violence

• *Support Services for Adult Survivors' Committee (SSAS)*

The Support Services for Adult Survivors Committee (SSAS) was initially formed to implement the Sexual Assault Project's Community Model recommendations. SSAS meets monthly with the goal of improving the response of local services and systems to adult survivors of sexual violence. The Sexual Violence Education and Prevention Committee members joined with SSAS and we re-emphasized the need for more community education on all issues relating to sexual violence.

This year SSAS:

- sent a letter to Marla Gaudet, Regional Administrator, Department of Community Services asking her to clarify the role Community Services would play in making available the funding necessary for sex offenders living in Antigonish to participate in the Sex Offenders Treatment Program in New Glasgow.
- invited **Gary Dupuis, Director of Community Corrections, Department of Justice**, to clarify the Department's process for funding the participation of sex offenders in treatment programs. In the case that a sex offender is unable to pay for treatment, the Department of Justice will cover the assessment and associated costs of attending the treatment program.
- sponsored two education sessions on sexual deviance with **Randall Fletcher, P.E.I. Department of Attorney General**, presenting. Randall Fletcher is currently employed as a specialist in the area of sexual deviance by the P.E.I. Department of Community Affairs/Attorney General Division of Corrections. He gave a public address **The Truth About Child Molesters** and a one day workshop for service providers, **Dealing with Sexual Deviance: A Community Based Approach**. The workshop received mixed reviews. AWRC staff and others were concerned with Fletcher's lack of feminist analysis, social analysis and understanding of power dynamics along with the lack of opportunity for input into the program by organizations working with survivors.

- After reviewing the program outlined by Mr. Fletcher, SSAS wrote to the Ministers of Justice, Health, and Community Services in Nova Scotia to request that a sex offenders treatment program based on the New Glasgow model but open to people at-risk of offending be made available to Antigonish.
- Committee members reviewed changes their organizations had made to provide more effective services for survivors of sexual violence. Maureen O'Rourke, Department of Community Services, reported on responding to child abuse complaints. Ellen O'Rielly updated us on the university. Isabel Forsyth reported on Mental Health Services, St. Martha's Regional Hospital.
- Heather Carson gave an over-view of her project *Preventing Sexual Violence: A Rural Outreach Approach* sponsored by the AWRC.

b. Violence

• *Antigonish and Area Inter-Agency Committee on Family Violence.*

The Inter-Agency meets monthly and is comprised of representatives from local government and non-government services who respond to victims of family violence as well as to perpetrators. The function of the Inter-agency is to monitor the community's response to family violence, to identify gaps in services, to network, to educate the public about family violence, and to lobby for change. Lucille acts as vice-chairperson of the committee and represents the committee on the Inter-Agency Advocate Advisory Committee.

Over the past year the committee undertook several initiatives to educate committee members about family violence and related issues as well as actions that address the dynamics of violence:

- **Women Leading Action on Violence Against Women (WLA)** committee members, Lucille Harper and Peggy Mahon introduced the WLA project and the resource manual, **Sharing the Talk, Sharing the Work to Coordinate Community-based Responses to Violence Against Women**. The meeting presented an opportunity to pilot and evaluate an exercise, *Identifying and Acting on Accessibility* from the section on *Supporting Coordinated Action* while the manual was still in the draft stage. The exercise was well received and found by Inter-Agency members to be useful.
- completed our action plan for the upcoming year. The focus of the year was bullying, violence against women in the black community, and the violence of poverty.

- organized a seminar that brought together teachers and education administrators to review five violence prevention programs currently being offered in Antigonish schools. Lucille presented *Teens Take Action: A Peer Education Approach to Dating Violence and Sexual Assault*. We are encouraging the School Board to establish violence prevention and sexual abuse awareness programs in all schools as part of curriculum.
- sponsored a presentation on the *Violence of Poverty* delivered by Katherine Reed, AWRC.
- viewed *No More Secrets*, a two part video that raises awareness about violence against women in the Black Community. **Doreen Paris, African United Baptist Association Women's Institute**, facilitated the session and answered committee members' questions.
- submitted a proposal, *Sibling Violence: A Family Secret*, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Committee to the Department of Justice Canada, Community Mobilization Program. Lucille Harper, AWRC, and Jean Crosby, Naomi Society developed the proposal.
- met with **Ron L'Esperance, Deputy Minister of Community Services and Tracey Williams, Income Assistance**, to give input into the discussion paper on social assistance restructuring, *Response to Rebuilding the System*.

• The Inter-Agency Sub-Committee on Violence Prevention in Schools met with Rob Ryan, Strait Regional School Board, to promote the idea of establishing a violence prevention program in all district schools. Rob informed us that there are plans to train elementary teachers to deliver the Lions' Quest program. This program will start in a few schools in Antigonish County and be expanded to all elementary schools and then to the junior schools. It is an expensive program because it requires all teachers in participating schools to be trained in the program. We suggested that sexual violence awareness be added to the train the trainers component of the program.

c. Poverty/Economic Issues

- ***Antigonish Coordinated Services***

This committee, a network of local organizations who provide financial support to low-income people, has representation from the Department of Community Services, RCMP Community Policing, services clubs and some organizations working with people on low-incomes. This group serves as the delivery mechanism for the local

"Christmas Daddies" program which assists low-income families with toys and food at Christmas time. The AWRC provides a critical analysis of women's poverty and economic justice issues within this group. - Katherine

• ***Northern Opportunities for Business Ltd. Community Investment Committee***

Northern Opportunities for Business Ltd. (NOBL), a community business development corporation serving Colchester, Pictou and Antigonish counties, delivers various ACOA, HRDC and ERA programs intended to stimulate and support entrepreneurship. Some of these programs are targeted at visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and youth. - Katherine

• ***Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice***

The Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice (ACEJ) is made up of representatives of local groups and individuals who have a justice focus. ACEJ undertook the following initiatives in 1998-99:

- co-sponsored the affordable housing meeting;
- organized an information session on the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investments for people in the Antigonish Area;
- presented an information booth at the Antigonish Mall on October 17, **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**. The focus of the information was the discrepancy between the costs of basic necessities of life (food and shelter) and the allowances paid to people on social assistance.
- participated in the Citizen's Action Social Watch gathering in Ottawa in December. The ACEJ participant made a presentation to ACEJ upon his return. The AWRC and ACEJ are registered with this new initiative which will research the effects of globalization on Canadians and disseminate this information along with that of other nations.
- continued to be a member group of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). This connection keeps us well informed of poverty issues across the country, and assists NAPO in their information gathering on Nova Scotia.

• ***Society for Affordable Community Housing in Antigonish (SACHA)***

With the assistance of Judy Kennedy, SACHA has been resurrected. Katherine, Sr. Josephine Kaiser csm, Judy Kennedy, May Goring, Gary Wong, and Veronica Gillies met and reviewed what SACHA has done to date and discussed ideas for addressing the needs of people (primarily women) on low incomes. One of the

challenges the committee addressed is involving more low-income women in this process.

- ***Women in Community Economic Development***

Katherine continued to network with the **Women for Economic Equality** project which is now in its second phase and has been re-named **Women in Community Economic Development**. Katherine is a member of this project's advisory committee. This link should provide opportunities for sharing information and resources and networking.

d. Health

- ***Antigonish Community Health Planning Group.***

Until this year Antigonish was the only community in the Eastern Health Region that did not have a Community Health Board (CHB). The work of the committee this year was to establish the **Antigonish Community Health Board**. This involved several actions:

- In April 1998, the **Interim Steering Committee of the Community Health Planning Group** met to review the comments and findings of *From Vision to Decision: A Workshop to Talk about Community Participation in Health Planning for Antigonish Town and County* and to develop recommendations for establishing a community health planning body. We also organized a community information night, *Decision Time*, where residents were asked to make a decision on the type of health planning organization they wanted in Antigonish and to establish a Steering Committee with a mandate to develop the organization.
- formed the **Antigonish Community Health Board Steering Committee** whose mandate was to form a Community Health Board. The Steering Committee recognized that we needed to develop an inclusive process that would actively seek diverse representation on the CHB. Community groups and organizations from across the County were asked to nominate board members. Selection Criteria for the ACHB included age, ability, gender, geographic location, language, race, income, and a range of skills and backgrounds. Lucille did not allow her name to stand and will act only in an advisory capacity.

- Lucille

- ***PATH (People Assessing Their Health) Coordinating Committee and Regional Advisory Committee***

The **PATH Advisory Committee** continued to look for a way to keep the work of PATH going. Our purpose is "to provide opportunities for people and communities in the Eastern Health Region to critically analyze issues in order to effect the changes necessary to build healthy communities." To this end:

- the **PATH Partners**, AWA, St. F.X.U. Extension Department, and Public Health Nursing Services, Eastern Health region, submitted a proposal, *Applying Community Health Impact Assessment to Community Health Planning: PATH (People Assessing their Health)*, to the Health Transition Fund Secretariat, Health Canada. The project takes the work of the PATH Project to another level testing and evaluating community health impact assessment as a strategy for community participation in health planning by Community Health Boards in Eastern Nova Scotia as well as by the Eastern Regional Health Board. Unfortunately the proposal was not approved. PATH will look for other potential funders.
 - **PATH** is exploring the possibility of partnering with St. F.X.U. to submit a SSHRC grant that would fund our work on developing and implementing community health impact assessment tools with Community Health Boards and the Eastern Regional Health Board. We have identified possible university partners.
 - The **PATH Forum Planning Committee** met to organize for a one day forum to be held in May 1999. The Forum, *Economic Inequality, Our communities and Our Health: What Can We Do?* will bring together people to:
 - build a common analysis about the issues facing us in reshaping health and health care in the Eastern Region and about global forces impacting on us as we engage in this process;
 - focus on health from the perspective of people, community and systems;
 - analyze needs, barriers and capacities;
 - identify challenges and opportunities;
 - identify issues to be discussed further at a follow-up *People's School on Health*.
- Lucille

- ***Eating Disorders Group Planning Team***

At the invitation of the St. Martha's Regional Hospital Department of Mental Health, the AWRC was asked to participate with their staff in developing an Eating Disorders Group program. This 12 session program will be based upon the QEII program and will be open to adults with a range of eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia, compulsive eating. The Group will use a cognitive behavioral approach and will incorporate life skills, communication, and self-esteem components.

- Lucille

e. Children and Youth

- ***ACT (Adolescents Coming Together) for Change***

ACT for Change is working to develop a youth centre in Antigonish. The Youth Centre will provide adolescents with a place to gather as well as with information on issues and concerns. Over 1998-99, ACT:

- hired three high-school students as summer coordinators. Tanya Joe, Mary Beth Carty and Chelsea MacDonald organized several events to raise awareness about the need for a Youth Centre, to profile ACT for Change and to increase youth membership in ACT. They participated in Highland Games activities, organized a youth craft fair and rummage sale and participated in the Parade. They tried very hard to organize a "Battle of the Bands" event but could not find a suitable venue in the Town. ACT staff worked out of the AWRC project office.
 - submitted and received funding for **A Youth Positive Community = A Safer Community: A Collaborative Approach to Crime Prevention in Antigonish** a proposal to the Community Mobilization Program, National Crime Prevention Centre. The project will help ACT establish a youth centre in Antigonish and to develop programs for youth.
 - sponsored a *Claymen* concert for the high school and a benefit at Piper's Pub for ACT. The Claymen are a world beat band from Toronto who have an interest in supporting youth.
 - hired Cary Connors to coordinate the Crime Prevention project. Cary will work out of the AWRC until they secure their own space.
- Lucille

ii. Provincial Level

- ***Women Leading Action on Violence Against Women (WLA)*** - sponsoring *A Community Response to Violence Against Women: Developing an Action Planning Resource*. This project evaluated existing coordinated community models, and created an action planning resource manual, *Sharing the Talk, Sharing the Work to Coordinate Community-Based Responses to Violence Against Women*. The resource manual was introduced to the community through workshops organized in New Glasgow, Amherst, Weymouth, East Preston, and Halifax. The workshops were coordinated with the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute and follow their introduction of *No More Secrets*, their video on violence against women living in black communities. Lucille facilitated small group sessions in both New Glasgow and Amherst. - Lucille

- ***Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy (FemJEPP)*** was formed as a follow-up to the *Public Policy Strategy Forum* held in May 1998. The group involves feminist, community-based, front-line women's organizations as well as women working on public policy development aimed at improving the status of women. FemJEPP has been involved in a number of initiatives. We submitted and received approval for a proposal to Status of Women Canada, Women's Program, to develop a feminist analysis of healthy public policy, to identify barriers, challenges and opportunities for influencing public policy, and to develop a strategy for participating in the development of public policy. - Lucille

- ***Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health "Nova Scotia Reference Group on Economic and Social Inclusion"*** Along with sister reference groups in each Atlantic province their purpose is to advise on the development of research on economic and social inclusion (i.e. poverty) as it affects women and their families. The focus is on the impacts of social policy on women who rely upon government programs. - Katherine

- ***Annual Topshee Memorial Conference Planning Committee*** - planned **People First: Pursuing a Just Economy**. Along with sitting on the Planning Committee, Katherine participated in the conference and worked as a workshop facilitator. All of these activities fit well with the AWRC's work on economic justice.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

The AWRC needs to raise a minimum of \$10,000 annually to cover programming costs associated with our adolescent programs, our sexual abuse survivors therapy groups, the self-esteem program, the Sister Mary MacLeod Bursary and staff benefits. Our 1996-97 fundraising efforts included:

- a Christmas raffle;
- spring, fall and winter direct mail campaigns;
- Sr. Mary MacLeod Bursary draw for a spring gardening bonanza;
- funding requests to local service clubs;
- specific funding requests to unions and corporations; and
- a rummage sale with clothes and household items donated by students leaving university to return home for the summer as well as by people in the community.

The staff of the Bergengren Credit Union generously contributed \$1,000 towards the costs of our Teens Take Action program.

Raising monies in the corporate sector is difficult. This past year letters requesting funding to help support AWRC programming were sent to companies in the Atlantic Region as well as to corporations that fund activities targeting women and social services. The requests were program specific. Only three companies responded favourably - Cara Operations Ltd, Mt&T, and General Motors Acceptance. Each of these companies made similar donations to our work last year.

The community response to the direct mail campaign showed an increase over last year and these donations made up for the decrease in corporate donations.

WOMEN'S CENTRES CONNECT!

1998/99 has been a busy and exciting year, with lots of new projects and lots more of the same old thing - i.e. pursuing adequate funding for the Women's Centres. The themes for the year were money and policy.

Shaping Public Policy (or trying to) took many forms. Here are a few of the activities.

- **Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access** - We prepared a brief to the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in May. This Committee was struck to consult with the public across Canada and to make 'informed' recommendations regarding changes to the Federal Divorce Act. The process was difficult - women's groups were verbally harassed during presentations and Father's Rights Groups had a heyday with the media in which they attempted to discredit the legitimate concerns of women. Not only were the Father's Rights groups 'out to get' the Women's Movement, some of the Committee members were openly biased against women during presentations and in the Committee report, which was released in November. Our main concerns were, and still are, that new legislation could make women even more vulnerable to victimization by former partners, and by the system itself.

This issue has mobilized women's groups across the country, and lobbying efforts have been successful enough that the Minister of Justice has indicated that the Department will give careful consideration to issues before modifying the legislation.

- **Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (MCEWH)** - The Federal Government has made gender-based analysis of new policies and programs mandatory and is moving towards implementing the practice in all Federal Departments. The Women's Movement has been conducting its own feminist analysis of policies for decades, and Women's Centres have been working to develop their own framework for analysis and strategies for use. Because our projects shared some common features, CONNECT! Joined the Gender Equity Lens (GEL) Team in June to help guide the development of a gender equity analysis tool for policy makers. The background research uncovered many tools already in existence, but mostly unused. Further investigation revealed that the main barriers to implementation are related to political will (both 'big-P' and 'small-P'), education, understanding and skills of policy analysts, and to the different 'languages' spoken by the groups which must work together to analyze and develop healthy public policy. The GEL Team is now working on developing an educational curriculum for policy makers, and is planning for a national symposium to be held in October. CONNECT! is involved in both projects, and the potential results could be very exciting.

- **'Made to Measure: Developing Policy, Research and Action Tools to eliminate Gender Inequity'** - a symposium to take place in October of 1999 at the Halifax Weston. CONNECT! and Feminists for Equitable and Just Public Policy (FEJPP) are working together on a project that will research the experiences of community-based, equality-seeking women's groups in shaping public policy. The research will be used to develop a symposium session in which community groups, academics, politicians and bureaucrats will come together to develop mechanisms and strategies for collaborative consultation and participation in policy development. The project is funded by the National office of Status of Women Canada, and is being developed in partnership with the MCEWH. This promises to be an exciting project and I hope to see some of you at the Symposium (SWC is subsidizing participation by the community sector.)
- **Feminists for Equitable and Just Public Policy (FEJPP)** - after the Public Policy Strategy Forum last May, the Standing Up and Speaking Out Committee (SUSO) expanded its membership and began working towards facilitating the participation of community-based, equality-seeking women's groups in the development and analysis of equitable and just public policy. Key policy areas were related to poverty, and focused on several key Government Departments: Community Services and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). After discussions with the Department of Community Services, we have begun to develop a project proposal for SWC in which we will work with the Department to address some of the key problems that keep women in poverty. And with all the other projects, this leads to another area where Women's Centres are working...
- At this writing, we are developing yet another proposal for SWC. Three Centres are developing **Community Development/Action Research projects** that will inform the FEJPP process, and will facilitate participation of women, at the provincial and regional levels, in developing effective policies and programs related to social assistance and employment support. Antigonish will be developing a feminist analysis of poverty and the barriers to economic independence. New Glasgow will be researching existing program supports for low-income women. And Sydney will be looking at the impact of the one-tier community services system that had been piloted in Cape Breton. In addition, all Centres, including those in Bridgewater, Lawrencetown and Sheet Harbour will be facilitating workshops for low-income women in which they will gain an understanding of how policy is formed and how they can influence the development of policies and programs that respect and support their needs. And finally, all the women involved will come together in the Spring of 2000 at a provincial forum for low-income women, where recommendations and an action plan will be developed, and then taken back to their regions. This provincial

forum is also part of the FEJPP project and the impact across the Province could be significant and exciting!

- **From Common Purpose to Common Ground: Capacity Building for Social Change**
This is a two-year project funded by SWC. The main goals are to identify and share resources and strengths amongst Centres, and to strengthen our capacity to influence public policy. Since we began the project, it seems that the opportunities for exploring public policy have sprouted like mushrooms, as you can see from the projects already described. Feminist Analysis and lobbying for policies that further women's equality is what Women's Centres have always done, but we seem to be moving into a new realm. We are not just 'in the streets'. We may actually be getting closer to a seat at the 'policy table'. It is all very exciting and although full of potential intrigue, it will be a good learning experience for us all.
- **Rebuilding the System - CONNECT!** worked with women from three Centres to develop a policy brief in response to the Community Services Discussion Paper on social services reform. We also had the opportunity to present our brief to the Provincial Standing Committee on Community Services and to the Department of Community Services itself. The dialogue started here has paved the way for the other policy-oriented projects already mentioned.
- **Funding, Lobbying, Planning...** as always, we continue to fight for adequate funding for Women's Centres. In June of 1998, Community Services brought all Centres up to equal funding of \$53,700, and this was a major accomplishment. We are all now equal in our poverty. All Centres continue to be severely underfunded, and we have been lobbying to correct this situation. Our lobbying has been partially effective in that we have, once again, moved from the 'streets' to the Boardroom. Community Services invited us to engage in a planning process that has the ultimate goal of establishing stable core funding for all Centres. Although this process has potential for some long-term stability and interesting partnerships, the immediate funding needs of Centres has not been addressed. In fact, the situation in Antigonish is so severe that the Centre could be forced to close in August if interim funding is not found. So while we are in the Boardroom planning for the long-term, we have to take to the streets once again.

That is not all we've been up to, but it is the most exciting, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful Women's Centre women for being such a pleasure to work with. I'm inspired every day by the dedication and absolute wisdom of the women of CONNECT! Many thanks for a great year.

Submitted by Georgia MacNeil, Connect! Coordinator

OTHER GRANTS AND PROJECTS

Preventing Sexual Violence: A Rural Outreach Approach

In late February the AWRC received funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Justice to conduct a Sexual Violence Prevention Project in the rural areas surrounding Antigonish. In early March the AWRC hired Heather Carson as Project Coordinator.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- ◆ to involve people living in rural parts of Antigonish County in learning about sexual violence and sexual violence prevention, by organising and facilitating a series of sexual violence information and strategy development sessions
- ◆ to involve people representing a diversity of ages, backgrounds and occupations in producing and distributing throughout Antigonish County a series of three posters in sexual violence prevention designed to appeal to children, youth and adults.

During the first month of the project, individuals and representatives from various organisations throughout Antigonish County were contacted in an effort to encourage maximum community participation. In addition the coordinator researched material pertaining to sexual violence and developed an agenda for information sessions. The agenda includes the following topics: definitions of sexual abuse, assault and harassment, dispelling myths, effects of sexual abuse and assault, obstacles to dealing with abuse, signs and indicators of child sexual abuse, disclosure, available supports, preventing sexual assault in our community.

The project will continue until July 1999.

CONCLUSION

Our work over this past year has been multi-dimensional. Our work is informed and directed by women's stories. And we remain strongly committed to meeting the needs of individual women requesting support. Through our Centre programming and public education forums we have provided support to women and added to our community's knowledge of sexual violence prevention, the effects of poverty on women and children, and women's health related issues. We have contributed to efforts that support youth, strengthen community health and promote economic justice.

By working through the community, regional and provincial levels we were able to integrate the stories and experiences of individual women into coordinated efforts to positively affect public policy change. Our work is grounded in our community and it is with our community knowledge and perspective that we are able to connect and collaborate with women regionally, provincially and in government to promote pro-woman institutional and systemic change.

Our work with government to develop a long-term plan for women's centres has provided a forum for an indepth discussion of women's centre's work, the role we play in our communities and the potential for working more collaboratively with government in providing services to women in Nova Scotia. We anticipate this discussion will continue and will lead to a stable funding base for women's centres in the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

We would like to acknowledge the support of both the provincial and federal governments. We thank Donna McCready and Judy Jackson from the provincial office of the Department of Community Services for their participation in the planning process. We thank Nina Clarke, Regional Administrator, Northern Region, and Marla Gaudet, District Supervisor, for finding the emergency funds necessary to help us keep our Office Manager. We thank Marie-Paule LaForge, Women's Program, Status of Women Canada, for her ongoing support of the work of the AWRC and Connect!

Thanks go to the AWA/AWRC Board of Directors for their inspiration, their commitment to women, their sense of humour and for the hours of work they have given to committee work. And our thanks go to our volunteers who do the small and large tasks that contribute to the daily work of the women's centre and that make AWRC events run smoothly. We also greatly appreciate the financial and material "in-kind" support of individual community members, local businesses and institutions. Together we have kept the Women's Centre strong, responsive, healthy, and stimulating.