

YEAR END REPORT 2000-2001

**ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S
RESOURCE CENTRE**

Submitted to:

The Nova Scotia

Department of Community Services

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Antigonish Women's

Resource Centre

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past 17 years the Antigoniash Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) has come to mean many things to many people. It is a dynamic, multi-tasked organization that serves Antigoniash Town, County and surrounding area in a multiplicity of ways. With our primary mandate of providing support to women and their families, we are a critical and unique link in the network of community agencies and government services. Our understanding of the challenges and barriers women face as well as our experience in working with the community to address issues that adversely affect the lives of women and their families, make us a respected voice when speaking about the poverty and violence women endure on a daily basis. As well, we are identified in the community and province as an initiator of and positive contributor to initiatives that, through prevention and/or intervention, address issues of concern to women.

This past year the number of people contacting the Women's Centre for information and support, or to participate in AWRC programs or community development initiatives increased by 688 contacts. We continued to provide Women's Centre programs that are unique to the community and that women and the broader community tell us are helpful. These programs included our therapy groups for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, our self-esteem and assertiveness programs for women, our education and support group for parents of teens, our income tax preparation program, our peer education program, and our group for adolescent girls. In response to requests from women and adolescent girls, we developed new projects and offered new programs. These included our employment readiness program, our peer sexual harassment prevention discussion group, our youth social justice group, and our young women's reading group.

Fighting to free women and their children from poverty remains a primary focus of the Women's Centre. Poverty keeps women and their children marginalized, stigmatized, dependent, and vulnerable to violence and abuse. It is a complex social justice issue that requires a coordinated community/government/first voice response. The depth of women's poverty directly and inversely reflects the depth of commitment to eliminating it. The Women's Centre works to address poverty on many levels. We work with women individually to sort through the barriers and challenges presented on a daily basis. As well we work with women to develop strategies for moving ahead with their goals for establishing personal and economic independence. We work collaboratively with community and provincial groups that are taking action on women's poverty and we participate in government consultations.

For many women, gaining access to further education or to sustaining employment can be a daunting task - especially when their lives may be complicated by poverty, single parenting, family responsibilities, recovery from addictions, relationship changes, or lack of education and current job skills. The Women's Centre understands that women's lives are not segmented and that in order to re-enter the workplace or to seek further education and training, they need a preparation program that addresses their whole lives -- including their personal challenges and

barriers. We designed our employment readiness program, *On the Road to Employment*, specifically to support single mothers to identify life and career goals and to develop plans to actualize those goals. The program is built upon the success of the program we designed and offered to African Nova Scotian Women on Social Assistance.

Women living on inadequate incomes - particularly single mothers and single older women - consistently identify the lack of affordable housing and the lack of public transportation as impediments to providing for themselves and their families. The Women's Centre took a lead role in reviving community interest in working to develop affordable housing solutions, in involving women who are in need of affordable housing in the effort to develop appropriate solutions and in establishing the *Antigonish Affordable Housing Society*. As well, the Women's Centre was actively involved in the re-organization of the local transportation committee which evolved into the *Guysborough/Antigonish Dial-a-Ride Association*.

The sexual violence that women and children experience remains an ongoing focus for the work of the Women's Centre. This past year our *Stage I and Stage II Therapy Groups for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse* were full and we carried a waiting list for a Stage I Group. Participants have asked us to develop a Stage III Group that would support them in exploring deeper levels of their healing. We are considering this for the upcoming year. Through our Links Project we are participating in a national initiative that is documenting the experiences of survivors of sexual violence as they proceed through the legal system. Our peer sexual harassment awareness project, *When Bullying Becomes Sexual Harassment*, explored peer sexual harassment from the perspectives and experiences of girls in elementary, junior and senior high schools. Peer sexual harassment that is normalized and allowed to continue unchallenged creates a climate of acceptance of dating violence and sexual assault. It leaves both girls and boys vulnerable to becoming victims or perpetrators. The Project Coordinator developed a resource for teachers which has been distributed to schools around the region.

Our *Teens Take Action* peer educators presented their dating violence and sexual assault awareness and prevention program to 15 classes of grade 8 students. Through this highly successful program, a group of twelve grade 11 and 12 students developed a presentation that taught younger students how to recognize dating violence and sexual assault, how to respond to and how to avoid potentially dangerous situations, and where to go for help. This year Teens Take Action was supported with funding from Sable Offshore Energy Incorporated.

Increasingly, adolescent girls are coming to the Women's Centre for information and support. And we are expanding our programs for them. Our adolescent women's discussion and support group, *Young Women: Exploring Our Lives Together*, provided high school girls with a safe place to explore issues they face in their lives. The participants themselves determined the topics for discussion. Our *Youth Social Justice Group* offered teen men and women a facilitated forum for looking at issues they experience or hear about in the larger culture. Discussions included a broad spectrum of concerns ranging from racism to the Sydney tar ponds to the Free Trade Area

of the Americas. All our teen programs emphasize healthy decision making, encourage discussion, and respect the abilities and diverse perspectives of the participants.

Securing funding for the PATH Project, *Applying Community Health Impact Assessment to Rural Community Health Planning*, has enabled the PATH Partners - the AWRC, the St. F.X.U. Department of Extension, Public Health Services, Eastern Region, and the Antigonish Town and County Community Health Board - to continue the work of PATH I and to further develop our knowledge about building healthy communities by developing community health impact assessment tools appropriate to the use of community health boards.

Securing adequate funding is an ongoing challenge for the AWRC. We actively participated in the Province of Nova Scotia/Women's Centres Connect! Joint Planning Committee where, as the culmination of two years' effort, we produced a Final Report and Recommendations that was to lay a basis for negotiating multi-department funding. Although we expected multi-department funding to be in place for the 2001-2002 fiscal year, it will not be in place until the following year at the earliest. This leaves us without adequate funding to maintain current staff levels and creates a tension and uncertainty about the upcoming year.

Maintaining current staffing levels is essential to keeping our doors open and our programs accessible to women. AWRC staff are a skilled and dedicated group of women. We are able to provide a high level of service and a high quality of service because of the expertise staff have developed in their primary areas of responsibility, their breadth of knowledge of the issues facing women and adolescent girls, their familiarity with community resources, and the trust relationships they have developed with women coming to the Centre. Staff continuity and the commitment of staff to their work has enabled us to develop an efficient, effective service. During the past year, AWRC core staff worked 754 hours of unpaid overtime to maintain and to meet the level of service and program delivery required by the community.

Each day at the Women's Centre, we have the privilege of hearing the stories of women's lives, learning from their experiences, benefiting from their wisdom, and gaining inspiration from the strength they demonstrate in the face of adversity. Women confide their hopes, their pain, their tears, their anger, their frustration and their determination to create a better life for themselves, their children and their community. We share that determination.

CENTRE USAGE

Staff record the number of contacts, (calls and visits) made to the Centre daily and tabulate them monthly. We record separately the number of people using the Centre for meetings or other planned activities. During 2000-2001 contacts totalled 9,606. Outgoing calls made by staff totalled 4,061 excluding outgoing calls made by volunteers. The number of people attending or participating in programs, presentations, and/or community development activities totalled 5,534. These numbers may under-represent the actual work of the Centre because calls and visits 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
AWRC Usage April 1, 1999 - March 31, 2000

MONTH	CALLS IN	VISITS IN	TOTAL INCOMING CONTACTS	OUTGOING CALLS	PROGRAMS, PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION
APRIL	395	391	786	237	505
MAY	588	452	1,040	461	495
JUNE	495	334	829	302	538
JULY	372	337	709	233	293
AUGUST	334	290	624	271	263
SEPTEMBER	466	246	712	220	536
OCTOBER	509	333	842	347	716
NOVEMBER	416	316	732	300	339
DECEMBER	280	239	519	188	591
JANUARY	520	329	849	373	206
FEBRUARY	589	325	914	536	408
MARCH	580	470	1,050	593	644
TOTAL	5,550	4,062	9,606	4,061	5,534

Breakdown of AWRRC Contacts

To better reflect the types of issues facing women who use women's centres and the nature of the contacts women's centres receive, women's centres across the province worked together to standardize the way in which we categorize calls, visits and centre usage. Table 2 indicates the issue(s) with which an individual contacts the AWRRC. This helps us identify how the AWRRC is being used and the issues with which women and the community were most concerned during the year. This in turn helps us 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 AWRRC programming and community committee work,
- individuals using our facilities,
- board members, AWA members, and volunteers,
- the media, and
- numerous local, regional, provincial and national groups.

TABLE 2

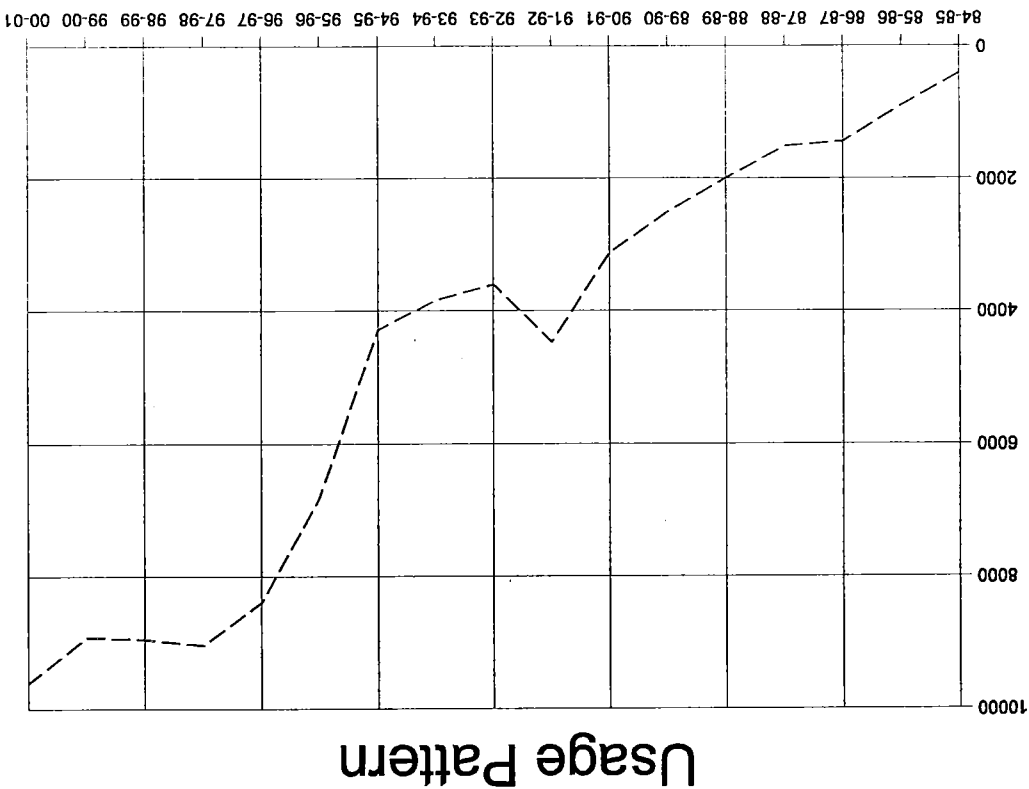
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre 2000-2001

Subject/Issue	Direct Service	Personal Support	Inter-agency Community Development	Staff/Board Committee	General Info	Centre Services	Program Attend	Other	Connect	TOTAL
20 Economics	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
(a) business/entrepreneur	1	3	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	12
(b) education/training	48	45	145	90	13	147	488	0	0	976
(c) employment	20	88	40	15	4	69	8	2	1	247
(d) financial management (personal)	82	42	16	1	4	7	20	0	0	172
(e) economics (macro)	2	0	43	13	3	4	0	0	2	67
21 Equity	4	2	90	11	2	24	60	0	0	193
(a) racial issues	3	1	5	0	2	0	12	0	0	23
(b) gender stereotyping	6	0	8	0	1	11	10	0	0	36
(c) disability	48	39	22	1	2	16	9	0	0	137
22 Family/Social Relationship	18	4	12	1	0	1	1	0	0	37
(a) childcare	34	35	10	1	3	10	23	0	0	116
(b) parenting	42	16	5	1	0	21	69	3	0	157
23 Health	0	62	216	47	8	24	51	8	0	416
(a) general	36	51	18	10	5	73	49	0	0	242
(b) mental health	83	57	41	4	3	60	140	0	0	388
(c) reproductive health	21	16	6	5	0	47	10	0	0	105
(d) sexuality/orientation	4	4	4	0	0	10	11	0	0	33
(e) addictions	16	23	35	1	2	43	73	0	0	193
24 Justice	0	0	66	1	1	1	1	0	2	72
(a) divorce/separation	17	7	1	0	1	7	11	0	0	44
(b) custody/access	38	2	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	48
(c) maintenance enforcement	12	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	18
(d) legal issues	109	39	133	12	9	17	13	0	2	334
25 Poverty	39	37	338	30	20	155	184	0	5	808
(a) housing	71	35	192	28	6	42	115	0	2	491
(b) social assistance	164	41	130	9	11	42	100	0	4	501
(c) poverty relief (clothing, furniture, food, baby)	288	77	55	1	21	35	13	0	0	490
26 Women's Centre Info	3	3	411	935	3	614	67	0	54	2090
(a) photocopying	6	3	2	5	1	372	41	2	0	432
(b) leave-retrieve messages or articles/info	2	3	4	0	3	286	2	0	0	300
(c) res/waiting place	0	5	0	0	0	132	18	0	0	155
(d) other organization/services	7	14	302	16	192	74	5	2	0	612
(e) equipment use (computer, fax machine, ccl.)	7	11	8	4	0	355	1	0	0	386
27 Violence	7	2	230	18	0	22	51	0	0	330
(a) abuse-spousal relationship	36	2	27	5	1	16	31	0	0	118
(b) sexual assault/abuse	42	9	41	3	0	38	77	0	0	210
(c) abuse - family relationships	19	2	20	1	2	1	22	0	0	67
(d) sexual harassment/discrimination	9	4	15	10	0	19	56	0	0	113

UTILIZATION INCREASE

During 2000-2001 Centre usage increased by 688 calls and visits over the previous year. These totals do not include program attendance. Table 4 shows the Centre usage statistics for the past ten years while Figure 1 plots the usage pattern.

Year	Calls and Visits	Total Increase
1990-1991	3,123	620
1991-1992	4,482	1,359
1992-1993	3,610	-872
1993-1994	3,844	234
1994-1995	4,290	446
1995-1996	6,810	2,520
1996-1997	8,387	1,577
1997-1998	9,042	655
1998-1999	8,955	87
1999-2000	8,918	-37
2000-2001	9,606	688



REFERRALS

The AWRRC offers women the information, support and assistance they need to effectively deal with concerns in their lives. Generally, we do not ask women whether they were referred to the Centre. We do not use intake forms, we do not keep personal records on women using the Centre. We, therefore, do not keep accurate records of the numbers of referrals made by other agencies to the Centre. This past year women who told us they were referred to the Centre were referred by:

- Naomi Society
- Addictions Services
- Human Resources Development
- Victim Services
- Cape Breton Mental Health
- Teen Help Line
- Antigonish Venture Centre
- Celtic Homes
- Opportunity Shop
- Antigonish Town Library
- St. F.X.U. professors
- lawyers
- priests
- friends
- Leeside Transition House
- Community Services
- Department of Environment
- St. Martha's Regional Hospital
- St. Martha's Department of Mental Health
- Kids First Family Resource Centre
- Antigonish Homecare
- Afton Band Office
- Pictou County Women's Centre
- M.L.A.
- physicians
- private therapists
- family

AWRRC staff record all referrals made to other agencies and organizations in the community, region and province. When a woman comes to the AWRRC, staff assist her in assessing the 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 291 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

AWRC PROGRAMS

I. Groups for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

The AWRC offers a Stage One and a Stage Two Therapy Group for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse. The Groups are facilitated by a registered therapist who has training and experience specific to working with survivors of trauma and of 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 Group for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Facilitator: Barbara Hayes
Assistant: Amanda Workman

The Stage I Group is a seven week program that educates the participants about childhood sexual abuse and teaches them the coping and grounding skills they will need to carry through with their emotional healing in a safe manner. The objectives of the Stage I Group are to:

- create a safe group environment where women can begin to learn about sexual abuse;
- teach coping and grounding skills;
- educate participants about the effects of trauma- traumatic memory, triggers and flash backs;
- teach women how to be safe while coping with overwhelming feelings.

The Survivors Groups are scheduled to allow Stage I participants a minimum break of two months between groups to practice skills before starting Stage II Group which concentrates on beginning emotional healing. The Stage I Group was offered in the fall of 2000. Eight (8) women participated.

• Stage II Group for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Facilitator: Barbara Hayes
Assistant: Amanda Workman

The Stage II Group is a ten week program that is designed to support women to move slowly through their personal healing work. The objectives of the Stage II group are to:

- build a safe healing environment in which participants begin to tell their stories;
- work on trauma within the support of the group;
- examine self-blame and self-esteem, body image and relational effects of the abuse;
- create pathways for anger, grieving, loss, and rebuilding and reclaiming self-worth

The Stage II Group was offered in the spring of 2000. Eight (8) women participated.

Both Stage I and Stage II groups were evaluated by participants at regular intervals. The evaluations informed the progress of the group and confirmed the achievement of the objectives of the group and the participants' personal healing goals.

2. Embracing Ourselves: Building Self-Confidence

Facilitator: Barbara Hayes

Embracing Ourselves is a seven session program that is designed to examine and explore topics and issues related to low self-esteem in women. These topics include sex role stereotyping, early childhood conditioning, body image, depression, anger, addictions, sexuality and assertiveness. The focus of the workshops is to help women reclaim their power to assert themselves, to care for themselves, and to value and respect themselves. These sessions have proved to be extremely valuable learning experiences for promoting positive change and empowerment in women's lives. Embracing Ourselves continues to be a popular and well-attended program. It was offered in the fall of 2000. Ten (10) women participated in the program.

3. Can't Say No?: An Assertiveness Program for Women

Facilitator: Barbara Hayes

Can't Say No?: An Assertiveness Program for Women is a three session program that was developed in response to requests from women who had participated in the Embracing Ourselves program. The participants wanted to work more intensively on learning and practising assertiveness skills. The program encouraged women to become aware of personal behaviours that needed to be changed and to practice those changes through role-playing in the group. Women learned new behaviours and were supported in incorporating them into their daily lives. They began by analyzing power and powerlessness, examining women's victimization and identifying the victim role. Participants practiced using their personal will and choice for change. They learned assertive communication skills and each woman identified and role-played scenarios which she identified as presenting her with a significant challenge in using assertive behaviour in her personal life. The program was offered in the winter of 2001. Twelve (12) women participated in the program.

4. Teens Take Action:

A Peer Education Approach to Dating Violence and Sexual Assault

Trainers: Amanda Workman, Barbara Hayes, Lucille Harper

Peer Educators (spring 2000): Melissa Berthiaume, Janice Campbell, Patrick Claney, Janice Deon, Rae Ann Haley, Kathleen Ives, Jenny Jones, Maggie MacDougall, Beth MacEachern, Katie MacInnis, Julie Stinson, Katie Sullivan, Eppa Turniawan, Terry Ray Armour, Colin Duggan, Chris Spencer

- Funded with donations from Sable Offshore Energy Enterprises and the Bergenregion Credit Union (spring 2000)
- Funded with a donation from Sable Offshore Energy Enterprises (fall 2000, spring 2001)

Peer Educators (Fall 2000 - Spring 2001): Candace MacKenzie, Jane Lee, Caitlin Mulcahy, Sarah MacKinnon, Nathan Boudreau, Terry Ray Armour, Krista Tulken, Briana Lynch, Kyle Gillis, Stephen Brosha, Amanda Mansfield, Matthew MacIntyre

- Funded with donations from Sable Offshore Enterprises Ltd.

Teens Take Action: A Peer Education Approach to Dating Violence and Sexual Assault is sponsored by the AWRRC in partnership with the Guidance Departments of the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional School and the St. Andrew Junior School. Teens Take Action uses a peer education model to provide information about dating violence and sexual assault to grade 8 students. The program recognizes that young people's 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.

In April of 2000 the 16 students trained during the 1999-2000 session gave their last presentation together in Antigonish at an assembly open to the general public. The presentation was well received and suggestions were made to take the presentation into more classes.

This past year, we trained 12 grade 11 and 12, female and male high school students to facilitate dating violence and sexual assault workshops for junior school students. This 2000-2001 group presented the workshops to 15 classes or groups of students, including the following:

- 5 groups of combined grade 9-10 students, East Antigonish Education Centre
- 10 classes of grade 8 students, St. Andrew Junior School

5. **Teens Take Action: A Peer Education Approach to Substance Use Awareness**

Co-sponsor: Addictions Services

Trainers: Wendy Panagopoulos, Addictions Services, Lucille Harper, Amanda Workman, AWRRC

Peer Educators: Maureen Armour, Simon Arsenault, Jason Klapstein, Beth MacGillivray, Isaac Pelly, Cindy Partridge, Sabha Shafiei, Marian Turniawan, Morgandy Burkett, Melanie Fraser, Candice Hanifen, Keegan How, Tara MacGillivray, Brett Smith Hanlon, Erica Voerman

- Funded with donations from Central Supplies Ltd. and John Juurlink Equipment and Sales

Fifteen grade 8 and 9 peer educators participated in two, full day and four, half day training sessions where they learned about the effects of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis, as well as about substance use, dependency and addictions. The teens explored peer pressure and how it relates to substance use and they discussed passive, aggressive, manipulative and assertive

The Young Women's Reading Group is a new program of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. It provides a forum for high school girls to read and discuss women's literature from a feminist perspective. The program was initiated in February 2001. A group of six (6) young women met to discuss *The Colour Purple*.

7. Young Women's Reading Group

Facilitator: Pamela Fry

• Cheryl Brymer, Public Health, facilitated two sessions on *Healthy Sexuality*.
to 13 girls.
facilitated by community resource people. Over the year, weekly participation ranged from 6 necessities for happiness, self-awareness and assertiveness. Where appropriate sessions were identification, belonging, harassment, childhood, experiences of sameness/difference, participants for discussion included relationships, body image, sexuality, values with a new group of participants in September 2000. This year, topics identified by the making. The program concluded in May for the 1999-2000 school year and re-commenced learn more about issues they face in their lives. The program promotes healthy decision- adolescent girls with an opportunity to come together on a weekly basis to talk about and to Young Women: Exploring Our Lives Together is a program that provides high school

6. Young Women: Exploring Our Lives Together

Facilitators: Susan Jewkes, Maureen Ryan, Pamela Fry

The peer educators took their *Teens Take Action: Tobacco, Alcohol, Cannabis Awareness* presentation to grade 6 classes at:
• St. Andrew's Consolidated Elementary School (2 classes)
• MacPherson Elementary School (3 classes)
• St. Joseph's Consolidated School
• Heatherton Elementary School
• Havre Boucher Elementary School
• St. Andrew Junior School (2 classes)
• Maryvale Elementary School
• L'Ecole Pomquet, delivering the majority of their presentation in the French language.

behaviours and responses to peer pressure. They then took what they learned and developed presentations for grade 6 classes in Antigonish. In the presentation they use skits, role plays and a quiz to encourage the students to think about substance use and to make informed decisions about whether or not they use addictive substances. The program was well received by the schools. The teachers reported being pleased that the students had the opportunity to meet older teen role models who encouraged them to think about their choices and peer pressure. The students did a great job.

8. Youth for Social Justice Group

Facilitators: Flora Murphy, September 2000 - March 2000, Christie Dyer, March 2001

The Youth for Social Justice Group is open to young women and men grades 10 through 12 who are interested in learning more about world issues and issues that affect their lives. A group of 8-12 students began meeting bi-weekly in September but, at the request of the participants, moved to weekly meetings in January. Discussion topics varied and sometimes reflected events being covered in the media. The first weeks focussed on social justice ideologies and vocabulary. Participants explored their understanding of social justice and the role it played in their lives. Areas of particular interest identified by the group included ageism, the public school system, poverty in our community and abroad - its causes, social circumstances and barriers, sweatshops, native rights, sexual assault and harassment, Nova Scotia Black History and the impacts and causes of racism, the impact of government policies on society and social class and the importance of a social security system, the role of the United States CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in numerous injustices around the world, the impact and how the media influences an understanding of the world, and globalization and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Resource people were invited to share their knowledge and experiences on specific topics. They included:

- Katherine Reed, AWRRC speaking about women's poverty in the Antigianish community
- Kerry Prosper, Afton First Nations Reserve, speaking about treaties, the Reserve system and native traditions
- Pamela Fry, Peer Sexual Harassment Project, speaking about sexual assault and harassment.

9. Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teens

Facilitator: Chris Tragakis

In September our *Parents with Challenging Teens* group was renamed *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teens*. This monthly discussion and support group for parents who are struggling to maintain healthy parenting practices with challenging teens is based on a model described in a book with the same name. The group is facilitated by a therapist and provides problem-solving support and guidance. Each session has a structured education component with time for open discussion about issues and challenges any of the parents are experiencing with their teens. There is a sense in living with teenagers that everything difficult is a crisis. Emotions are magnified sometimes to an alarming level, and both parents and kids have a tendency to escalate conflict, take it quite personally, and issue ultimatums. The group is a support group in which parents share sometimes heart-wrenching stories of the pain in their households and offer suggestions to one another about how to deal with difficult situations. The group maintains an attitude of respect for teens as parents try to understand the tumultuous nature of their lives, and the complexity of issues they deal with on a daily basis (school, career, friendships, relationships, drugs, alcohol, safe and unsafe sex, AIDS, etc.). The group encourages parents to be compassionate with their own difficulties in dealing with

their kids' abuses and torment. The mutual support along with the facilitated discussion makes this group useful and helpful to parents. The group is offered September to June, is open to all non-abusing parents and has a regular attendance of 8-15 parents.

10. Income Tax Return Preparation Program

Volunteers: Carmel Gallagher, Service Learning Students, St. F.X.U.

Again this year, we offered our Income Tax Return Preparation Program for low-income women. This year we participated in a program sponsored by St. F.X.U. using service learning students to complete tax returns. We collected the information and the service learning students, under the supervision of their professor, completed the forms. This was done in two stages this year addressing the long wait people experienced last year. Carmel Gallagher reviewed some of the forms and completed the more complicated ones. As well, she completed the forms brought in by women after the cut-off time. Sixty-seven (67) people came to the AWRC to have their income tax returns completed saving them the cost of going to a for-fee service.

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. We cooperated with other organizations in planning and/or sponsoring community education programs and events. As well, we participated in workshops, focus groups and events at the invitation of other organizations. These included the following.

1. AWRC Workshops and Events

- **Women and Financial Planning** program was very informative, focusing on both the use of credit, and retirement savings/taxation. Len and Betty MacDonald of Hicks Financial Services facilitated the program and they left the Centre with some very useful written materials dealing with those two topics.

- **The Women's Free Store** provided clothing and furniture items to women at no cost. Organized by St. F.X.U. students in cooperation with the AWRC, students donated, collected and organized a distribution site for approximately 700 items of clothing for women and children in the community.

- **Sister Mary MacLeod Bursaries** of \$250 each were awarded to four women returning to school. This year's recipients were Tracey Bingley, Sherbrooke, Library and Information Technology at NS Community College - Halifax Campus; Valerie Chisholm, Harbour Centre, Licensed Practical Nurse at NS Community College; Donna Gero, Antigonish, Personal Care Worker at NS Community College - Strait Campus; and Trina Gunn, Antigonish, Diagnostic Cytology at Dalhousie University.
- **Volunteer Orientation & Training Sessions.**
A total of 6 women participated in our fall volunteer orientation session which prepared them to help with general duties at the Centre. Amanda and Angie organized and facilitated the sessions.
- 2. **Outreach, Presentations and Training Sessions**
 - **Violence**
AWRC staff facilitated workshops/presentations on sexual violence and dating violence:
 - The Nova Scotia Secondary Schools Students Association requested a workshop on sexual assault for their H.Y.P.E. Conference. Lucille along with four members of Teens Take Action, Patrick Clancy, Melissa Berthiaume, Maggie MacDougall and Katie MacInnis, facilitated the session.
 - A student from a Family Studies class at Antigonish East High School requested a presentation on sexual assault. - Lucille
 - **X-Nite Line** volunteers requested a training sessions on Responding to Sexual Assault. - Lucille
 - For the Family Violence Prevention Workshop 2 day training session organized in response to the Health Sector Family Violence Prevention Framework for Action, Lucille presented the Overview/Analysis of Violence Towards Women. The training session was supported by the Nova Scotia Department of Health.
 - The **WORK Set Program** for youth, a mixed group of men and women aged 16-29 years, requested a presentation on sexual harassment and sexual violence. - Amanda Workman, Pamela Fry
 - Students from Professor Donna MacDonald's St. Francis Xavier University Deviant Behaviour psychology class invited the participation of AWRC in the panel discussion on **Violence Against Women.** Jean Crosby, the Naomi Society, Downey Brocklebank, Community Policing Officer and Amanda spoke as panelists. Amanda talked specifically about sexual assault.

- **Poverty**
AWRC staff facilitated workshops/presentations on poverty and poverty-related concerns:
- the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Dietitians of Canada sponsored a forum, **Building Food Security in Nova Scotia**, which dealt with the issue of food security. Katherine Reed presented as part of a panel called *Identifying Strategies for Action* which focused on poverty and nutrition. She spoke mainly about social assistance policy in Nova Scotia and the issues that arise in "deficit financing" for women on welfare. She shared some of the materials that came out of the workshops the AWRC has been organizing in the Women in Transition Project.
- for the 16th Topshoe Memorial Conference - Social Justice: A Dialogue with **Youth**, Lucille co-facilitated with Mica Francis a small group discussion on **Women's Issues**. The focus of the discussion was Women and Poverty: a Concern for Youth.
- **Rod Bantjes** invited Katherine Reed to his **Introduction to Sociology** class to discuss women and poverty and issues around social assistance. Katherine developed a 10-question quiz which she used as a learning tool.
- the **Social Justice Committee of the Sisters of St. Martha** invited Katherine to their annual strategic planning day where they identified the most pressing economic justice issues for women in Antigonish. Katherine focused on the housing issues faced by Antigonish women who are living on low and modest incomes.
- **The Antigonish & Area Inter-Agency Committee on Family Violence** invited Katherine to speak to them about the current reality of women on social assistance.
- **The Standing Committee on Community Services** invited Katherine, as part of a four person panel, to present on the issue of affordable housing. This committee is made up of elected MLAs from all three political parties. All presenters made a powerful argument for more provincial government support for the development and maintenance of affordable housing. Grant Wanzel, Patricia Richards, and Louise van Wart also presented.
- The AWRC "**On the Road to Employment**" program asked Katherine to facilitate two workshops, one on social assistance and one on political structures and social policy. Participants were keenly interested in the upcoming social assistance policy changes and how government works.

- **Health** A/WRC staff facilitated workshops/presentations on health and health-related concerns:
- The Lions' Quest Youth Camp requested a workshop on **Body Image** for a group of teen women. As part of the workshop the teens put together a series of posters on body image. - Amanda
- The A/WRC was invited to participate in a community meeting about **Literacy and Health** where discussion centred on the ways literacy impacts on people's ability to access health related information. - Amanda
- The A/WRC was invited to meet with members of the **Provincial Health Council** when they visited Antigonish on an information-gathering tour. Katherine spoke with them about the housing and social assistance concerns of women living in poverty in Antigonish.

3. Community Use of the A/WRC

The A/WRC is used by community groups for meetings, programming and other activities. It is also used by individuals who need a private space to study or to meet with a service provider, a tutor, a friend or a family member. This past year the following groups used the A/WRC as a meeting space:

- Mothers Matter Support Group
- Women Standing Up! in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties
- ACT for Change
- Community Policing
- Women in Community Economic Development
- student research project

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 these committees and, in others, has been involved since their inception. This work provides opportunities for information sharing, community development, project development, and agency learning.

Community/Regional Level

1. Antigonish Committee to Address Sexual Violence

AWRC Representatives: Vangie Babin, Amanda Workman, Lucille Harper

The Antigonish Committee to Address Sexual Violence has a double mandate of community education and of improving the response of local services and systems to adult survivors of sexual violence.

2

Antigonish and Area Inter-Agency Committee on Family Violence

AWRC Representative: Amanda Workman

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.

3. Antigonish Town and County Crime Prevention Association

AWRC Representative: Amanda Workman

The Antigonish Town and County Crime Prevention Association works to prevent crime in the community through addressing the protection needs of community members with a focus on seniors, youth and businesses.

4. Antigonish Coordinated Services

AWRC representatives: Katherine Reed, Amanda Workman

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, service clubs and charities working with people on low-incomes. They organize the annual Christmas Toy Program (formerly Christmas Daddies) and provide some special needs

funding to people in the community. A WRC staff bring forward concerns of women living in poverty as well as an analysis of women's poverty.

5. Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice

A WRC Representatives: Katherine Reed, Krista DeCoste

The Antigonish Coalition for Economic Justice is made up of representatives of local groups and individuals who have an interest in social justice.

6. Society for Affordable Community Housing in Antigonish (SACHA)/ Antigonish Affordable Housing Society (AAHS)

A WRC Representative: Katherine Reed

The lack of affordable housing continues to be a major issue for women living on low and modest incomes. SACHA under the leadership of the A WRC has taken a lead role in bringing community members together with women living in poverty to work on addressing the need for affordable housing.

7. Antigonish Guysborough Transportation Steering Committee/The Guysborough/Antigonish Dial-a-Ride Association

A WRC representative: Katherine Reed

The Antigonish Guysborough Transportation Steering Committee was a broad-based committee advising the Nova Scotia Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs' about the Inclusive Transportation Pilot Project. The project sought to address barriers to transportation for local residents in need of special and/or affordable transportation (people with disabilities, low-income people and seniors, etc.) and to better link the users with the services and coordinate the available services and maximize the services' efficiency. The group restructured in March of 2001, adopted the new name **The Guysborough Antigonish Dial-a-Ride Association**, and took responsibility for overseeing the "Dial-a-Ride" program which organized volunteers to provide transportation to people living in the two counties.

8. PATH (People Assessing Their Health) Network

A WRC Representative: Lucille Harper

The PATH Network kept the work of PATH moving ahead this past year. The PATH Network includes representatives from health services, community-based agencies and universities in the Eastern Health Region. Its 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."

9. Antigonish Youth Coalition

AWRC Representative - Lucille Harper

The Antigonish Youth Coalition brings together representatives from the RCMP, community church youth groups, the Antigonish Town and County Crime Prevention Committee, ACT for Change and the AWRC to look for ways to support youth initiatives in Antigonish.

Provincial and Atlantic Regional Level

1. Women's Centres Connect!

AWRC Representative: Lucille Harper

Women's Centres Connect! is the provincial association of Women's Centres. Connect! has been working actively through the Province of Nova Scotia/Women's Centres Connect! Joint Planning Committee's to produce a Final Report and Recommendations for multi-department funding. The report establishes the role women's centres play in their communities, the relationship between agencies, services available in each community, opportunities and challenges for working together, and potential for accessing funding for programs, projects and service contracts within the local and regional areas of each Centre. As well, it discusses options by which Centres might generate revenues to complement government funding.

2. Women Leading Action on Violence Against Women

AWRC Representative: Lucille Harper

The WLA developed and received funding from Status of Women Canada for its proposal, **Building a Nova Scotia Women's Caucus for Justice**. The project was designed to identify critical issues facing women attempting to access the justice system; to identify and develop a clearly defined plan for reaching desired outcomes on these issues; to establish a mechanism for ongoing communication and action among women's equality seeking groups within Nova Scotia; and to establish a mechanism for ongoing communication and action among equality seeking women's groups with the other three Atlantic provinces.

3. Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, Ad Hoc Committee on the Strategic Plan
AWRC Representative: Lucille Harper

As follow-up to the Atlantic meeting, *Violence Against Women and Girls in Rural and Socially Isolated Communities in Atlantic Canada*, sponsored by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, an Ad Hoc Committee on the Strategic Plan was formed and met to further the ideas presented at the Atlantic meeting and to develop a follow-up proposal for addressing violence against women and girls in rural communities. The committee developed a proposal to be submitted to Status of Women Canada for the *PRISM Project: Probing Rural Issues, Selecting Methods to Address Abuse of Women and Girls*. If approved, the project will identify the key elements of effective approaches to prevent and address abuse of women and girls in rural communities, develop a plain-language resource for the use of rural communities, and develop an Atlantic communication strategy for connecting communities, individuals and agencies working in rural areas to address the abuse of women and girls.

4. Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy (FemJEP)
AWRC Representative: Lucille Harper

FemJEP involves feminist, community-based, front-line, equality-seeking, women's organizations as well as women working on public policy that improves the status of women. Currently FemJEP is working to develop an integrated public policy approach that will involve community and policy makers in working together to develop policy that will benefit women and their families in Nova Scotia.

5. Maritime Centre for Excellence in Women's Health (MCEWH) "Nova Scotia Reference Group on Social and Economic Inclusion"
AWRC Representative: Katherine Reed

The Reference Group includes sister reference groups in each Atlantic province. The purpose of the Reference Group is to advise the MCEWH on the development of research on economic and social inclusion (i.e. ending poverty) as it affects women and their families. The focus is on the impact of social policy on women. Katherine sits on the Reference Group to provide, from a community-based, feminist organization's perspective, expertise on how women and children living in poverty are affected by government policies.

PROJECTS

This past fiscal year the AWRC sponsored projects that addressed issues relating to women's poverty, community health and violence experienced by women. These projects included:

1. **Women in Transition (WIT) Project**
Funded through Women's Program, Status of Women Canada
November 1, 1999 - October 31, 2000
Project Coordinator: Katherine Reed
2. **Re-Entry Readiness Program for African Canadian Women on Social Assistance**
Funded through Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Community Services and Human Resources Development Canada
January 10, 2000 - May 19, 2000
Project Coordinator: Debbie Ross-Munroe Life Skills Facilitator: Wendy Campbell
3. **On the Road to Employment: A Pre-Employment Program for Single Mothers Facing Barriers to Employment**
Funded through Employment Assistance Program, Human Resource Development Canada
January 30, 2001 - July 13, 2001
Project Coordinator: Tracy Bulman Life Skills Facilitator: Sherry Battiste
4. **Links Project: Violence Against Women and the Justice System**
Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres with funding from Justice Canada
April 1, 2000 - March 31, 2003
Site Researcher: Amanda Workman
5. **Sibling Violence: A Family Secret**
Funded through Community Mobilization Program, Department of Justice
Co-sponsored with Naomi Society for Victims of Family Violence
July 31, 2000 - December 15, 2000
Project Coordinator: Alicia Van de Sande
6. **When Bullying Becomes Sexual Harassment: Building A Student-Centred Prevention Approach**
Funded through Community Mobilization Program, Department of Justice Canada
September 11, 2000 - May 11, 2001
Project Coordinator: Pamela Fry
7. **Applying Community Health Impact Assessment to Rural Community Health Planning**
Funded through Remote and Rural Health Fund, Health Canada
December 2000 - March 31, 2002
Project Coordinator: Susan Eaton

STAFFING

1. AWRC Core Staff

This past year the Antigianish Women's Resource Centre core staff positions included:

- Director
- Crisis Support Worker - primary area of responsibility: women's poverty, housing, social assistance, separation and divorce
- Crisis Support Worker - primary area of responsibility: sexual violence, custody and access, child protection, separation and divorce
- Office Manager
- Assistant Program Coordinator and Fundraiser
- Bookkeeper

As Director, Lucille Harper was responsible for overseeing the administration and direction of the Centre, as well as for supervising projects, developing programming, writing grant proposals, liaising with government, working with Connect, representing the Centre on community and regional committees, planning Centre fundraising, handling public relations, training the peer educators and presenting workshops as requested by community groups and organizations.

Our Crisis Support Worker, Amanda Workman, worked with women who come to the Centre for information and support on sexual violence, custody and access, child protection, separation and divorce issues and issues of concern to adolescent women. Amanda organized the peer education program, assists with the Therapy Groups for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, facilitates volunteer orientation sessions, supervises student placements, and represents the AWRC on local committees that address mental health concerns, youth issues and violence against women.

Our Crisis Support Worker, Katherine Reed, was our resident expert on social assistance and was an invaluable resource to women dealing with poverty issues. Her primary area of responsibility was women's poverty, housing, social assistance, and separation and divorce. Katherine worked with board members to coordinate annual AWRC events, and represents the AWRC on community committees that address housing, poverty and economic justice concerns.

Vangie Babin provided essential office management. Vangie was responsible for greeting women as they came into the Centre, handling the phone lines, bookkeeping, payroll, statistical record-keeping, clerical assistance, organizing fundraising events and library maintenance. She also assisted with supervising volunteers and women in the Centre on work experience placements.

Christine Hanlon was our much appreciated bookkeeper. Christine kept the books for the Centre core operations as well as for AWRC projects. Each project required its own system of accountability making Christine's job complex and intensive.

This past year we decided to take a serious look at corporate fundraising. The AWRC employed Maureen Ryan for a six month period to help with program planning and to identify and apply for funding to corporations and foundations that identified women's issues as an area of concern. While Maureen did a credible job of approaching corporate sponsors and developing funding proposals, our efforts were disappointingly unsuccessful. With our current level of funding, this position is unsustainable.

We hired Caitlin Mulcahy to work after school as the Student Programming Assistant Coordinator. Caitlin acted as a liaison person with high school students to inform them about AWRC programs and to help coordinate the programs.

The workload of the Women's Centre continues to increase. To meet the demand for direct service, requests to participate in community development endeavours and the need for increased fundraising, AWRC core staff worked a total of 754.5 unpaid overtime hours, AWRC project staff worked a total of 265 unpaid overtime hours for a total of 1,019.5 hours.

2. AWRC Summer Staff

The AWRC received a grant from the Nova Scotia Employment Program Summer 2000 to hire a summer student. Meaghan MacIntyre was hired to assist with the daily operations of the Women's Centre and to help Debbie Ross Munroe gather information on affordable housing initiatives.

3. Service Learning Students/Student Placements

The AWRC provides student placement opportunities for St. F.X. University students participating in Service Learning Programs, for students attending community colleges, as well as for students attending other re-training or re-entry programs. This year the following students came to the Centre for their workplace experience.

- Tammy MacLean, a participant with the AWRC Re-Entry Readiness Program did a four day volunteer placement with the Centre. She helped with fundraising and with photocopying.
- Tracey Bingley, a Library Technician student at the Halifax Campus, Nova Scotia Community College, did a wonderful job of updating our library system - a daunting task.
- Roxanne MacDonald, a Human Services student at the Port Hawkesbury Campus, Nova Scotia Community College, updated our Directory of Services for Survivors of Sexual Violence. Roxanne also provided office support and was a pleasure to have in the Centre.
- Cynthia Bonvie and Lavinia Gough, St. F.X.U. Department of Nursing students, worked under the direction of Pamela Fry on the Peer Sexual Harassment Project. They did background research on specific aspects of the issue.

As is the case with many community-based agencies, the AWRRC is finding that volunteers have less time to commit to volunteer activities. Many women are working full-time, caring for children and, often, aging or infirm parents, trying to upgrade their education and/or job skills, and find they have less time for volunteer activities. We have experienced a decrease in the number of core AWRRC volunteers.

However, volunteers remain an integral part of the AWRRC. 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. Amanda facilitated an orientation session for new volunteers in the fall of 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 2,695 hours.

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

4. Volunteers

- useful to us.
- Rhonda MacInnis, Dr. John Phyne's Sociology Student Internship Program, was to undertake some background research that included interviews with justice workers on conditional sentencing for the AWRRC and the Antigonish Committee to Address Sexual Violence.
 - However, we pulled back from the project because there was not enough discussion with us on the direction of the research and the form it was to take. The lack of communication left both Rhonda and the AWRRC in difficult situations. Rhonda did review the Supreme Court decisions on conditional sentencing cases and gave us a copy of her paper. This has been useful to us.
 - Wendy Lank, St. F.X.U. Department of Nursing student, worked with Amanda to collect information on the St. F.X.U. policy on responding to sexual assault.
 - Melody MacInnis, St. F.X.U. Department of Nursing student, worked with Amanda on the Teens Take Action peer education program. She helped organize a presentation at the Antigonish East Academy while on her placement.
 - Patricia Delorey, St. F.X.U. Service Learning student, worked with Pamela on the Peer Sexual Harassment Project.
 - Amber Logan, Human Nutrition student, wrote an honours thesis on body image and young women's relationship with food. She facilitated some information gathering focus groups and workshops with students through the AWRRC.
 - Rhonda MacInnis, Dr. John Phyne's Sociology Student Internship Program, was to undertake some background research that included interviews with justice workers on conditional sentencing for the AWRRC and the Antigonish Committee to Address Sexual Violence.

FUNDING

During the fiscal year 1999-2000, the AWRC received core program funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. Both the provincial and federal governments provided funding for specific projects. While project funding enables the AWRC to undertake important pieces of work that contribute to the knowledge and well-being of the community, it does not support the core services of the Women's Centre.

The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services provided core provincial funding of \$100,000. Provincial funding covers our direct service work to women -- support, counselling, information, court accompaniment, 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.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

The AWRC needs to raise funds annually to cover programming costs associated with our adolescent programs, our sexual abuse survivors therapy groups, our women's programs, the Sister Mary MacLeod Bursary and other AWRC costs. This year we undertook fundraising efforts in both the community and the business sectors.

- The community response to our 2000-2001 spring and fall direct mail campaigns clearly demonstrated sustained community support for the AWRC and our work. Thank you to all who so generously supported us.

- To help cover the costs of our programs the AWRC sought donations from labour as well as from the public and corporate sectors.

The Canadian Auto Workers Union has been particularly supportive of our anti-violence work and the anti-violence work of women's organizations across Canada. Betsy MacIntyre, Canadian Auto Workers, and former AWRC Board member, presented the AWRC with a \$2,000 donation on IWD.

Businesses also have been supportive of AWRC programming and responded positively to our requests for donations to support specific programs as well as to support our programming in general.

- Sable Offshore Energy donated \$3,610 (Teens Take Action Dating Violence program)
- Cara Operations Ltd. donated \$1,000
- Central Home Improvement Warehouse donated \$750 (Teens Take Action Substance Use program)
- Imperial Tobacco Limited donated \$250

- Peak Experiences donated \$185
- Pleasant Valley Nurseries donated \$100
- MacLeod Group Inc. donated \$100
- Bergenren Credit Union donated \$50
- Skye Food Services donated \$50
- Community service clubs and religious congregations also supported our work. Contributions included:
 - Sisters of St. Martha \$300
 - Sisters of St. Martha, Adsum Community \$50
 - Antigonish Lions Club \$250
- Individual artists and community businesses demonstrated their support of our work by donating items for fundraising raffles, gift certificates, and beverages and food trays for various AWRRC events.
 - Alice Hoskins donated a warm and enchanting watercolour of Hibiscus for the Sr. Mary MacLeod Bursary draw which will take place in June 2001. She donated the drawing in appreciation of care provided to her by the VON. The Maritime Inn donated a luncheon for two gift certificate. Winners of the June 2000 draw were Stephanie Workman, Halifax, 1st Prize "Bear River" art print by Anna Syperek and Diane Walsh, 2nd prize "Lunch for 2- Gift Certificate" at Gaberieu's Bistro.
 - For our Christmas draw, Vangie Babin donated a gorgeous handmade Mother Solstice and Angel.
- Individual community members donated food, books, videos, clothing, school supplies, baby needs, children's games and toys, children's sports equipment, office supplies, kitchen items, furniture items, Christmas decorations, and other items for the use of the Centre or for women who use the Centre.
- Maureen Ryan designed a set of four note cards that we printed and are selling to raise funds for our programs. They are beautiful, they celebrate women and they have launched Maureen on her artistic path.

CONCLUSION

In thinking back over the year, it is clear that the AWRC accomplished a lot. We integrated the prevention and intervention aspects of our work in a way that allowed us to respond appropriately and effectively to the immediate needs of women in crisis, to work to address the underlying causes of the poverty, violence and health issues facing women, and to deliver and promote prevention programs for women and youth. In doing so, we continued to build and reinforce productive, collaborative working relationships with agency colleagues at the community, regional and provincial levels. We provided students with the opportunity to gain work experience in a feminist organization, using a feminist perspective, and welcomed the involvement of university service learning, community college and high school students.

And, although we were busier than ever, we managed to maintain an open, inviting atmosphere where women felt welcomed, listened to and valued.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the provincial government. We thank Judy Jackson, Department of Community Services, Halifax, for her efforts to make apparent at the provincial level the contributions Women's Centres make to their communities and to the province. We thank Nina Clarke, Regional Administrator, Northern Region, and Lisa Smith and Erv Currie, District Supervisors, Antigonish, for supporting the work of our Women's Centre. And, we acknowledge and thank our project funders - Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Status of Women Canada, Health Canada, Justice Canada, and Human Resources Development Canada - for supporting us in making a difference in the lives of women and their families.

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 Women's Centre. 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.