

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre

2006 -  
2007



# ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

## Annual Report 2006 - 2007

### A Message from the Executive Director



*Lucille Harper,  
Executive Director*

This past year, our 24<sup>th</sup> year, has seen the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) take on new challenges and grow to accommodate greater community calls for services. For the first time, with support from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, we were able to provide outreach services and programs to women and adolescent girls in Sherbrooke, Guysborough and Canso. Our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program is now up and running in Antigonish with plans to expand to the Strait area in June 2007. Our Healthy Relationships for Youth Program expanded from two to five schools, with plans for another five schools to come on stream in the fall of 2007. The number of calls and visits from people contacting the Women's Centre for information, services, and issues related work reached 11,941.

We are motivated and remain inspired by the women and adolescent girls we work with each day – by their strength, resiliency, and determination to overcome the barriers they face. On a daily basis we work with women who live in deep and persistent poverty – poverty that is often generational and racialized. We work with women and adolescent girls who experienced violence and abuse. And, we work with women and adolescent girls who live in very rural communities and who are trying as hard as they can to establish economic

independence in a region where there are few opportunities for employment, to provide and care for children and family members

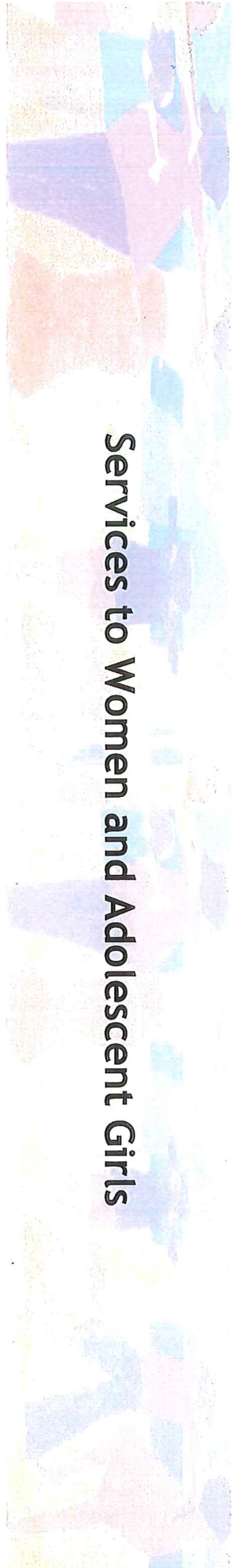
### Our Mission

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre is an independent, feminist, community-based organization. We provide information, support services and programs for women of all ages and backgrounds in an environment that is sensitive to women's needs. We recognize and address issues of concern to women and their families through community development, education and research. We work together with women in our community to create a just and equitable society.

with limited access to childcare and support services, to further their education and seek training opportunities when there is no public transportation system. On top of this, they are holding their communities together by performing many hours of unpaid community labour on top of their household and paid labour.

We remain committed to working for social and economic justice, for peace, for a safe and healthy world, for a world in which all women, all children, all men are valued, cared for and supported each for our uniqueness and our commonality.

*Lucille Harper*



## Services to Women and Adolescent Girls

The Women's Centre is guided in its work by women's experiences and knowledge. We recognize that women are experts on their own lives. Our role is to provide women with the information and support they need to make informed and healthy decisions for themselves and their families.

Women and adolescent girls come to the Women's Centre for information, support, and advocacy for a broad range of issues and concerns.

### Crisis Counselling and Problem-Solving Support

Women and girls want to live full, healthy lives and to develop the inner resources and social supports they need to do so. The Women's Centre provides women and adolescent girls with information as well as the short-term and ongoing problem-solving and emotional support they need to make positive changes in their lives.

This may mean working through poverty related concerns, removing themselves from an unhealthy relationship, healing from childhood traumas such as sexual or physical abuse, freeing themselves from addictions, building self-esteem and a sense of power over their lives, finding adequate employment, enrolling in academic up-grading and re-training programs, and developing positive parenting skills. Because our services are helpful and available to women when they need them, other agencies and institutions refer women to the Women's Centre for support.

*"I feel at home at the Centre. I can get all the information and support that I need to help me move on with my life."*

*"The support counselling I have received over the last year has been invaluable."*

### Our Approach to Working with Women and Adolescent Girls

#### We believe:

- that all women and girls have the right to equal access, opportunity, and full and equal participation in society, and
- that we have the right to make informed decisions and to be treated with respect and human dignity.

#### We understand:

- that many of the problems faced by women and girls are determined by a range of inter-connecting social, economic and cultural factors.
- that these factors impact on women and girls in a gender-specific way, which must be understood, recognized and addressed.
- that helping women and girls strengthen their ability to lead healthy lives requires a combination of intervention, prevention and community development services.
- that we must work from a holistic perspective, which means we work with the 'whole' person, understand her issues to be inter-connected and address them as such.

#### We work:

- at an individual level, helping women and girls identify and work through their problems by providing information, support, advocacy and referral.

# Services to Women and Adolescent Girls

This past year, services were provided to 1,030 individual women and adolescent girls. They used our services 7,129 times.

- ☐ On average, each person accessed our services and programs 7 times.
- ☐ 618 women and girls accessed crisis or ongoing support services.
- ☐ 970 women and girls accessed programs.
- ☐ Women and girls were referred by health professionals, community and government agencies, and schools.

## Advocacy and Accompaniment

At the request of women who come to the women's centre, AWRRC staff advocate for and accompany women to legal, medical and social service appointments, as well as to court and the hospital. As advocates, staff are able to help women find answers to their questions and negotiate systems that can be complex, confusing and intimidating. This past year we accompanied women to 67 court, legal, and medical appointments. We made 856 advocacy related calls.



*Jennifer Steylen,  
Support Staff*



*Support workers Isabel Gillis  
and Amanda Workman;  
Women's Service Coordinator  
Vangie Babin (center)*

## Serving the Needs of the Whole Community

### We work:

- at a collective level, providing educational and support programs for women, men and adolescents.
- at a community level, through community development and by providing workshops and presentations for the general public, schools, and service providers.
- at a systems level, addressing the structural barriers women face as they try to take control of their lives, by advocating with the system to remove these barriers and to implement woman positive public policies and programs.

## Programs

The Women's Centre offers facilitated therapy and support programs for women and adolescent girls as well as programs that benefit the community as a whole.

- ✓ Justice Matters for Women: Rural Outreach in Guysborough and Antigonish Counties
- ✓ Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program
- ✓ Survivors of Sexual Trauma Groups
- ✓ Lindsay's Health Centre for Women
- ✓ Support Programs
- ✓ Community Education

# Justice Matters for Women: Rural Outreach in Guysborough and Antigonish Counties

*Justice Matters for Women* was created in response to requests by women in Guysborough County to extend the services of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre to their area. With funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, in April 2006, the program began providing law-related information, advocacy, accompaniment and problem-solving support to women and adolescent girls one day per week each in Canso, Guysborough and Sherbrooke.

Guysborough County is the largest and most sparsely populated county in Nova Scotia. Unemployment is high in the area and the average income is low. Women in the area face multiple barriers related to poverty, isolation, lack of transportation, and the out-migration of services.

## Services

Women contact our Outreach Program for information on a variety of issues including: the legal system; rights and entitlements; poverty; relationships; sexual violence, harassment and abuse; addictions; housing; education and employment; and physical, mental and emotional health.

- ☐ As of April 30, 2007, 116 women and adolescent girls accessed the Program for support.
- ☐ Referrals to the Program have steadily increased.

Community members say the program is a welcome and much needed addition to Guysborough County, noting that it is not often that such a program is offered in their rural communities.

## Workshops

In addition to providing one-to-one support, *Justice Matters for Women* offers workshops and programs.



*Rural Outreach  
Coordinator  
Meghan Mulcahy*

- ☐ 26 people participated in two workshops on end-of-life issues and family law.
- ☐ 9 women attended a day long workshop on women and poverty that was held in Sherbrooke.

## Inspire

*Inspire* is a school-based program that provides adolescent girls with a safe, non-judgmental and girl-friendly venue for exploring issues in their lives, learning about their rights, and developing life-skills. *Inspire* provides positive mentoring and role modelling that encourages self-care, healthy decision making and the development of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. The program was offered in 5 schools in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties with 53 girls participating.

*"I think people don't recognize that girls our age do have problems, and Inspire showed us that some people do care."*  
*Inspire Participant*

*"Ms. Mulcahy has developed an excellent program at our school and has gained the ultimate goal of any educator, the trust of the students."* - School Principal

# Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program

Sexual assault happens every day. One in four women are sexually assaulted at some point during their lives; one in three while they are in college or university. While women and girls are the most frequent targets, boys and men also are victims of sexual assault. Yet sexual assault is perhaps the most under-reported crime. There are many reasons for this – fear of reprisal, self-blame, shame, not knowing where to go for help.

The SANE Program is a new service offered by the AWRRC in partnership with the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA) and St. Francis Xavier University Student Services to male and female survivors of sexual assault who are 13 years of age and older.

Specialized on-call SANE Nurses provide:

- Emergency response, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Comprehensive medical examinations;
- Competent collection of forensic evidence;
- Referral to support services;
- Expert testimony in a court of law.



*Marla Barton,  
SANE Program  
Coordinator*

The SANE Program can store forensic evidence for up to six months. This gives victims/survivors 16 years of age and older time to decide whether they want to involve the police. A key part of the program is the supportive follow-up care.

Currently, SANEs are able to do exams at St. Martha's Regional Hospital and Lindsay's Health Centre for Women. Once the program is fully established, exams will also be done at the Strait Regional and Guysborough Hospitals.

## The SANE Program Model

The AWRRC SANE Program is a "client centred" model of care. This means it is designed around the needs of the victim/survivor and she/he provides direction for all aspects of her/his care from start to finish. Services are provided in a safe, supportive, non-judgmental and confidential environment to women and men, girls and boys who are 13 years of age and older.

The victim/survivor is given medical treatment options as well as options for follow-up care. As well, victims/survivors 16 years of age and older are provided with information about their legal options and whether and when they want to involve the police.

## Program Accomplishments 2006-2007

- ✓ Program policies, protocols and procedures developed
- ✓ 16 nurses and 2 physicians hired, trained and certified as sexual assault forensic examiners
- ✓ SANE certificate training program (40 hours) with follow-up sessions delivered
- ✓ SANEs ready for on-call May 28, 2007

# Survivors of Sexual Trauma Support Group

All women are vulnerable to violence and conservative estimates say that one quarter of all women will experience some form of sexual violence by the time they are eighteen.

The Women's Centre recognizes that participating in a survivors' group can be an important part of the healing journey for women. We have been providing support groups to help women address issues of sexual trauma since 1992.

Our Stage I and Stage II Groups provide women who have experienced sexual trauma through childhood sexual abuse and/or sexual assault a safe and supportive place to:

- ✓ identify and explore feelings and memories and to practice new skills
- ✓ establish rapport and share their experiences
- ✓ learn about trauma memory, triggers and flashbacks to better understand the impact that being sexually abused/assaulted has had on their lives
- ✓ learn coping, grounding and boundary setting skills to support the healing process
- ✓ continue their healing journey

## Survivors of Sexual Trauma Stage I Group

This eight week educational program is for women who are beginning their healing process and want to build a foundation for this work by developing practical coping skills in the areas of managing flashbacks, setting healthy boundaries, building a support system, nurturing self-care and developing self-compassion. Offered in May 2006, 7 participants met once a week for two hours.

*"Boundaries - I realized I had to create and maintain them."*

*"I have a better understanding of what I went through and why I react like I do."*

## Survivors of Sexual Trauma Stage II Group

This ten week therapeutic group is for women who are ready to begin healing in a group setting from the effects of their sexual abuse or assault in. The group addresses the effects of trauma and the healing process, emotional numbing, exploring self-blame, body image, relationships, creating pathways for anger and grief, and reclaiming self-worth. Offered in the October 2006, 4 participants met once a week for two hours.

*"I think this group is one of the most important things I have ever done in my life."*

*"Having someone listen and understand - these needs are being met in this group."*



Facilitators Barbara Hayes and Jean Crosby

# Lindsay's Health Centre for Women

Through Lindsay's Health Centre for Women we offer an integrated, woman-centred, primary health care program for women and adolescent girls, with a particular focus on those who experience barriers to access. Lindsay's is a partnership program of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, GASHA - Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority, and the medical community.

Lindsay's is offered each Thursday at the Women's Centre.

- ✓ A physician and a nurse practitioner provide medical care.
- ✓ The Women's Centre provides one-to-one support and partners as requested in program delivery.
- ✓ Addictions Services, Public Health Services and Mental Health Services offer programs and issue-specific support.

This past year:

- ☐ 247 women accessed medical care with a total of 480 visits.
  - 165 women visited the physician.
  - 121 women visited the nurse practitioner.
- ☐ 9 women participated in a six session *Stop Smoking* Program.
- ☐ 7 women participated in a six session *Eating Issues: Ready for Change?* Program.
- ☐ Our public health nurse saw women 88 times.



Dr. Daphne MacLean, Nurse Practitioner  
Connie Venedam-Marchand, and Public  
Health Nutritionist Sarah Hallahan

## Our Approach to Providing Services

Lindsay's Health Centre is guided by women's diverse experiences and knowledge. We value and encourage women's ideas and insights about their lives and health.

We work with women to provide programs and services appropriate to their needs and designed to enhance the understanding, self-care, self-help and self-advocacy abilities of each woman.

## Our Philosophy

♀ Every woman has the right to make informed decisions about her health.

♀ A woman's health improves when she has a greater sense of control over her life situation.

♀ A woman's health is dependent upon her physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being.

♀ Gender is a key determinant of health as are social status, income, employment, education and social supports.

# Support Programs, Community Education and Community Engagement

## Support Programs

In response to the issues and concerns that women bring to the Women's Centre, we offer a number of support programs.

### Women Supporting Women

Women Supporting Women is a facilitated support group for women. It provides women with a safe space to share their stories and life experiences, to support each other in finding solutions to problems in their lives, to learn important life skills, to begin to make positive personal changes and to celebrate their accomplishments. The group is open to all women.

### Income Tax Preparation for Low-Income Women and Their Families

Each year, we provide support to low-income women and family members needing help with completing their income tax returns. The returns are completed by volunteers. This year volunteers completed returns for 202 people.

### Adopt A Family Program

Each year, members of the community approach the Women's Centre with offers of assistance to families at Christmas. While it is not possible to meet the needs of all families in the community who need help through this program, we are able each year to help some.

### C@P Site

Some 66 women used the C@P Site 269 times.

## Community Education

The Women's Centre offers workshops and presentations to community groups, service providers, students, educators, and the general public. We facilitate workshops on topics related to sexual violence, poverty, health, and women's equality issues.

This past year we did workshops and presentations for:

- St. Francis Xavier University classes on poverty, social assistance policy, sexual assault, and the women's centre approach to providing mental health services;
- Coady International Institute students on women's equality;
- Antigonish Career Resource Centre Skills Link program students on sexual health and healthy relationships;
- Sisters of St. Martha on grant writing.

*"One of the most memorable lectures I have ever attended in my four years at SIFX was when the woman came in from the Women's Resource Centre to speak to us about poverty, social systems and gender."*

## Community Engagement

### Coady Picnic

In the summer, we host a picnic for women coming from other countries to study at the Coady International Institute. This is an opportunity for women from Antigonish to welcome the Coady women and to learn about their work and lives.

# Working with Youth

Young women come to the Women's Centre for information about and support for handling a range of issues - relationship concerns, home troubles, sexual violence, dating abuse, sexuality information, school concerns, housing, anxiety, depression, and stress.

Over the years the Women's Centre has provided many programs for youth. Understanding the increased vulnerability of girls to many forms of harassment, violence, exclusion, and discrimination, we have developed programs that help them develop resiliency, life skills and strategies for reducing their vulnerability and for actualizing their life goals.

As well we deliver school-based programs that train both male and female students to work as peer educators in teaching other youth about healthy relationships.

## Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Program

February 2002 - August 2006

The Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Program (RYEP) is a gender-based, violence prevention program that provides youth with skills to build and maintain healthy relationships. Adapting a SWOVA project, "Women and Violence - Education is Prevention" RYEP brought a West Coast program to the East Coast.



Jean Crosby, Rural  
Youth Healthy  
Relationships  
Program  
Coordinator

Coast communities. In addition to addressing gender and sexual orientation issues, the program delivery and content are relevant to a rural environment with a diverse population, including Miikmaq and African Nova Scotian communities.

With the support of the Strait Regional School Board and the Nova Scotia Department of Education, the program was delivered in two rural schools - East Antigonish Academy and Chedabucto Place in Guysborough.

- RYEP's achievements are most evident in the impact on youth:
- ✓ engaged youth in critical thinking about issues that are central to their lives
  - ✓ delivered 12 one hour classroom sessions to 1,277 students in grades 7, 8, 9 and 11
  - ✓ actively engaged 75 youth as facilitators and peer educators

*"I've broadened myself as a person, brought a lot of stuff in my life that I didn't have prior. LGBT, respecting everybody's individuality, and learning to communicate with my partner, and it was just really nice stuff."* - youth facilitator

*"(I am) more self-confident, stand up for myself, resolve conflicts by talking them out, understand stereotypes and feel good about (my) body."* - student

# Healthy Relationships For Youth Program

*Healthy Relationships For Youth* continues the school-based, violence prevention work of the Rural Youth Education Project (2002 - 2006). It is a school based program which highlights youth involvement as peer educators in the classroom and within their schools and communities. It is currently offered in 5 schools in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties. The curriculum maintains the diversity focus while drawing upon resources provided by other youth violence prevention models which represent best practices in this field.

In order to accommodate working with an increased number of schools, the program focuses on delivering a series of twelve sessions within the Health curriculum of grade 9 classes. Teachers co-facilitate the program with community partners and the assistance of a member of the Youth Team. The Youth Teams in each participating school are recruited from Grades 10 - 12 and trained in leadership and facilitation. By the year two, the program will be offered in ten schools in the Strait Regional School Board.

Accomplishments for 2006-2007:

- ✓ Male/female Adult Facilitator teams established in 5 participating schools in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties: J. H. Gillis High School, East Antigonish Academy, Canso Academy, Guysborough Academy, and St. Mary's Academy.
- ✓ Male/female Youth Teams engaged at all five schools with a total of 18 youth participating.
- ✓ Two day training sessions completed with both Adult Facilitators and the Youth Facilitators.
- ✓ Nova Scotia Department of Education providing support for school staff training, Youth Team training, development of program information resources and development of a credit for Youth Facilitators.
- ✓ Sessions underway in 5 schools in 8 grade 9 classes.

## Program Goal

The goal of the *Healthy Relationships for Youth* Program is to reduce the risk of violence for youth through developing skills and knowledge related to creating and maintaining healthy relationships.

## Belief Statement

*Healthy Relationships For Youth* believes that communication which reflects sexism, racism and homophobia creates harmful stereotyping and discrimination and that these oppressions are forms of violence. Through enhancing awareness of the social context of their lives and by promoting skill development to promote healthy interpersonal communication, youth can make positive decisions about their own behaviour.

*What stood out for me in the training sessions was learning new activities, new approaches, and developing a new understanding of controversial ideas. – Adult Facilitator*

*The curriculum was well laid out. The LGBT awareness session was very helpful. – Adult Facilitator*

# Working for Change - Raising Awareness

The AWRRC organizes community events and participates in provincial and national events that raise awareness about issues that affect women. This past year we spoke out about women's poverty, housing, violence, access to education, human rights and cuts to federal programs that disproportionately impact women.

♀ We co-presented *Current Issues in Social Policy and Why They Matter to Women: Poverty, Workfare, Child Care* at the Atlantic Waves Conference.

♀ We organized a *Speak Out, Lunch In* poverty awareness event for the October 17 International Day for the Elimination of Poverty where we focussed on student debt, the working poor, social assistance and global poverty.

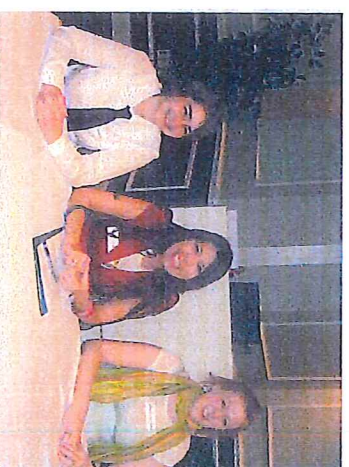
♀ We held a *December 6 Day of Remembrance and Call to Action on Violence Against Women*.

♀ For December 10 International Human Rights Day and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's ratification of CEDAW, we participated with Nova Scotia women in *A Call to Equality in Governance* event. In Ottawa, we participated with the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) which brought together 35 women's and human rights organizations from across Canada to meet with key MPs to discuss Canada's obligations under CEDAW.

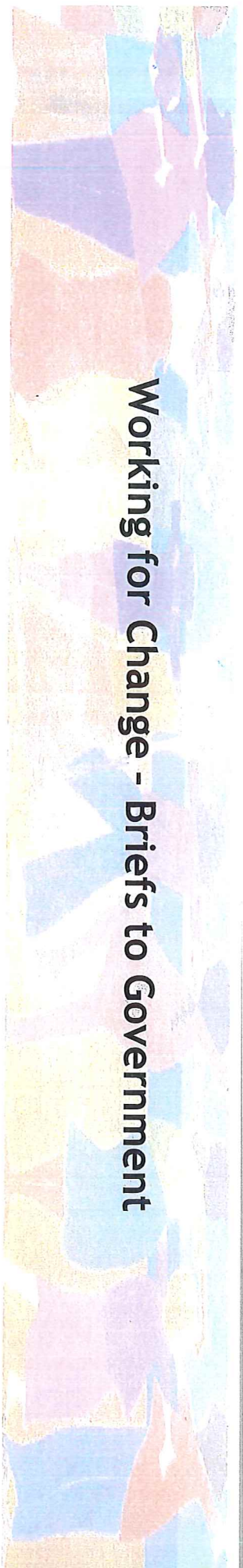
♀ We brought concerns with affordable housing in the Antigonish area to a roundtable discussion with the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia.

♀ For International Women's Day, the AWRRC, in partnership with the Women's Studies Department, St. FXU, organized a women's conference, *Feminist Activism in Conservative Times*. The conference drew more than 50 women from a broad cross-section of the community and inspired engaged and thoughtful reflection and discussion about women's lives and women's activism. Participants appreciated the leadership and the presentations of the younger women as well as the thoughts on feminism provided by Angela Miles, the key note speaker.

*"What stood out for me was the wonderful group of women in the room, the opportunity to hear from younger feminists, and the sense that this work is so important to so many women."* – *Feminist Activism participant*



Feminist Activism panelists Kyrie Mann, Michele Buckman and Marchell Coulombe



## Working for Change - Briefs to Government

The AWRC recognizes that the barriers many women face reinforce and are reinforced by inequality and oppression, are systemic, and require policy change as part of broader social change. Over this past year we presented briefs with recommendations for policy change to the federal and provincial governments.

- To the **Advisory Committee to the Minister on the Children and Family Services Act and Adoption Information Act**, we provided comments on the implementation of the Act and recommendations for improving the delivery of Child Protection services.
- To the **House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**, we spoke to the importance of ensuring strong social programs are recognized as essential for the social and economic development and the well-being of Canada and all of our people.
- To the **House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women**, we provided an overview of the ways in which changes to the terms and conditions of the Women's Program and to Status of Women Canada negatively impacted women living in rural communities.
- To the **Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry**, we focused on the impact and in particular the dynamics of poverty experienced by women living in rural Nova Scotia.
- To the **Nova Scotia Standing Committee on Community Services, Continuation of the Forum on Poverty**, speaking on behalf of women's centres in Nova Scotia, we stressed the importance of taking immediate steps to reduce poverty in Nova Scotia and to work with organizations across the province that are working on poverty issues to develop a poverty reduction strategy.

With out-migration, we are seeing the loss of our youth and those who are more highly skilled, educated, and able-bodied. In some cases we are seeing the loss of whole families, in other cases we are seeing the loss of primary income earners. Family structures are changing as men take jobs in the west and leave their partners to care for the home, children and extended family. This leaves the women often solely responsible for trying to hold down employment, parent their children, care for ailing parents and neighbours, and maintain the organizations that hold communities together (school groups, church groups, fire department auxiliaries, and so on).

— *Brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry*

# Working for Change - Social Development Projects

## Face to Face: Building inter-sectoral collaboration to improve policy responses to single mothers' education and training needs

The Face to Face Project began in early September 2005 and will conclude in January of 2008. Our goal is to influence federal and provincial government to provide adequate supports to help single mothers on social assistance achieve their education and training goals and move into sustaining, satisfying careers.

In order to provide policy makers with information about policy changes needed to fully support economically disadvantaged women as they struggle to improve their education and become self-reliant, Face to

Face:

- ☐ Interviewed single mothers who have relied on social assistance while pursuing a career plan that involves training and/or education and identified the factors that help and hinder their progress.
- ☐ Interviewed human service personnel and identified the challenges they see with current policies and programs.
- ☐ Conducted an extensive literature review.
- ☐ Produced a discussion paper that synthesized the results of the research, presented a feminist analysis of the material and made recommendations for improved policies and program delivery.
- ☐ Met with and presented to government and community organizations.
- ☐ Organized a policy strategy forum that brought together government, community-based organizations, and first voice women to create strategies for advancing the five priority recommendations for improved responses to women's education and training needs.



*Face to Face  
Project  
Coordinator  
Katherine Reed*

- In order to help women advance their education, training and employment goals, Face to Face:
- ☐ Produced and disseminated widely an Employment Options Kit that compares 39 common occupations in Nova Scotia in terms of the investments required to earn the necessary credentials and the eventual returns on those investments.

### Project Rationale

In 1998 changes in social assistance policy restricted social assistance recipients' access to education. In August 2001, Nova Scotia implemented a new social assistance system that focussed on moving social assistance recipients into employment and out of the welfare system. Ending welfare reliance took precedence over supporting women's efforts to move into well-paid, secure employment. The new program narrowed recipients' education and training options limiting them to taking approved programs of two years in duration or less. The policy excluded post-secondary students from eligibility for welfare.

### Belief Statement

Single mothers on social assistance must be able to choose from a range of education and training options and be fully supported in pursuing the programs they choose in order to secure careers that pay well enough to support their families.

# Social Assistance Reform: Moving Forward a Woman-Positive Public Policy Agenda

The *Social Assistance Reform: Moving Forward a Woman Positive Public Policy Agenda* project ran from May 2005 to February 2007.

Through the project we:

- ☐ Traveled to eleven communities across Nova Scotia, sought out and listened to 91 women who had experience with receiving income assistance and documented their priorities for ESIA policy changes in our *Struggling to Survive* report.
- ☐ Organized a Working Session that brought together 41 women – women living in poverty, women’s equality-seeking groups, anti-poverty activists, and academic researchers to discuss and hone the recommendations from the *Struggling to Survive Report* and to present them to senior staff from the Department of Community Services.
- ☐ Documented the presentations and the revised recommendations the *Survival Strategies Report* and presented it to the Minister of Community Services.
- ☐ Initiated a month long letter campaign in which one letter per day supporting the implementation of the key Moving Forward recommendations was sent from 30 social justice, health and anti-poverty organizations to the Minister of Community Services. Mayors and Wardens from 23 municipalities called for the implementation of the recommendations.
- ☐ Held community forums where women discussed together the benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income and a women’s agenda for a provincial poverty reduction strategy.

## Project Rationale

In 2001, the Department of Community Services (DCS) implemented a standardized single tiered social assistance system, Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA), which had a more stringent welfare to work mandate. In response to this new policy the A WRC along with sister centres in New Glasgow and Cape Breton, undertook two projects that assessed the impacts of the new ESIA program on women and made recommendations to DCS for improving policy.

## Belief Statement

It is women with first hand knowledge about poverty and barriers to economic independence who are best able to provide recommendations for and to evaluate the impact of policies and programs that directly affect their lives.

## Project Objectives

- To ensure women with first hand knowledge are included in social assistance policy development.
- To work with women’s social justice and anti-poverty organizations to advocate for the implementation of the project’s recommendations for improving social assistance policy.
- To explore feminist models for addressing poverty, and to advance that knowledge and analysis through women’s social justice organizations and anti-poverty groups.

## Working Together for Change at the Community, Provincial and National Levels

The AWRRC is involved at the community, provincial and national levels with committees, organizations and initiatives that address issues affecting women. We have been instrumental in the creation or involved since the inception of several of these committees. Together we share information, develop programs, and collaborate on social change and community development initiatives.

At the Community Level we are involved with:

- **Antigonish and Area Inter-Agency Committee on Relationship Violence**
- **Antigonish 2020 Foresight Committee** in creating a vision for Antigonish and working to actualize it.
- **People Assessing Their Health (PATH) Network** to provide opportunities for people and communities to critically analyze issues in order to effect the changes necessary to build healthy communities.
- **Pa'qnukek First Nation Inter-Agency Committee** to better meet the needs of their community.

At the Provincial Level we are involved with:

- **Women's Centres Connect**, the provincial association of women's centres.
- **Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy** to promote the social and economic well-being of women and their communities.
- **Halifax Antigonish Making a Difference Committee** to improve the criminal justice response to survivors of sexual assault.
- **Sexual Assault Services Provincial Needs Assessment Steering Committee**
- **Canada Social Transfer Nova Scotia Action Group** to call for a strengthened Canada Social Transfer.

At the National Level we are involved with:

- **Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women**
- **Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action**



## Funding Support

The work we do at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre would not be possible without the support of our community and without the support of the foundations and departments of government that provide us with funding.

**We would like to thank all for their support.**

**Direct Services are funded by:**

- Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
- Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA)
- Community donations

**Justice Matters for Women is funded by:**

- Law Foundation of Nova Scotia

**Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Program is funded by:**

- National Crime Prevention Strategy, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

**Healthy Relationships for Youth Program is funded by:**

- Canadian Women's Foundation

**Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program is funded by:**

- Nova Scotia Department of Health

**Face to Face Project is funded by:**

- Public Health Agency of Canada

**Social Assistance Reform: Moving Forward is funded by:**

- Women's Program, Status of Women Canada

### Community Support

It is with the generous, ongoing support provided by the community that we are able to do all that we do.

♥♥ Thank you ♥♥

to

125 individual donors  
Sisters of St. Martha  
Sisters of Charity  
Lions Club  
Fraser House, St.FXU  
St.FXU student athletes  
Canadian Auto Workers union  
Shoppers Drug Mart  
MacLeod Group  
Pleasant Valley Nurseries  
Royal Bank of Canada, Antigonish Branch

# Finance Report



*Christine Hanlon,*  
*Financial*  
*Administrator*

The year ending March 31, 2007 was a busy year for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. Our annual budget for direct services was just over \$250,000 with most of it coming from the Province of Nova Scotia. As shown in Figure 1, about 60% of our direct services funding comes from the Department of Community Services while 20% comes through GASHA. In addition, the generous financial support from our local community contributes significantly to the services and programs we provide. This past year the Women's Center was able to keep direct services expenditures within budget and closed out the year with a small surplus.

Along with the direct services offered through our core funding, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre manages a number of projects. Over the past year the combined total funding for these projects was approximately \$400,000. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of funding by project. Our Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Project, a five year project funded by Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, as well as Moving Forward, a twenty month project funded by Status of Woman Canada, finished this past year. Face to Face, funded by Health Canada, finished its second of three years. This year we began offering Justice Matters for Women, an outreach program funded by the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia and our Healthy Relationships for Youth program funded for three years by the Canadian Women's Foundation. As well we established the SANE program with funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Health.

A detailed accounting of the funding and expenditures for the Center and its projects can be found in the annual audited financial report.

*Christine Hanlon*

Figure 1

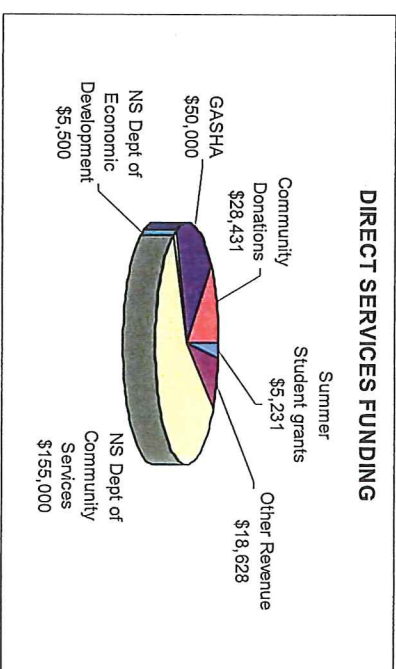
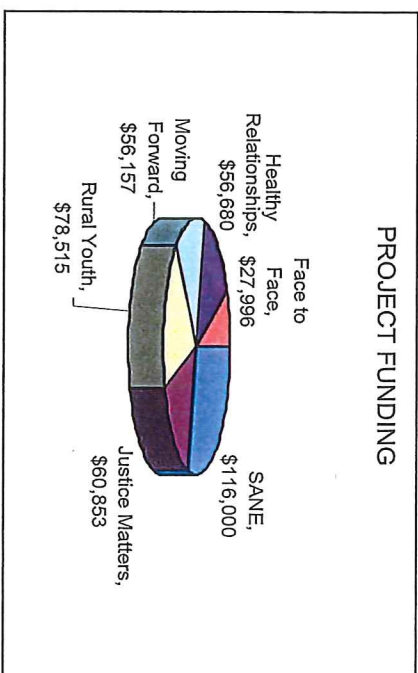


Figure 2



# The Women Behind the Work 2006-2007

## Executive Director

Lucille Harper

## Financial Administrator

Christine Hanlon

## Direct Services

### ♀ Women's Services Coordinator:

Vangie Babin

### ♀ Women's Support Workers:

Amanda Workman

Isabel Gillis

### ♀ Support Staff:

Jennifer Steylen

Sharon Beavan

### ♀ Summer Students:

Theresa Turay

Leona Batten

## Survivors of Sexual Trauma Support Group

### ♀ Facilitators:

Barbara Hayes

Jean Crosby

## Justice Matters for Women

### ♀ Rural Outreach Coordinator:

Meghan Mulcahy

## Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Program

### ♀ Program Coordinator:

Jean Crosby

### ♀ Administrative Assistant:

Jackie Jacques

### ♀ ♂ Adult Facilitators:

Krista DeCoste

James Maynard

### ♀ Diversity Consultant:

Sylvia Parris

### ♀ Program Evaluator:

Peggy Mahon

## Healthy Relationships for Youth Program

### ♀ Program Coordinator:

Jean Crosby

### ♀ Assistant Trainer:

Krista DeCoste

## Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program

### ♀ Program Coordinator:

Marla Barton

### ♀ SANES:

Debbie Cotton

Filomena Enxuga

Angela Fougere

Marlene Graham

Shauna Grant-Smith

Janine Hagan

Sherry Jackson

Jocelyn Landry

Lynn MacDonald

Michelle MacDonald

Patricia MacKenzie

Suzanne Munro

Cindy O'Halloran

Michelle Thompson

Sue Yewchuk

Maureen Allen

Margot Sadler



*SANES in training*

### ♀ Physician Forensic Examiners:

Margot Sadler

## Lindsay's Health Centre for Women

### ♀ Physician:

Daphne Maclean

### ♀ Nurse Practitioner:

Connie Venedam-Marchand

### ♀ Staff from Public Health, Mental Health & Addictions Services

## Face to Face Project

### Project Coordinator:

Katherine Reed

## Social Assistance Reform: Moving Forward Project

### Project Coordinator:

Rene Ross

# Visionary Women

## Our Board of Directors 2006-2007

Donalda Davidson, Co-Chair  
Nancy Forestell, Co-Chair  
Elsa Arbutnot  
Nelda Armour  
Laurie Baird  
Betsy MacDonald  
Donna MacDonald  
Peggy Mahon  
Clare Mulcahy  
Maureen Shebib  
Verlie Wile

## Antigonish Women of Note

**Liz Chisholm**  
A long-time supporter of  
women and promoter of  
women running for office,  
Liz was elected to the Chair  
of the Nova Scotia Advisory  
Council on the Status of  
Women.

## Volunteers with the Women's Centre

It is only through the work of our volunteers  
that we are able to accomplish all that we do.

This year a dedicated group of women and  
men as well as a group of enthusiastic and  
committed students helped with:

- ✓ office support
- ✓ the preparation of income tax returns
- ✓ fundraising
- ✓ library maintenance
- ✓ facilitating programs
- ✓ organizing events

## Grace MacKinnon... Passing the Torch

It is with sadness that we note Grace  
MacKinnon, the first President of the  
Antigonish Women's Association, passed  
away October 2006. At 81 years of age,  
Grace passed the torch to those she leaves  
behind to continue working to create a more  
just and equitable world.

*"[Grace] knew when something was  
right, that it should be done and never  
mind the 'nay sayers'." – Judy Whitty*

## Contact Us

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Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
B2G 2C1

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[www.antigonishwomenscentre.com](http://www.antigonishwomenscentre.com)

*Art by Maureen St.-Clair.*

