



*"Building the smallest democracies at the heart of society."
The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994*

Agreement# 40063171

Saskatchewan's Housing Crisis: Addressing the Needs of Women and Children Who Have Experienced Violence



by Diane Delaney and Stacey Kesten, PATHS: Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan

A report entitled *I Built My House of Hope: Best practices to safely house abused and homeless women* was published by **Dr. Leslie Tutty** in Fall 2009. The report examined models of emergency and second stage shelters that best address women's housing needs; and what models and strategies might better assist women at high risk of becoming homeless, to access safe, affordable and permanent housing. Our study was built on Tutty's work and examines the experiences of 35 women from Saskatchewan. Our view is that it is not until one hears and reads about women's experiences that one can come to understand what homelessness really means.

Interviewees described the challenges that come with homelessness. Some participants explained how they often had to sleep rough, at times with their children. They reported staying in abandoned houses, sleeping in hallways, and setting up house in tents. These women also described a pattern of bouncing around from place to place. As one participant explained:

"Because, of course, I have to move around all the time, and then next there's the social workers and the family workers [who say], 'Why are you moving so much?' [I reply] 'Well, find me a decent house! Pay for a house that's something that you would live in, and then I'll stop moving!'"

Research participants identified a lack of affordable housing in Saskatchewan as one of the most powerful

barriers keeping women from exiting dangerous, abusive, and violent situations. Participants explained that they simply had nowhere else to go.

We heard that landlords play a key role in the lives of the interviewed women. Some were generous in providing housing at below-market rates in order to lend a helping hand, while others were exploitative. Women perceived that they had no control over their ability to stay in the accommodation, over the physical condition of the home, or over the size of rent increases. There was a clear power imbalance between landlord and tenant.

The role of family members, positive and negative, and the effect of their children's exposure to violence and abuse were the two topics most talked about by research participants. Most women realized the impact that their own life experiences had on their children, and they identified that a stable home is a priority.

Participants also spoke of their desire to live in a safe

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Ending Physical Punishment of Children as a Family Violence Prevention Strategy



by Joan E. Durrant

This article is a follow-up to **Learning at the Parent's Knee**, published in the RESOLVE December 2010 newsletter.

The most thoroughly documented correlate of physical punishment in childhood is increased aggression in the child. More than 30 studies have been conducted on this relationship, and each one has led to the same conclusion—regardless of where the study was conducted, the ages of the children, the socioeconomic status of the parents, or a range of other variables. An ever-growing number of studies have shown that this relationship is not just correlational, but causal: physical punishment directly increases the risk of aggression and violence in children and youth. This aggression can take the form of physical fighting, bullying, antisocial behaviour or dating violence. And this relationship continues into adulthood. Adults who were physically punished as children are more likely to physically aggress against their partners and their own children.



Therefore, ending physical punishment must be a component of an effective violence prevention initiative. But this strategy has unique challenges, not the least of which is the social acceptability of physical punishment of children. It is the only form of interpersonal aggression that remains both legal and approved by a substantial proportion of the population. A strategy to end physical punishment requires an intensive level of public education about its risks and a societal shift in parents' conceptions of the meaning of discipline.

One region where efforts to end physical punishment are rapidly gaining strength is Southeast Asia. I have been fortunate to have travelled to Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan and Thailand to contribute to their efforts to shift cultural norms so that parents no longer strike their children. A major challenge faced in these countries, as in Canada, is to help parents find answers to the question, "What do I do instead?"

Governments and NGOs are looking for easy-to-use tools for conveying the meaning of constructive discipline.

I have partnered with **Save the Children**, an international NGO committed to ending violence in children's lives, to develop an approach to discipline that crosses cultural boundaries and is inexpensive to implement. Called **Positive Discipline**¹, this approach is based on research findings on healthy child development and effective parenting, and on the principle of children's right to protection. The approach focuses parents' thinking on the essence of childrearing: what kind of people do we want our children to be as adults? Interestingly, wherever I go, parents answer this question in the same way—they want their children to grow into kind, empathic, nonviolent, respectful, adults with healthy relationships. Parents simply need to connect their own behaviour to those long-term goals. The Positive Discipline manual guides them through this process.

The approach seems to be resonating across cultures. To date, the manual has been translated into 17 languages. The approach is being implemented by the Ministries of Education in Thailand and Mongolia in an effort to end caning and other physical and humiliating punishments in schools. The goal of these efforts is to help adults around the world find new ways of resolving conflict that do not involve hitting or hurting a child. By teaching children nonviolently, we will provide them with some of the fundamental tools they will need to manage conflict without violence throughout their lives. ❧

¹ **Positive Discipline: What It Is and How To Do It** is available for free download at www.cheo.on.ca/uploads/AboutUs/Files/js_positive_discipline.pdf. Hard copies are available from the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs www.frp.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=475.

Manitoba Update



by Jane Ursel

This is a wonderful opportunity to send a quick note on my experience with international collaborative research from my vantage point in Australia. RESOLVE is involved in a number of international projects—including the Justice Observatory—with colleagues in the US, the UK and Australia; the small replication of the Healing Journey in New South Wales (NSW); and the twinning of the Winnipeg Family Violence Court with the Domestic Violence Court in Canberra. These projects have led to some very fruitful exchanges among magistrates, judges, prosecutors and victim service workers between our two courts.

In November, I was invited to Canberra by the Chief Magistrate, who is responsible for the Domestic Violence court, to speak about the Winnipeg Family Violence Court experience. It was so interesting to talk to practitioners about their work in Australia and there are some remarkable similarities. For example, we all struggle with victim ambivalence about the criminal justice process. There are also some surprising differences, such as convicted offenders almost never get a sentence of incarceration in Canberra, while it is not unusual for a repeat offender to receive a jail sentence in a Manitoba court.

On the same trip I was also invited to speak at the Australia National University about longitudinal studies in the Canadian context, where I spoke about the Healing Journey study. My Australian colleagues were very interested in expansion of a small study done in NSW to a larger project. I look forward to further discussions with them on this possibility. On my second day in Canberra, I was invited to speak to the Australian Reconciliation Commission about RESOLVE'S work with the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This was a moving and powerful exchange of information. Our Australian colleagues plan to organize an International Reconciliation Conference in 2012, which will provide a global opportunity to learn from one another.

I have been privileged to meet so many colleagues and see the value of international research first-hand and have also been gratified by the keen interest and high esteem Australians have for the work we do in Canada. ❧



RESOLVE SASKATCHEWAN PRESENTS

Rebecca Kotz

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre, Australian Federal Police

PUBLIC LECTURE
Tuesday, March 1, 2011

3 P.M.

Luther Auditorium

Regina, Saskatchewan

The talk will include:

- The extent of the missing persons problem in Australia
- Australia's response to the issue of missing persons, including supports for families

RESOLVE Saskatchewan thanks Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons, and Luther College for their support and assistance.

Saskatchewan Update: Working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission



by Robyn Morin

RESOLVE Saskatchewan was invited to become partner statement-gatherers with the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** (TRC) in mid 2010. We trained 12 statement gatherers; most attended the national event in Winnipeg in June, 2010. All statement gatherers are Aboriginal and all care deeply about the healing process of relatives who attended residential schools. We also are thankful for this opportunity to allow Elders and relatives to speak their truth.

In Saskatchewan, we have developed a strong network that consists of our interviewers, the **Health Canada Regional Health Support Workers**, and **Kim Quinney**. In early December, RESOLVE Saskatchewan Project Coordinator, **Robyn Morin**, was invited to meet with **Peter McCallum** from Health Canada and other Regional Health Support Workers in Saskatoon. We began the conference with team-building exercises, where laughter and movement were intertwined in order to promote personal and professional development. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen the relationship between RESOLVE and the Health Support Workers, which inadvertently benefits the survivors that we interact with. The conference was beneficial as new relationships were formed between RESOLVE and the Health Support Workers, which indirectly benefits survivors.

RESOLVE had an opportunity to meet with the Regional Health Support Workers and the new Saskatchewan TRC Representative, Kim Quinney, at a “meet and

greet”, where representatives from all agencies were able to come together. At this meeting future plans were developed for the TRC’s work in Saskatchewan. Before she became the Saskatchewan TRC Representative, the Health Support Workers and RESOLVE worked alongside Kim at various outreach events.



Robyn Morin

RESOLVE Saskatchewan has been working alongside the Regional Health Support Workers in an effort to support residential school survivors as they come forward to share their stories. The Regional Health Support Workers are on the frontline, and assist survivors as they share their experiences in court. Most of these Health Support Workers are former residential school survivors themselves, and many are willing to share their own experiences with RESOLVE Statement Gatherers to help them better understand the intergenerational effects of the residential school era. This work requires strong, trusting relationships

among RESOLVE statement-gatherers, Health Support Workers, the TRC, and communities. We continue to work together, offering presentations in Aboriginal communities as a way to build this trust. RESOLVE, Health Support Workers and the TRC believe it is essential to build strong trusting relationships with each other, and within communities, in order for survivors to come forward and share their experiences. RESOLVE, Health Support Workers and the TRC will continue to work together and offer presentations in Aboriginal communities as a way to build trusting relationships and educate survivors on the mandate of the TRC. ☸

Alberta Update



by Leslie M. Tutty

Recently we completed the report *No Longer Silent: Persons with Disabilities who have been Abused Identify their Service Needs*, authored by **Leslie M. Tutty, Bianca Giurgiu, Kelli Moorey, Sarah Anne LeDrew, and Choni Tenzin**. The report was prepared for the **Action Committee on Disabilities and Abuse** of Calgary's **Alliance to End Violence**. The Action Committee on Disabilities and Abuse is a collaborative network of researchers, domestic and sexual violence service providers, and disability service providers who came together out of a mutual concern for persons with disabilities who experience abuse.

The Research Advisory Team for this project consisted of **Linda White**, former executive director of the Alliance to End Violence; **Karen Walroth**, past executive director of the Alliance to End Violence; and Kelli Moorey, past Persons with Disabilities Coordinator. Project team members included **Eva Chan**, *Alliance to End Violence – Older Persons Initiative*; **Carol Fredrec**, *Multiple Sclerosis Society*; **Maggie Mackillop** and **Liz Frazer**, *HomeFront*; **Chad Goebel**, *Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre*; and **Debb Hurlock**, *United Way/Faculty of Social Work*. The project received funding from the **Prairieaction Foundation** and the **Calgary Foundation**. Without this support the current evaluation could not have been conducted. Many thanks!

This research is the second phase of a project conducted by RESOLVE Alberta. The first report was an environmental scan of services specific to individuals with disabilities who have been abused in some manner; and qualitative interviews with 20 Calgary service representatives from both the disabilities and the family violence sectors. The second phase comprised interviews with ten women with disabilities who experienced abuse at some point. The purpose was to gather their experiences and impressions about the services that they did or did not receive to assist them in coping with the abuse.

Interviewees' discussions about services focused mainly on difficulties accessing such basic needs as finances, housing, food, transportation, employment and food. Given that six of the ten women were living

in emergency shelters for abused women at the time they were interviewed, this should not be surprising. When we spoke to them, all were in transition and were in the process of accessing services to meet these core needs.

A major difficulty identified by the women was the lack of appropriate financial support. Participants identified their mental and physical health conditions as significant barriers to their full or part-time access to income-generating activities. As examples, some respondents' job applications were rejected and several could not access career development programs tailored to their special needs.

Participants disclosed complex histories of violence, abuse and control. The majority of the women had been victims of multiple forms of abuse, in addition to having multiple abusers. Most commented on the stigma and discrimination related to both disabilities and abuse. Therefore, a more holistic approach to the issues of abuse and special needs must be developed and instituted by professional agencies.

Finally, the women disclosed great isolation in their personal and professional lives. They identified few informal supports or professionals who could assist them in the long term. The women revealed that loneliness and a lack of communication generated additional mental health problems, and worsened their health. In conjunction with the input from the Calgary service providers, the important voices of these women were used to construct recommendations to improve services and better address their needs. The report is available from tutty@ucalgary.ca.



Other RESOLVE Alberta News

Bianca Giurgiu, who has been a valued research assistant with RESOLVE Alberta since 2008, successfully defended her MSW thesis, *Violence Against Women in Eastern European Immigrant Populations*. She and her husband recently relocated to Portland, Oregon. Her contributions to a number of projects and her dedication to the issue of the abuse of women are greatly appreciated. ❀

Saskatchewan's Housing Crisis cont'd from Page 1

neighbourhood. Some women reported living in fear of gangs, and described how neighbourhood violence affected their children.

Many women from smaller communities spoke of a sense of connectedness, so leaving their community was often not something they would consider. Although staying in their communities posed risks to their safety, they were willing to take the risk.

Some participants expressed a deep sense of despair in their circumstances, some to the point of contemplation of suicide. In contrast, other women expressed optimism and hope for the future. Most had plans to return to school. All mentioned the desire to be in the workforce, although they placed priority on jobs that would accommodate their parenting responsibilities. One woman expressed her optimism by saying:

"I came here [to a second stage shelter] with nothing. Look what I have [now]. I have beautiful, beautiful stuff which I never had over there. The furniture...people are very generous and I have a beautiful place now. This is a new, fresh, good start, a new beginning, a new life, a good life; the best that I can do."

Conditions described by our interviewees illustrate that Saskatchewan is clearly in a housing crisis. These conditions and circumstances were consistently reported by women throughout the province - urban, rural, on reserve, off reserve. The following recommendations are compiled from their narratives. We need:

- A system of rent controls that work for both the landlord and the tenant;
- Laws that do not allow for the conversion of existing apartment buildings into condominiums, unless the conversion is a tenant initiative;
- Enforced rules, perhaps through a rental

property registry, for the upkeep of rental accommodation, in order to ensure that no resident of Saskatchewan has to live in unacceptable conditions;

- Housing policies at all levels of government that include a financial commitment to affordable housing;

- Comprehensive and innovative approaches to extending and strengthening income security, such as an adequate guaranteed income;

- Supports built into housing programmes for women who have experienced violence;

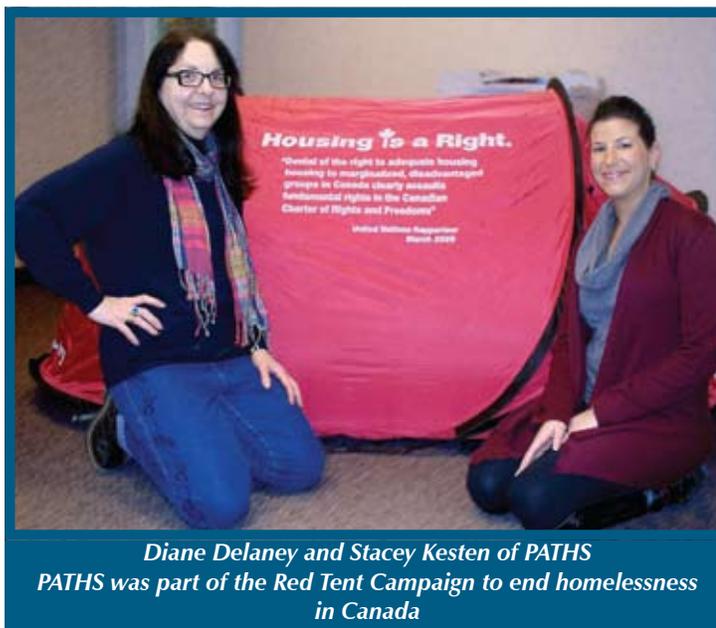
- Advocates to help women find accommodation, along with other supports;

- Welcoming and safe neighbourhoods that can be established through funding community associations, church programmes, and community policing initiatives;

- Increased awareness by government and the general public of the housing challenges women face when they attempt to exit an abusive relationship; and

- Education of tenants as to their rights and responsibilities.

The stories of the women interviewed evoke an empathic response and appeal to our values of fairness and generosity. By acting upon these values we can enable the change in laws, policies, and professional relationships that affect the circumstances of these women. Changing the status quo in terms of housing policy is the ethical choice and will help to ensure that women and children who leave violent situations can have the best chance at freedom from violence. ☘



*Diane Delaney and Stacey Kesten of PATHS
PATHS was part of the Red Tent Campaign to end homelessness
in Canada*

WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES AND EVENTS



February 14, 2011 - *Understanding Violence in Relationships (Domestic Violence Core Module)*, hosted by The Support Network. The event will be held at The Support Network, 400, 10025 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. For more information refer to www.eventbrite.com/event/1210804549 or call **780-482-0198**.

February 24, 2011 - *Dying to Get Out: The Link Between Suicide and Family Violence (Domestic Violence Module 2)*, hosted by The Support Network. The event will be held at The Support Network, 400, 10025 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. For more information refer to www.eventbrite.com/event/1210828621 or call **780-482-0198**.

March 1 - 2, 2011 - *Family Violence and Addictions*, presented by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. This course will provide an overview of addiction problems and family violence, their coexistence and the implications for identification and referral. For more information refer to www.afm.mb.ca/Education/index.php#4.

March 6 - 8, 2011 - *A Dialogue on Family Violence in Culturally Diverse Communities: Practical Approaches to Prevention and Response*, hosted by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. The event will be held at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel & Conference Centre in Toronto, Ontario. This conference will address new and emerging manifestations of family violence across the lifespan in culturally diverse communities, including immigrants, refugees and other established ethno-racial populations as well as First Nations and Inuit peoples. For more information contact **Sandra Wright**, *Manager, Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being* at **613-526-3679** or by e-mail at swright7@sympatico.ca.

March 22 - 25, 2011 - *Canadian Domestic Violence Conference 2: The Next Wave of Conversations from Today's Top Innovators*, co-sponsored by Bridges: A Domestic Violence Counseling, Research and Training Centre, and the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre: Gail Appel Institute. The event will be held at the Delta Chelsea Hotel in Toronto, Ontario. The focus of the Canadian Domestic Violence Conference 2 is on helpful conversations with those who perpetrate abuse, those who are abused, or those who have both abused and are abused in the same relationship. Early registration prices are in effect until February 24, 2011. For more information, refer to www.canadiandomesticviolenceconference.ca, or contact **Shannon Holcomb** at **416-972-1935 extension 3340**, or by e-mail at sholcomb@hincksdellcrest.org.

May 29 to June 1, 2011 - *Second International Conference on Violence Against Women: Complex Realities and New Issues in a Changing World*, hosted by The Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence against Women (CRI-VIFF). The event will be held in Montreal at the Delta Centre-Ville Hotel. For a discounted rate, register before April 16, 2011. For more information, refer to www.conferenceviolence.com/english/home/introduction-word/ or e-mail conferenceviolence@esersoc.umontreal.ca.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CENTENARY 1911 - 2011

Celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day
on March 8, 2011

Check local listings for events

RESOLVEnews is a quarterly newsletter published by RESOLVE Manitoba. Any submissions, announcements and inquiries can be directed to the RESOLVE office in each of the three prairie provinces or to the editor, Ilze Ceplis, RESOLVE Manitoba - phone (204) 474-8965; fax: (204) 474-7686; e-mail: newsedit@cc.umanitoba.ca



We're finding solutions to protect women and children from violence and abuse!

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Web site: www.prairieactionfoundation.ca

2011 CARE Grants



Prairieaction Foundation brings academics together with such front-line agencies as women's shelters and child abuse services, to create research projects that produce results in our communities.

The **Community Action, Research and Education (CARE) Grant program** furthers Prairieaction's goals by supporting community-based research, whose goal is to protect women and children from violence and abuse.

The research that we fund constantly tries to answer the question "How do we know if we are doing the right thing if we don't know what works?"

The essence of the CARE Grant program is to fund human services agencies and other registered charities for research that will:

- Identify effective strategies, models and methods to prevent and alleviate violence and abuse; and/or
- Demonstrate the impact of a specific program or approach in providing solutions to violence and/or abuse

The research project must be solution-oriented and answer a question that will allow community-based organizations to break the cycle of violence and abuse. Our aim in creating more understanding with our stakeholders is to be able to provide our donors with a stronger case for investing in research.

Further details are available at www.prairieactionfoundation.ca. ☞

RESOLVE Manitoba

~ Dr. Joan Durrant ~
Acting Director (Academic)

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