



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

Agreement# 40063171

Healing Journeys



by Dr. Darlene Juschka, Associate Professor, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Religious Studies, University of Regina



The *Healing Journey* is a tri-provincial Prairie research project mapped through the RESOLVE network. This project, headed by **Dr. Jane Ursel** of the University of Manitoba, involved—through seven waves of questionnaires and 93 in-depth interviews, the collection of details and narratives of the lives of women on their journey away from intimate partner violence (IPV). Data collection was completed in 2010.

Service providers, above all others, are familiar with the difficulties faced, efforts required, and necessity to initiate more than once the journey away from violence, so there is little to say that would be new—at least with regard to specific details and/or narratives of the journeys of our participants. However, in light of the service providers’ close familiarity with IPV, I will draw on stories of some of the participants of the *Healing Journey* to provide you with a long view—a view of the healing journey from initiation, through to a midway point and, finally, the conclusion of her journey away from IPV. I hope that by providing you with a long view, you may gain an overarching perspective of the process that shelter folks encounter daily.

At the outset of any journey one prepares by packing, arranging accommodations, food, pet-sitters, people to water the plants, and pick-up mail – but this is not so for a woman who begins her journey away from violence. Often everything is left behind, including pets, and as she flees grabbing her children, and maybe a purse if it can be done. She cannot prepare, so has few resources when she leaves, often in shock and pain. Whether or not she can return to her home is not known and for the time being she has lost her home; or better said, she has been driven from her home as it is no longer safe for herself and her children.

Initiating such a journey is never easy, and one participant commented that the first time she left she was unsuccessful, as she felt too dislocated in the shelter. They were good people she commented, but it was all too strange and the world unknown, so she returned home. In time, this participant did leave with the help of her adult children.

It took the woman I speak of thirty-seven years to leave her relationship, and there were numerous hurdles to overcome. One hurdle that traps women is the idea

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that *"this is normal."* The above participant commented:

"That was the first time and after that it just became [a] regular routine and it didn't really bother me. I just accepted it because it was just the way I grew up and I figured you know it was no worse than when I grew up."

Violence as normative is not an unusual response and many participants speak as witnesses of violence as very young children—violence often directed against their own mothers:

"This was the first time ever I saw my mom get hit and as the years went by my mom started drinking and her reason was so that she didn't have to feel my dad's fists hitting her."



Violence, particularly intimate partner violence, is often, but not always, an integral part of the earliest experiences of the participants and therefore a normative aspect of their life. They were often not clearly able to name what they had experienced as abuse, even if they knew there was something terribly wrong with the violence directed at them. Reflecting on their own behaviour, working to ameliorate the tension in the abusive relationship, many participants come to the realization that the abuse is neither situational nor their fault, and began their journeys away from violence.

I would situate the midway point of the journey with the clear realization that what she faces is abuse, that it is not normal, and is a threat to their very lives. Participants may have left several times already, or at least have removed themselves from the home for several days. Often at this point, after having named the violence, a significant hurdle to manage is disbelief – not hers this time - but the disbelief of family (both sides) and the circle of friends shared by the couple. Denial by those around sufferers of IPV is a difficult hurdle to overcome as she has claimed her knowledge but her certainty is precarious and when denied or minimized by the abuser and his family, and even her own family, her certainty about what she has

named is shaken. One participant comments:

"I was taught as a child you're quiet, you do what your husband tells you. You don't talk about stuff outside the home. You just put up with that. I've probably had more open discussions with my girlfriend than any of my family."

Or another:

"But, my parents... they kind of said, 'Well you must of done something to have caused this to happen. What did you do?'"

The first part of the journey entails recognition of abuse; the next part of the journey consists, in-part, of the need to establish witnesses – either actual but more often metaphorical – to the abuse. Such witnesses can be friends, family, police, shelter workers, co-workers, etc. But there is a need for others to believe her story and to support her efforts to challenge the abuse and to leave the situation if need be. Naming, and having others confirm the naming, can be instrumental in bringing an end to the abuse:

"It will never get better. Always hoping it would get better. I'll never touch you again; I'll never do that again. Never, never, never will do this, we're going to go on trips, pay off our bills and we're going to, going to, going to...and the drinking would start again and the abuse would start again, it would just get more violent, and more violent, and more violent. And I said to him [RCMP officer] right there, 'No I'm not going to go back.' And he said, 'The best thing you can do for yourself is to write down why you're not going to go back.'"

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Manitoba Update



by Cheryl Fraehlich and Jane Ursel

Working With Aboriginal Agencies for Solutions to Violence and Abuse

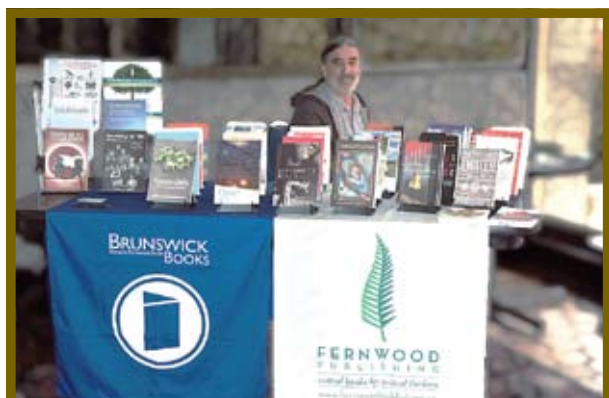
Ikwe-Widdijiitiwin Inc. (Ikwe) in Winnipeg is a residential shelter for women and their children. All women who are victims of abuse are welcomed at Ikwe, regardless of their ethnic origins. However, in keeping with their mandate, Ikwe provides specialized culturally sensitive services and activities for Aboriginal women including sharing and healing circles and other traditional practices. In addition to residential services, Ikwe provides individual and group counselling; advocacy and referrals; a crisis line; follow-up services; and services and educational programming for children. RESOLVE Manitoba has just completed an evaluation of the continuum of programs and services provided by Ikwe. Although results of the evaluation indicate that the agency is perceived very positively and provides valuable and essential services, agency staff are committed to looking for ways to improve Ikwe programs and services. RESOLVE will continue to work with Ikwe as they engage in the process of developing a formal service framework .

Wahbung Abinoonjiag Inc. provides culturally-based services to Aboriginal families in Winnipeg who have experienced violence in their lives. Programs and services are provided to women, children and youth to help break the cycle of violence now, and in future generations. RESOLVE Manitoba is working with Wahbung to develop program logic models to facilitate their future development.

Sagkeeng Mino Pimitziwin Treatment Centre Inc. is a family addictions treatment facility located in Fort Alexander, Manitoba. They offer a culturally oriented, seven week residential treatment program that serves First Nation and Inuit families who struggle with drug and alcohol addictions. Recognizing that family violence can be an issue confronting families struggling with addiction, the program manager of the centre requested family violence training to increase awareness and sensitivity among staff. RESOLVE Manitoba was pleased to participate in the provision of a two day training session for all staff of the Sagkeeng facility in December 2011. Cheryl Fraehlich worked with Ron Thorne-Finch over the course of the two days and provided an overview of current information on family violence including the impact of family violence on victims, families, and communities, and using the cycle of violence model to work with victims and perpetrators in both the short and long term.



RESOLVE Publication Series Back on Track



Fernwood Publishing's Wayne Anthony

Our publication series has been an important tradition for academic and community researchers to communicate their activities to the broader community. This has led to the publication of seven books in less than one dozen years. We began the series with **Fernwood Publishing**, who initiated us into the publishing world and produced and marketed our first five books. Due to changes in Fernwood's priorities and some restructuring we moved to Cormorant Press for a few years, and they published our last two books as an experiment in entry into the academic market. In the ever changing world of publication in Canada, Cormorant decided to keep to their concentration on Canadian fiction writers and RESOLVE was once again looking for a publisher. Our search occurred at a time when Fernwood Publishing had expanded and shifted much of their

administration and production to Winnipeg. In light of the changed circumstances RESOLVE approached them again and they welcomed us back into their fold. So we are returning to our roots with Fernwood and look forward to producing many more books with the assistance of co-publisher **Wayne Antony** (pictured here in attendance at our Research Days in October 2011), and his Winnipeg staff. ☘

Saskatchewan Update: Update from the Regina RESOLVE Team

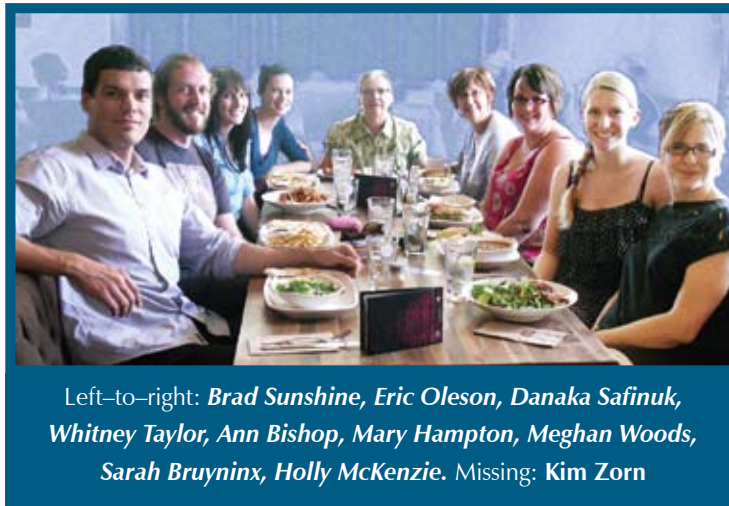


by Danaka R. Safinuk & Kim Zorn

In September 2011, Danaka Safinuk presented on abuse during pregnancy at the *Prevention Matters* conference in Saskatoon. (Danaka is a RESOLVE Saskatchewan Master's student working under the supervision of Dr. Mary Hampton in the University of Regina's Clinical Psychology program.) Her presentation, entitled *Precursors and Consequences of Abuse During Pregnancy*, consisted of educational information on abuse during pregnancy; consequences; predictors; and the importance of screening. Over 100 audience members were in attendance. Interspersed among the educational information were quotes from participants from the **Healing Journey Project** (SSHRC/CURA, PAF, RESOLVE), and various data and statistics that drove the message home. The importance of the topic of abuse during pregnancy was evident through statistics that showed the prevalence of rates of women who experience such violence. Further, the importance of screening for abuse during pregnancy was also stressed to the audience, as pregnant women have multiple visits to health professionals, which allows for repeated opportunities for screening. Repeated exposure to health professionals helps create a trusting relationship and good rapport in which women are more likely to disclose abuse. Overall, the presentation had great impact and was well-received by the audience.

In January 2012, Danaka was later invited to speak for a community group run by the Domestic Violence Unit through Family Services Regina. This presentation was an excellent opportunity to give back to the community. Further, the two junior students who had helped with the construction of the presentation helped deliver this community presentation. This type of mentorship and student development at RESOLVE is what helps the program continue to grow. Recruitment and mentoring of young research assistants helps produce competent graduate students who pursue research projects through

RESOLVE. Danaka Safinuk was also invited by Health Canada to deliver the talk via teleconference for a group of nurses who work in Aboriginal communities. The teleconference took place on January 27, 2012. This series of presentations provides a great opportunity to connect with the community, and to represent RESOLVE within Saskatchewan.



Left-to-right: Brad Sunshine, Eric Oleson, Danaka Safinuk, Whitney Taylor, Ann Bishop, Mary Hampton, Meghan Woods, Sarah Bruyninx, Holly McKenzie. Missing: Kim Zorn

Kim Zorn is a new clinical psychology MA student who also works under the supervision of Dr. Mary Hampton. Since 2008, Kim has been involved in various projects with RESOLVE Saskatchewan. She has worked as a research assistant for The Healing Journey, she was the volunteer coordinator for

RESOLVE Research Days in Saskatchewan in 2009, and participated in a full-time research internship in Winter 2010. Kim's primary areas of interest in research are women's health, cross-cultural psychology and community psychology. To date, her main research focus has been the psychological health of women who have experienced severe forms of trauma and abuse. Her honours thesis, supervised by Dr. Hampton, was an exploratory analysis of eating patterns reported by women who have experienced intimate partner violence. This study contributed to the literature on the longitudinal effects of physical abuse on women's health and well-being. Kim hopes to continue working with intimate partner violence and women's health throughout the course of her academic and clinical career. Kim hopes to investigate posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in women who have experienced intimate partner abuse in her Master's thesis. She plans to use the Composite Abuse Scale to discern whether severe combined forms of abuse are more likely to elicit PTSD symptoms. Kim has also been named project coordinator for the current study that investigates rural and northern community responses to intimate partner violence. ☘

Alberta Update



by *Lorrie Radtke and Leslie Tutty*

In Alberta, efforts are underway to find a new Academic Research Coordinator. The search committee is chaired by **Anne Katzenberg**, Associate Vice-President Research, University of Calgary, and committee members include **Robbie Babins-Wagner**, Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Counseling Centre; **Lorrie Radtke**, Professor (Department of Psychology), University of Calgary; **Lesley Brown**, Associate Vice-President Research, University of Lethbridge; **Mary Hampton**, Academic Research Coordinator, RESOLVE Saskatchewan; and **Jane Ursel**, Director of RESOLVE. Interviews are expected to take place shortly.

Work on the *Healing Journey* project continues, with a focus on preparation of data for analysis. Our responsibility has been the Parenting data and the open-ended interviews. This process will be completed in the next few weeks. In the meantime, a number of our research team members have begun preliminary analyses, with completion of full research reports once the final data set is available. **Billie Thurston** has taken the lead on an analysis that focuses on sexual and reproductive health; **Kendra Nixon** has taken the lead on an analysis of mothers' strategies for protection of themselves and their children from further violence; **Rachel Ferrer**, an undergraduate student supervised by Lorrie Radtke, has undertaken an analysis of data related to drug and alcohol addictions within the Alberta sample; and **Taija-Rai Robinson**, an honours student, is in exploration of the Alberta participants' experiences with police services.

Although **Leslie Tutty** is no longer the Academic Research Coordinator for Alberta, she remains an active researcher. Recently, together with **Sarah Anne Knight** and **Jacqueline Warrell**, she completed *An Evaluation of the Calgary Partner Check Process for Domestic Violence*. This evaluation was funded through HomeFront from the Alberta Safe Communities Fund and the Provincial Mandated Treatment Steering Committee, Alberta Health Services. The Research Advisory committee consisted of **Christine Berry**, Calgary Counselling Centre; **Cynthia Wild**, YWCA Sheriff King; **Aggy King-Smith**, Manager, Community Treatment Initiatives of Alberta Health Services; and **Kevin McNichol**, Executive Director, HomeFront. The study examined how well the partner check process—used in Calgary for several

years—works. This process entails additional contact with partners of batterers as a way to check on victim safety, and for purposes of program accountability.

Participants were either administrators or frontline staff associated with three Calgary partner check programs: the Calgary Counselling Centre, the YWCA Sherriff King and HomeFront's Partner Support Program. In-depth interviews with the 15 program informants identified a number of similarities and several differences. The similarities across programs included the process for accessing names of and consent from the accused; contacting and getting consent from partners; responses from the partners regarding the partner-check processes; and protocols when new abuse is disclosed. Interviewees with Calgary Counselling and Sherriff King reported initial difficulties with the process of cataloguing when to contact partners and how the partner responded. Currently, Calgary Counselling and Partner Support have developed administrative processes to better schedule the calls and capture the responses and wishes of the partners. Other common difficulties included connecting, or reconnecting, with the partners and dealing with new partners rather than the partner associated with the incident in which the police charges were laid. The majority of the interviewees saw the partner check process as valuable to the victims, agencies, group leaders, the criminal justice system and the community, and as a mechanism to hold the offenders accountable. Partner checks can provide useful information to the treatment agencies, whether with respect to new or continued abusive behaviours or the partner's perception that the offender has changed as a result of the treatment. For further information or copies of the report, contact Leslie Tutty at tutty@ucalgary.ca. ☞



Healing Journeys...cont'd from Page 2

She did write it down, and she never went back.

The endgame, or the willingness to face the unknown and leave, often requires Herculean effort from participants but a point is reached in her healing journey when enough-is-enough. The catalyst for the endgame can be a deadly threat—children, or simply the realization that the abuse is never going to end. One participant reflected:

“The day I left I had a gun in my face. I was bruised. The only place I wasn’t bruised was my hands, my face and my neck...But until I became who I needed to be rather than this secret person, nothing in my life had any meaning or value; there was nothing to be passionate about.”

While another spoke of her children:

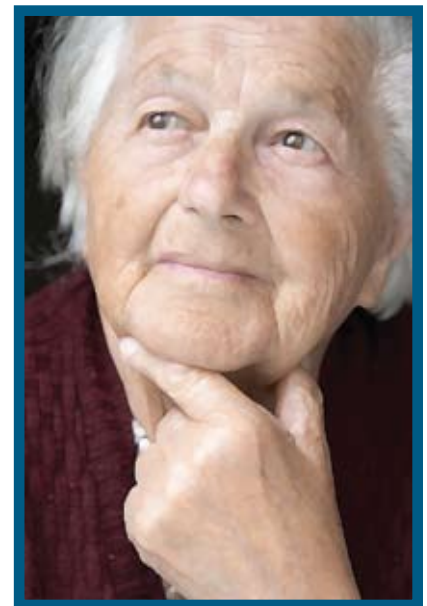
“It’s actually my kids who changed me. You know, if it wasn’t for them urging me to go on I don’t know where I’d be right now. They mean so much and they’re such an important part of my life. Everything I do right now is just to make their lives a little bit better. And I’ve changed from being so scared, and not... not having very much in life to now. I look at life as a precious gift and each new day is what you make it.”

Exiting from intimate partner violence does not mean that the healing journey of these women is over. They have all been shaped by the violence that has been woven into the fabric of their lives. But equally they occupy a social body that accepts violence as a legitimate and viable aspect of social interaction. We can see this social acceptance in instances where people stand by and watch a woman being beaten—as too many of our participants experienced, or when people marked by Aboriginality, race and/or sexuality are assaulted in the streets by those who consider themselves entitled to dominate those they consider “other,” however that otherness is defined. Faced with a social body replete with violence, these women nonetheless reject violence even as they recognize that it has shaped their lives:

“Before I couldn’t talk to anyone about anything. If you asked me about anything I would get mad at you, ‘Don’t ask me!’ It’s

none of your business.’ It’s hurting me—it was hurting me more than anybody else [hurt me], I wasn’t proving anything and I was just getting myself angry. I notice that when I let it out now, it’s kind of released. It’s not just sitting there, it’s out and I don’t have to put up with it in my own mind to try to figure it out. When I let it out there’s more space for it to move around. I’m still learning how to live and be in a non-violent relationship because I’m not used to it.”

Beginnings, middles, and ends, the healing journey is complex and unique to each woman who rejects intimate partner violence. But even as each journey is unique, there are patterns shared among women, since they share a larger social context and, therefore, attitudes toward violence and gender/sex ideologies of that context. Hurdles listed in this article are indicative of these patterns, and indicate that women continue to doubt their own perspectives and observations. They tend to take as normative masculine structures, where males dominate females and insinuate violence, enacted or suggested, is part of that domination and that, for multiple reasons, undercutting of their reality by their abuser, family of origin, the devaluation of those marked as female/feminine and/or racialized female/feminine, and so forth, these women (like too many women?) have little self-value. I suspect these patterns are not especially unexpected but what is surprising is how entrenched the patterns remain, even in the face of efforts on the part of shelters, services, feminists, and governments. These patterns suggest that there may be pieces of this complex issue that we have yet to uncover, and questions we have yet to ask. ☘



CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



February 23, 2012 - *The Impact of Exposure to Domestic Violence on Children*, with Kendra Nixon. This presentation is available through Online Computer Speaker Series Log On And Learn, Community Professional Speaker Series. Refer to reg.conexsys.ca/comm11-12/Default.asp?SessionCode=224632002.

March 1 – 2, 2012 - *Emerging Issues in Anti-Violence: Working to Achieve Safety, Justice and Healing for Women and Children*, hosted by Ending Violence Association of British Columbia, at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond, BC. For more information, refer to www.endingviolence.org/node/1165 or contact the EVA BC office at (604)633-2506, ext. 10.



International
Women's Day

March 8, 2011 - *International Women's Day*, observed since the early 1900s, is a global day that celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. Make a difference—think globally and act locally. Make everyday International Women's Day. Do your part to ensure that the future for girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding. **Check for events in your area.**

April 18, 2012 - *Annual Fundraising Breakfast*, hosted by The Laurel Centre, 7:30 AM, at Hotel Fort Garry in Winnipeg, MB. Guest speaker is Mellissa Fung. Ms. Fung has been a reporter for CBC television since 2003. As a national correspondent she has covered numerous topics on Canadian and World affairs, including the Robert Pickton trial, and the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. In 2007 and 2008, she was sent on assignment to Afghanistan, and she was abducted during her second tour. *Under an Afghan Sky* is her first book. Tickets are \$35 per person, or \$300 for a table of ten (10). For tickets, call (204)783-5460, ext. 0, or mail your cheque to **The Laurel Centre, 104 Roslyn Road, Winnipeg, MB, R3L 0G6**.

May 6 - 9, 2012 - *Joining Together: Taking Action Against Child Abuse*, hosted by the Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse, in Calgary, AB. The conference provides an opportunity to learn about the latest research and best practices in forensic and clinical approaches to child maltreatment. The wide array of keynote and plenary speakers and presenters ensures that a multitude of themes are covered, such as forensic interviewing, domestic violence, drug-endangered children, offender interrogation, Internet child exploitation, cultural sensitivity, abuses of faith, and case studies. Register online at reg.conexsys.ca/2012joining. For more information, call (403)289-8385, e-mail csica@shaw.ca, or refer to www.csicainfo.com, www.facebook.com/takingaction or twitter.com/#!/takingactionca.



Call for Proposals: RESOLVE Book Series

RESOLVE is now accepting proposals for the next book in the RESOLVE book series. Proposed books can represent a topic previously not covered in the existing book series, or can be an update of topics covered in the other book series—particularly some of the earlier book series. Refer to www.umanitoba.ca/resolve. All books proposed must reflect a topic related to family violence and/or violence against women and children. Proposals must include the following information **within a maximum of 5 single spaced pages**:

1. **Book Co-Editors.** Include names, titles, organizational affiliation, contact information and a professional or personal biography for each co-editor. The biography should convey how the individual is connected to the topic of their proposed book. Books require one academic co-editor and one co-editor from the community.
2. **Tentative Title.** It is understood that this title may change.
3. **Brief Description of Topic.** Describe the topic of the book and what issues will be covered under this topic.
4. **Explain Why this is a Topic that is Timely or that Needs to be Explored.**
5. **Tentative List of Chapters and their Authors.** It is understood that all chapters and their authors may not yet be determined, therefore ideas for at least 4 chapters should be presented, with indication that other chapters will be included. Any other information about the remaining chapters will be welcome. Identify if you are open to other people submitting chapters.

Deadline for Proposals: TBD

Proposals must be sent by e-mail in Microsoft Word to **Jocelyn Proulx** at proulxb@ms.umanitoba.ca.

Questions can be directed to Jocelyn Proulx at proulxb@ms.umanitoba.ca or (204)474-7410.

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!

Phone: 1-877-926-8129 / Fax: 1-877-947-9767

E-mail: info@prairieactionfoundation.ca

Web site: www.prairieactionfoundation.ca

Changing Faces at Prairieaction Foundation



In December 2011, PAF held its Annual General Meeting in Regina at Government House. We said good-byes to **John Duhault** as Chair of PAF, and Board members **Kevin Kline** and **Linda Thauberger-Smith**. We also said good-bye to the Executive Director, **Martin Strauss** and **Kirsten Parker** of Strauss Event & Association Management. We wish them good luck in their future endeavours.

Kathy Ogryzlo was elected as Chair of PAF, **Rod McKendrick** as Vice-Chair, **Karen Naylor** as Secretary and **Marlene Bertrand C.M.** as Treasurer.

The remainder of the Board consists of:

- **Mary Rose McGuire**, Alberta;
- **Cynthia Brick**, Manitoba;
- **Lisa Broda**, Saskatchewan;
- **Mavis Clark**, Alberta; and
- **Heather Salloum**, Saskatchewan

Our new mailing address as of January 1, 2012, is:

31250 Woodland Way
Calgary, Alberta T3R 1G5

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

RESOLVE Manitoba

*~ Dr. Jane Urşel ~
Director (Academic)*

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO: 40063171
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

**108 Isbister Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2**

**Ph: (204) 474-8965 Fax: (204) 474-7686
E-mail: resolve@umanitoba.ca**

Website: www.umanitoba.ca/resolve

RESOLVE Saskatchewan

*~ Dr. Mary Hampton ~
Academic Research Coordinator*

**LC 210, Luther College
University of Regina
Regina, SK S4S 0A2**

**Ph: (306) 337-2511 Fax: (306) 585-5267
E-mail: resolve@uregina.ca**

Website: www.uregina.ca/resolve

RESOLVE Alberta

PF 3239

**University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4**

Ph: (403) 220-8181 Fax: (403) 210-8117

E-mail: resolve@ucalgary.ca