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The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994*

Agreement# 40063171

## ***A Novel Approach to Assisting Women Abused by Intimate Partners***



*by Andrea Silverstone and Leslie M. Tutty*

Peer Support Services for Abused Women (PSSAW) opened in 1988 as the Calgary Society for Women Plus. Women Plus was first conceived by a Board member, a glass artist and a crisis counsellor, all connected to shelters for abused women. Each were concerned that women leaving shelters often ultimately returned to abusive partners. When women initially left the shelter, they were usually optimistic about their future, had housing, social assistance, and formal counselling supports in place. So what happened? When asked by shelter staff, many of the women said that they were isolated and lonely. When their abusive partner called and offered support, they went back.

Support groups were proposed as one strategy for women to develop support networks to help them through the difficult times and the social isolation. Through a support group, women could connect with other women who had left abusive partners. No one else could credibly say, "I've been there and successfully left." They hoped, too, that the women would build relationships that would be sustained outside the groups.

Growth Circles, as the peer support groups became known, continue to be a mainstay of PSSAW's programming. Five years ago, the curriculum was redesigned and the Growth Circles were expanded from a 10-week format to their present 15 weeks. The groups continue to provide women who have left or are in the process of leaving an abusive partner an opportunity

to share their experiences and receive support from other women. Trained volunteers facilitate the groups. Some of the facilitators have also experienced abuse from a partner. Topics addressed in the Growth Circles include the dynamics of violence, anger, parenting and family of origin. The groups were originally offered in neighborhoods throughout Calgary, but are now only available at the Peer Support office.



peer  
support  
services for  
Abused women

Self-esteem workshops called Finding Our Voices were started several years ago by a psychologist who volunteered to facilitate the workshops. Due to their popularity, the workshops are now offered monthly by a contracted

facilitator. Finding Our Voices is a one-day introductory workshop for all women interested in enhancing their self-esteem. Participants increase their understanding of self-esteem by learning about negative self-talk, the importance of self-care, and assertive behaviour. Follow-up mini sessions are offered three times per month on specific topics related to self-esteem.

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## RESOLVE Research Day 2007



by Leslie Tutty

The RESOLVE Research Day 2007 conference took place on November 6<sup>th</sup> in Calgary, and according to the feedback we received, the day was a success! Approximately 150 registrants attended the conference.

New this year, RESOLVE partnered with the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee "Knowledge Sharing Forum" who presented on November 5<sup>th</sup>, the day before the research conference. These workshops provided more in-depth opportunities for service providers across the province to share their expertise and to discuss different techniques, challenges, and strategies when dealing with family violence. More important, a number of the programs highlighted on the Monday had parallel research presentations on Tuesday's RESOLVE Research Day. The concurrent practice and research conferences fit well with RESOLVE's commitment to conduct action oriented research that provides practical solutions to our community partners.

The keynote speaker for the RESOLVE conference, Robyn Holder from Australia, inspired the audience with her presentation "Sisyphus in the Criminal Justice System: Reform in the Australian Capital Territory 1998-2007", setting the stage for a productive day. Robyn has been instrumental in a number of system change



*Helen McPhaden (left), Stephanie Martin, and Jane Oxenbury*

liaison within police and prosecution, responses to, and improved responses to victims of sexual assault and of residential burglary. Robyn has been chair of the coordinating committee of the Family Violence Intervention Program since its inception in 1998. The FVIP is an integrated and coordinated criminal justice response to family violence and has won a number of national awards for its innovation. Our other Australian guests, Elizabeth Moore and Paul Mazerolle, each presented their research in subsequent sessions.

The conference included 42 presentations from academics and community representatives across Canada speaking about their latest results on programs, policies, and best practices to address intimate partner violence and child abuse from justice, mental health, health, and counselling perspectives. From the Canadian west coast we welcomed Margaret Jackson from Vancouver; from the east, Carmen Gill, Rina Arseneault and Elizabeth Blaney, all from the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick. The presentation topics were truly comprehensive, ranging from the efficacy of groups for abused women and men who perpetrate abuse, critical issues for abused women and children, diversity issues with respect to Aboriginal girls, issues about sexual assault and different models of specialized domestic violence courts. Thanks to everyone involved!



*Elizabeth Moore (left), Leslie Tutty, Robyn Holder, Paul Mazerolle and, Jane Urse*

## Manitoba Update



by Jane Ursel

**S**ome Local Manitoba History: RESOLVE and the Manitoba Advisory Council were pleased to host a luncheon to celebrate a significant anniversary in domestic violence services in Manitoba. Twenty years ago, when domestic violence services were still in their infancy, a shelter director at time, Marlene Bertrand, approached a government program called "New Careers" to find out how they could provide training for workers in the field of domestic violence. New Careers was an innovative project to provide for paid on the job and in the classroom training in a variety of areas to promote employment for individuals who did not have formal credentials in the field. The New Careers staff person, Louise Gordon, informed Marlene that they would have to develop a contract with the government family violence prevention branch in order to initiate the program. So the Director of the branch at the time, Jane Ursel, got to work with Louise Gordon to develop a program and, as they say, the rest is history.



Jane Ursel (left), Diane Bairstow, Marlene Bertrand, and Louise Gordon

Twenty remarkable women were trained through this program and all went on to work in the field of domestic violence. A stellar graduate of this program is Diane Bairstow (pictured above) who has worked continuously in the field for twenty years, most recently as the Community Coordinator at Osborne House a women's shelter in Winnipeg. Another outstanding graduate is our former Community Associate Director Sharon Perrault, who worked in domestic violence for years, first at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata and later at the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre before joining the National Parole Board in 2003. Last, but certainly not least is Kim Storeshaw who is the Director of the Immigrant Women's Counselling Service and "A Woman's Place" a multi service agency for women who experience domestic violence in Winnipeg. Our

luncheon was an opportunity to celebrate this significant anniversary and the women who made it possible.

**P**roject Updates: A number of research projects and program evaluations have been completed over the spring and summer at RESOLVE and we would like to remind our subscribers that most of these reports are available on our web site.

1. *Children First: A Guide for Service Providers Working with Children Exposed to Domestic Violence* - Jocelyn Proulx and Maggie Nightswander
2. *Manitoba Forum on Trauma Recovery* – Maggie Nightswander and Jocelyn Proulx
3. *Legislated Frameworks and Service Provision Regarding Abuse and/or Neglect of Older Adults in Manitoba* – Kerstin Rogers and Jane Ursel
4. *Evaluation of the TERF Youth and Adult Program* – Jane Ursel, Jocelyn Proulx, Lucy Dean, and Sharon Costello (TERF is a support program for adults and youth exiting the sex trade)

**C**hild Abuse Archive: In 2001 RESOLVE Manitoba created a manual for collecting individual's stories for a child abuse archive at the University of Manitoba. We were inspired to do this after Ellie Danica, author and guest speaker informed us that writing is a powerful tool in healing for child abuse survivors. As a well known author she would get many requests from survivors asking how they could publish their stories so others could learn from their experiences. On Ellie's urging we developed the manual with protocols for a child abuse archive, but became stalled when we were looking for a very special person with the clinical skills and knowledge of services to make the archive a reality. We are very pleased to announce that we have found that person! **Marlene Bertrand** has joined RESOLVE to initiate the archive. We are delighted to have Marlene taking the lead on this critical new initiative for RESOLVE and for the University of Manitoba.



Marlene Bertrand

## Saskatchewan Update



*by Stephanie Martin, Carolyn Brooks, Marg Gauley and Lee Sanders*

The Saskatchewan Healing Journey research team is pleased to have Lee Sanders and Marg Gauley profile themselves and their involvement with the project.



*Lee Sanders*

**Lee Sanders:** I am a member of the Saskatoon team and interviewer co-coordinator with Carolyn Brooks. I am finishing my master's in political sociology and I hope to propose to use the Healing Journey data towards a dissertation on the socio-ideological factors of trans-generational domestic partner violence. This proposal directly relates to my interview experiences with my participants, tri-generational members of an extended family of DPV survivors, and an amazing group of indigenous women. I am also the primary parent to my teen-aged daughter, Ariel, and am an avid patron of the arts. I am creative and enjoy producing and editing Ariel's music videos in my spare time.

**Marg Gauley:** I have been involved as a researcher with the Healing Journey research project since May 2006. I came to the team with experience as a nurse, corrections worker, manager in youth corrections and educator within policing and child youth care programs at Mount Royal College. I gained experience working with women's issues doing volunteer work with the sexual assault centre and teaching assertiveness training to recovering alcoholic women. With my background and experience working with people in crisis has given and shown me the vital need for the Healing Journey project.

I joined the research team after the first wave of data was collected, and I have now participated in the last three waves. My journey began with this project by first attending an orientation and learning about the study. I work with five participants and have come to know these women and look forward to my contact with them. While each of these women has endured much pain and hardship, they have all moved on to better places. On a couple of occasions, two of my participants were experiencing hardships related to their experiences of intimate partner violence. Both participants were extremely receptive to my suggestions for services that they may pursue towards additional help.

The Saskatoon Healing Journey team has met on a few occasions and these meetings have been very useful. As a team, we share and discuss our experiences and provide support and feedback to each other. I am very grateful to be a part of this project and hope that our work can make a difference in the lives of these women who have stepped forward to participate.



*Marg Gauley*

**The Saskatchewan Healing Journey research team would like to thank Marg Gauley, Lee Sanders, and all of the Saskatchewan interviewers for their dedication to the Healing Journey Project!**

## Alberta Update



by Leslie M. Tutty

Last December, in partnership with the Alliance of Centres of Research on Violence Against Women and other constituents, RESOLVE Alberta took the lead in a unique project for the federal government's Housing and Homelessness Branch of the Department of Human Resources and Social Development. The project explored the feasibility of developing a national network of women's shelters that would encompass not only shelter for violence against women but also homeless shelters with specialized program and services for women.

The Research Advisory Team consisted of Helene Berman (Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, London), Mary Clifford, (B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses), Dominique Damant, (Directrice du CRI-VIFF, Université Laval), Leilani Farha, (National Working Group on Women and Housing), Carmen Gill, (Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre, New Brunswick), Mary Hampton, (University of Regina), Pamela Harrison (Transition House Association of Nova Scotia), Margaret Jackson, (FREDA Centre), Eileen Morrow, (Ontario Association of Transition Houses), Jan Reimer (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters), Paulette Senior, (YWCA Canada), Jane Ursel, (RESOLVE Manitoba).

The research consisted of in-depth key-informant interviews with 77 major stakeholders across Canada from these two populations (women affected by homelessness and violence), including provincial/territorial Transition House Association directors and provincial/territorial and federal government representatives responsible

for funding shelters dealing with both VAW and homelessness. The interviews were conducted by Cindy Ogden, Jill Weaver-Dunlop, Tracey Braun and Sylvie Thirault from Laval University in a very short time. The report documents the overlapping issues for both

groups, highlighting populations and circumstances that represent significant challenges. It concludes with the potential strengths and barriers to collaborating more closely through creating a network of shelter services for women.

The final project, "Feasibility Study for a National Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses", authored by Leslie Tutty,

Cindy Ogden, and Gillian Weaver-Dunlop, is available on the RESOLVE Alberta web site, [resolve@ucalgary.ca](mailto:resolve@ucalgary.ca).

The findings have been presented to the Alliance to End Violence Forum on Homelessness (Calgary, Leslie Tutty), the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Government Working Group in Family Violence (Ottawa, Leslie Tutty) and the presentation has been accepted to the Nurses Network on Violence Against Women International Conference (London as a poster, Helene Berman) and at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre Research Day (Fredericton, Carmen Gill) and the RESOLVE Research Day (Calgary, Leslie Tutty).

Finally, we say adieu to Jill Weaver-Dunlop who has been with RESOLVE Alberta for the past two years and has greatly contributed to a number of projects. Jill returns to her first love, clinical practice, at the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter's Men's Crisis Program. All the best to Jill!



**RESOLVE Alberta Staff (left to right) Jill Weaver-Dunlop, Kendra Nixon, Cindy Ogden, Carole Cillis, Jocey Bonneycastle, and Tracey Braun**

## "A Novel Approach to..." ... (cont'd from page 1)

Through the Moving on With Mentors program, trained volunteers provide individual support to women who have left or are attempting to leave an abusive partner. Some of the mentoring is done in-person and staff provide support to the mentors. Many of the peer mentors have experienced abuse from a partner.

Last year, RESOLVE Alberta evaluated the Peer Support Model (Tutty, Ogden & Wyllie, 2006), finding considerable support for the approach in interviews with both women participants and group facilitators. Since that time, PSSAW has implemented a number of changes. The Growth Circles format has been revised to one level over a 12-week period to enhance group cohesiveness and address time and commitment issues raised by group members. Moving on with Mentors added a drop-in group component that allows women to share experiences and do some psychosocial learning without a long term commitment. The Mentor training has been enhanced to address the growing needs of women still in abusive relationships and those with mental health problems. PSSAW found the study valuable in assisting the agency to understand the strengths of the peer support model, the diverse nature of our clients, and to be more responsive to client needs.

## "Breakfast with the Boys" An Inspiring Event!



by *Raymond F. Currie, PAF Board Member, and Chair of the Breakfast with the Boys*

In an inspiring event attended by over 300 men on November 1st at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Prairieaction Foundation achieved a high profile in the city in its efforts to support research, education and awareness to find solutions to violence and abuse. The event was used to launch the month of November as "Domestic Violence Prevention Awareness Month."

Ben Atherton-Zeman from Acton, Massachusetts performed a thoughtful one hour play taking on the characters of Rocky Balboa, James Bond and Austin Powers, and used many powerful video clips to address the role men can play to end violence against women. The audience heard a real-life 911 call from a woman describing the abuse to which she was

being subjected. They saw a video of a small child sitting on a staircase while Daddy berated Mommy downstairs because she did not have dinner ready when he came home, and hit her when she tried to explain why.

The MC for the event was Terry MacLeod, morning host of CBC radio, who also conducted two live broadcasts from the site. Premier Gary Doer, Leader of the Opposition Hugh McFadyen and Jon Gerrard, Leader of the Liberal party were all in attendance as well as members of the NDP and Conservative caucuses. Several city counselors, a large number of professionals, including Chief Justice Ray Wyant, Chief Medical Officer, Joel Kettner, a large contingent from a number of Real Estate companies, religious leaders, members of the Blue Bombers, doctors, dentists, bankers, financial advisors, and others. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, PAF was able to host 50 high school and university students.

PAF is indebted to the Winnipeg Foundation, and Debbie Goodfellow from Goodfellow and Goodfellow Real Estate Company, as well as the Manitoba Real Estate Association, Els Fenton from Siloam Mission, the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Dr. Billy Kettner and PAF Board members for the success of the event.

The event ended with a standing ovation, as the men took a pledge **"I pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about men's violence against women. I choose to respect, listen to and seek equality with every person I date, and every person I know."** (Ben Atherton-Zeman).



*Premier Gary Doer (left), Ben Atherton-Zeman, Voices of Men Speaker; Kevin Klein, Sun publisher & CEO; Gord MacIntosh, Minister of Family Services and Housing*

## Announcements



**D**ianne Bulback is known to everyone who has ever contacted the RESOLVE Manitoba office, because she has been our office manager since RESOLVE began. She joined us in 1997 when the Manitoba Research Centre was beginning to regionalize. She saw us through our early development, our growing pains and helped all of us achieve our mature three Centre, seven University research network. On October 17 Dianne left RESOLVE to take up a new and exciting position in the Sociology Department. While we are very sad to see her leave, we are very happy for her success and her future career.

I'm beginning to think we haven't lost her altogether. She was an enthusiastic participant at the RESOLVE Alberta Research Day and has already served notice she will volunteer for the Research Day in Manitoba next year. Thank you Dianne for a decade of outstanding service and support! We are delighted you have become our number one volunteer.



*Dianne Bulback*



*Amy Dario*

**R**ESOLVE Manitoba is pleased to welcome **Amy Dario** as our Acting Office Manager. Amy jumped into the significant challenge of managing our office October 10 and has been amazing us all with her calm efficiency, her computer savy and her great sense of humour. Working in our office with so many staff, different research projects and so many different personalities and work styles is rather like herding cats. Amy is proving to be quite creative in meeting this challenge. She originally comes from Santa Monica, California and has previous experience working in the U.S., Europe, and Middle East and now in Canada. She has experience working in marketing, photography and commercial art, computers and education.



## Conferences and Events

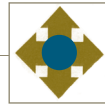
**January 29, 2008** - FASA Workshop Series "Understanding Problematic Sexualized Behaviour in Children Under 12. This workshop is designed for professionals in child welfare, education, childcare and mental health. To register or for more information, please call Marge Ritchie at New Directions (204) 786-7051 ext. 262.

**World Conference for Shelter Workers: Discovering the Common Core: Practical Frameworks for Change** In 2008 Alberta Council of Women's Shelter (ACWS) will host the first World Conference for Women's Shelters from **September 8-11, 2008** at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, Alberta CANADA. This event will present a new opportunity for family violence workers in Alberta and around the world to learn from international experts and each other. If you are interested in being notified as new information is available please contact ACWS at [voice@acws.ca](mailto:voice@acws.ca) and forward your email address.

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## ***RESOLVE Funding Announced by Prairieaction Foundation***



*by Pat McInnis*

Prairieaction Foundation is pleased to announce its annual grant for 2007-08 to RESOLVE in the amount of \$200,000. The annual grant is allocated to the administration and operational costs of the research network. With the guarantee of sustainable funding, the RESOLVE Network has been in a better position to retain its senior researchers and staff who provide consistency and valuable knowledge and skills. The Prairieaction Foundation has also agreed to fund the annual cost of distributing new RESOLVE books to participants in the RESOLVE Research Days.

Dr. Jane Ursel, Director, RESOLVE Manitoba, explains the Foundation's impact on RESOLVE, "From its inception Prairieaction Foundation has been unique and forward looking in their appreciation that the less glamorous but absolutely essential operational costs are the key to building and sustaining a productive and dynamic research network in the Prairies."

Sheila Denysiuk, President of Prairieaction Foundation confirms the relevance of RESOLVE's work, "RESOLVE continues to conduct important community-based research that is being used by agencies and front line service providers across Canada. Research is the key to lessening the impact of violence and abuse in our communities."

Since 1998, Prairieaction Foundation has awarded almost \$1.4 million dollars to the work of RESOLVE. For every dollar donated to RESOLVE by the Foundation, RESOLVE reports that six dollars are generated from other grants. Those are impressive accomplishments for both organizations!



## ***Momentum Campaign***

Thanks to many generous donors, the Foundation continues to raise funds for its Momentum Campaign. To help the Foundation achieve its campaign goals, please contact us at [prairie@ucalgary.ca](mailto:prairie@ucalgary.ca) or visit our web site at [www.prairieactionfoundation.ca](http://www.prairieactionfoundation.ca)

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*~ Jane Ursel ~  
Director (Academic)*

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