

KEY NOTES: A Publication of the North York Women's Centre – Fall 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

- Picnic time at NYWC!
- Multicultural Fair
- National Volunteer Week
- PRIDE
- Family Day Fair
- More than Just Girl Talk
- Community News



NYWC Team 2009: Mulu Haddis, Jessica Bonilla Eduardo, Elise Thorburn and Kathleen Lortie

**NYWC IS NOW ON
FACEBOOK & TWITTER!**



www.facebook.com



www.twitter.com/nywc

**20th ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**

**Tuesday, September 29, 2009
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
201 Caribou Road**

It's hard to believe that the North York Women's Centre will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary this fall. Our volunteers and staff have been working all summer preparing for our anniversary celebration.

Our 20th Annual General Meeting will be held on the evening of Tuesday, September 29, 2009. An anniversary celebration marking twenty years of Opening Doors for Women will follow.

We hope you will be able to join us for an exciting evening. It will be an opportunity to reconnect with "old" NYWC friends and meet new ones.

Details will be posted on the website as they become available. To RSVP, please call 416-781-0479 or email info@nywc.org.

Picnic Time at NYWC!

Upon beginning my volunteer experience with NYWC, I was granted the amazing opportunity of meeting a group of strong, intelligent and inspiring women volunteers. Bonds were formed between this group of women that allowed for a real sense of support and partnership in moving forward into our facilitation experience at NYWC.

On June 20, 2009 North York Women's Centre held its Annual Picnic in honour of Volunteer Appreciation Week. The centre welcomed its many volunteers. In spite of the rain, we had a great turn out in the indoor space provided by the centre. The picnic gave volunteers the opportunity to see one another again, as well as the opportunity to exchange stories and advice on our facilitation experiences thus far. The sisterhood that developed as a result of our common passion for self-growth and helping other women was enhanced further as we had the opportunity of meeting volunteers who have been with NYWC for several years. It was inspiring to hear the excitement that has remained in these women's hearts over several years!

NYWC has provided a space for passionate women to materialize their dreams into the many services NYWC volunteers work incredibly hard to deliver. The Picnic was a wonderful way to honour these amazing women!

Lia Colosimo, NYWC Volunteer

Multicultural Fair

Representing the North York Women Centre at the Multicultural Fair was something important for me and the community. For me it was important because I was able to talk to women about our organization, our goals and the services we offer for all women. Many participants at the fair were newcomers who did not know about NYWC or other organizations. When women learned that our services are free, they were very happy to hear this because they wanted to attend different groups, but they could not afford to pay for them. At the Multicultural Fair I felt that people need us and I am glad that I was able to represent NYWC together with Kathleen. It was a great opportunity to let the community know that we care about them and we can help in case they need us.

Audriana Albernaz, NYWC Volunteer

NORTH YORK WOMEN'S CENTRE'S KEY NOTES

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Planning for NYWC's 20th Anniversary Celebration has led me to reflect, not only on the organization itself, but on what it has meant for me personally. I have learned so much over the years and have been inspired by so many admirable women. I couldn't ask for a better job.

That's not to say that there haven't been days when I have felt angry and demoralized. We still have a long way to go in making the world a better place for women. But overwhelmingly, my experience with NYWC has filled me with pride, optimism and even awe.

I have had the privilege of meeting and working with so many women in my twelve years with the NYWC. Whether they are program participants, volunteers, staff or community supporters, they share common traits. They are strong, resilient, generous, compassionate, resourceful - and unstoppable once they set their sights on a goal.

On the subject of goal-setting, NYWC is launching a campaign to raise \$20,000 in recognition of its 20th year. It's an ambitious goal for us, but one that I am confident we can achieve with your support.

Please consider supporting our 20th Anniversary Campaign by:

- making a personal contribution,
- encouraging others to donate,
- honouring someone with a tribute gift on a birthday, holiday, special occasion – or just because,
- telling people who give you gifts what NYWC means to you, or
- hosting a get-together to raise funds on behalf of NYWC.

Final details on the campaign are still being worked out and specifics will be posted on our new website in September. If you would like information before then, just call.

Hoping to see you on September 29th,

Iris Fabbro

National Volunteer Week

April 19-25, 2009 was National Volunteer Week. To celebrate the event, the NYWC hosted its 1st Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day on April 25th, and many of our dedicated volunteers showed up with their families, kids and friends. We held the event to recognize the efforts of our committed volunteers, and for those in attendance there was an abundance of food, salads, desserts, and drinks (all donated). We also had activities such as yoga and skin care lessons.

It was nice to see our new and past volunteers interact and, share their experiences with each other. It is always a special time when we celebrate the extraordinary work of our esteemed volunteers and we had a wonderfully successful volunteer appreciation day!

Special thanks to Paula Hunter who has donated book prizes to all our volunteers and their kids; Oris Johanson, for providing free skin care demo; Terri-Louise, for providing free yoga lessons; and Lia Colosimo, for donating t-shirts and mugs.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your ongoing support to NYWC. Without you, NYWC does not exist!!!!

Mulu Haddis, NYWC Staff

PRIDE

As a volunteer at the NYWC, I had the opportunity to attend PRIDE along with Iris and Kathleen, two of the amazing team members at the Centre that make its incredible work possible day in day out! We had a booth at the event and distributed agency brochures and fliers on upcoming workshops and events. In line with the theme of the festival - Can't stop, won't stop! - we were equally enthused about providing information to a fraction of the 1 million people in attendance that weekend! It was an event that was festive, radical, diverse, commercial, spiritual, colourful, fun and an amazing expression of the pride of a community too often marginalized. Throughout the day, we met generous souls who offered to donate food for events, support the work of the agency through volunteer work as well as individuals who were interested in participating in the workshops. We also met past volunteers who stopped by to cheer us on and it made the day all the more meaningful!

Rubaiyat Karim, NYWC Board member

Family Day Fair

On June 10th, the NYWC was a proud participant of the Family Day Fair at Hinck's Dellcrest. Mother nature cooperated with beautiful weather, as it was a fabulous and sunny day, one of the only ones this summer, and spending it outdoors at the fair was the perfect family activity. This was a bittersweet event for me, as it was my last day as a practicum student at NYWC. I have to say though, that it was a great way to end my placement, as we were welcomed by both staff and volunteers of e Hinck-Dellcrest, whose dedication was evident in the magnitude and preparation of this event. There was a live band performing favorites of children and those young at heart, and the afternoon of fun was made even better by free hot dogs and beverages served to both participants and families attending the fair. The dedicated NYWC volunteers worked hard at making connections with other community agencies, by visiting different booths and spreading awareness about the vital services we offer to women. As well, we handed out our program brochures to mothers and women who attended the fair, inviting them to join our free support groups. Thank you Hincks-Dellcrest for hosting this fun and informative afternoon! And thank you NYWC for an absolutely amazing nine months of learning!

Joanna Potkanska, 2008-2009 Practicum Student and NYWC Member

NORTH YORK WOMEN'S CENTRE'S KEY NOTES

More Than Just Girl Talk!

When I first took on the assignment of facilitating a violence prevention program for young newcomer young women at a North Toronto high school, I have to admit I was a little terrified. Teenage girls are incredibly intimidating, mostly because it feels as though they can see right through you. You cannot fool a teenage girl – adults are like open books to them.

Shortly after entering into that high school classroom to begin the 10-month long “More Than Just Girl Talk” violence prevention discussion group, my fears were assuaged. The young women gathered in the room were excited and wide-eyed, looking forward to our meetings together.

Over the course of the 10 months that the group ran, I got to know the young women quite well. I looked forward to Thursdays for the opportunity to connect with some very interesting young women, and I believe they looked forward to the group as well. Their attendance never flagged, and when we missed sessions due to school events, the young women all expressed that they missed the group in the lost week.

One of the most important things that stood out for me was the way in which young women will put a brave face on everything. When we first met, they assured me repeatedly that they had no hang-ups about their bodies – they *knew* they were beautiful – and they had no problems with boys, with violence, with school, with discrimination, etcetera. Everything in their lives was just fine; they were strong, beautiful, happy young women. As the year wore on, and the young women came to trust the facilitators more, they began to express their doubts and fears, their insecurities and trepidations about the future.

To celebrate the successes and create an artifact of the time we spent together, the young women worked on designing and then painting their own t-shirts for our last few weeks together. Upon completion we held a small wrap party in the teacher's lounge at the school. The t-shirts were hung from clotheslines around the room so that visitors could take in the incredible works of art these young women had created. And incredible they were. The young women put so much effort into the shirts; the result was unbelievable. They felt proud of what they had done and posed for photos with their shirts. The vice-principal stopped in for a visit and was invited to partake of numerous photos. The party was a great success.

I learned so much from facilitating this group and I am honoured to have had the opportunity to spend time with such a brilliant group of young women. They made me proud to be part of such an amazing community, and proud of the North York Women's Centre for its commitment to supporting women through every step of their lives. In even better news: the Canadian Women's Foundation has agreed to fund the group again next year, so look out world! We are preparing some seriously amazing women to go out there and change things up!

Elise Thornburn, NYWC Staff

FALL 2009 PROGRAMS

Daytime Programs at the NYWC:

- *The Sharing Stop-Over (Drop In)*
Thurs, Sept 17- Dec 3; 1:00-3:00
- *Open Up Your World*
Wed, Sept 30- Nov 4; 1:00 -3:00

Evening Programs at the NYWC:

- *Assertiveness*
Thursdays, Oct 1- Nov 5; 7:00 pm - 9:00pm
- *Building Self-Esteem*
Wednesdays, Sept 23- Oct 28; 7:00 pm - 9:00pm
- *Stress to Strength*
Wednesdays, Nov 4 - Dec 9; 7:00 pm - 9:00pm
- *New Directions for Separated and Divorced Women*
Wednesdays, Oct 7- Nov 25; 6:30 pm - 8:30pm

Weekend Programs at the NYWC:

- *Women in Society*
Saturdays, Sept 12 - Oct 31; 12:30 - 2:30pm
- *Healthy Relationships*
Saturdays, Nov 7- Dec 12; 12:30 -2:30 pm

Satellite Programs:

Please call the satellite location directly for program location and information.

- *Women on the Move*
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays; Dates TBD 9:00am-11:00am.
Location: Falstaff Community Centre
- *The Women's Place*
Mondays, Wednesdays, Dates TBD; 12:45pm - 2:45pm.
Location: Flemington School Age and Family Centre,
150 Grenoble Drive, call to register

NORTH YORK WOMEN'S CENTRE'S KEY NOTES

THANKING OUR SUPPORTERS!

\$2,500 and over

TD Bank Financial Group

\$250-999

Sue Griggs
PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada
Freweini Teferi

\$100-249

Nancy Bardecki
Wendy Fraser
Helen Hansen
Luella Lumley
Lauri Maki
Les Monita
Francine Morissette
Shannon Persaud Tolnay

To \$99

Mekdes Abebe
Shyam Damani
Aisha Heywood-Delpeache
Rosalyn Fraser
Paula Hunter
Rubaiyat Karim
Anne Pilgrim
Nancy Porto
Paulett Ramsey
Stychin Tyme
Marianne Williams
Gemma Zanini

Volunteer Appreciation Day:

Peek Freans
Cupcakery Toronto
Loblaws, St. Clair & Bathurst
La Rosa's No Frills
Starbucks

NYWC 2009 Picnic:

Rainbow Sushi Restaurant
Walmart, Lawrence & Keele
Costco, Warden Avenue
Metro, Keele & Wilson
Sweet Samosa Factory
Fortinos, Lawrence Square
Lady York Foods

COMMUNITY NEWS

We extend a **warm welcome** to our new volunteers: **Lisa Van Ness, Liuba Revenko, Yurislen Sablon, Sarah Vermelhudo**. We thank you for your interest in the NYWC and look forward to your involvement.

We extend our **thanks and best wishes** to:

Our summer program worker, **Kathleen Lortie**, and our summer outreach worker, **Jessica Bonilla Eduardo**, both of whom are returning to school in the fall; and our program worker, **Elise Thornburn**, who is leaving NYWC to complete her PhD at the University of Western Ontario.

We are privileged to have had the opportunity to work with these progressive, intelligent, hard-working and compassionate young women. We thank them for their hard work, dedication and commitment. We wish them all the best in school and hope they will keep in touch!

Congratulations to our Ontario Volunteer Award recipients:

- Aisha Heywood-Delpeache: Board secretary and former group facilitator
- Carmen Mancini: Group facilitator and former board chair
- Ewa Szumowska: Legal clinic receptionist extraordinaire

UPCOMING EVENT – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

For information, or to RSVP, contact NYWC at (416) 781-0479 or info@nywc.org

NYWC 20th Anniversary Celebration!

North York Women's Centre
cordially invites you to celebrate
20 years of Opening Doors for Women!

Tuesday, September 29, 2009
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
NYWC: 201 Caribou Road



Please R.S.V.P. by: September 18, 2009
AGM to be held from 6:30 – 6:50 p.m.

NYWC is a community of diverse women providing resources and support to effect positive change. We deliver this in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all women in the community of North York and surrounding areas.

Launched in 1998, Key Notes was created to enhance communication within the NYWC community. Contributions, suggestions and comments are always welcome. If you would like to contribute an article, or help put *Key Notes* together, please contact us.
