

2004 Annual Report



Safer for Women ... Safer for Everyone



METRAC celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2004 and it has been an exciting year of increased stability and growth. METRAC held its first Community Planning Meeting in 2004. It was well attended by more than fifteen (15) community members and service providers. We reported back to the community on METRAC's activities over the year and received feedback about how effective the work has been and how it could be further improved. These meetings will be held annually to facilitate ongoing community input and influence in program goals and to explore opportunities for potential partnerships.

With the participation of funders, agency partners, community members, and volunteers, METRAC's Board and staff engaged in creating strategic directions to guide METRAC for 2004 to 2007. The process was an introspective opportunity for us to reflect on our agency's perceived strengths and limitations. The strategic directions identified were: to prioritize becoming culturally competent, expand our funding base, develop a higher profile and feedback mechanisms, work with partners to be part of an integrated support system for women experiencing violence, and develop an adequate staffing structure.

Overall, METRAC is seen to have important, unique program strengths. Our Justice Program is considered essential to women and service providers needing legal information, training, and supporting materials. We also learned that METRAC's Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN) website is a valuable resource that benefits both service providers and women across the province. Our Young Women's Speakers Bureau is seen as innovative, collaborative, and responsive to communities it serves.

METRAC's Strategic Planning process has indicated that community members need and want to know more about our publications and information services, how their communities can benefit from them, and how they can be involved in our program activities. We have responded to the community by restructuring our information services program to have more of an outreach focus. We have improved outreach efforts

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to increase linkages with diverse communities across Toronto and have renamed our former Information Services program to Community Outreach and Education Program to reflect this renewed focus.

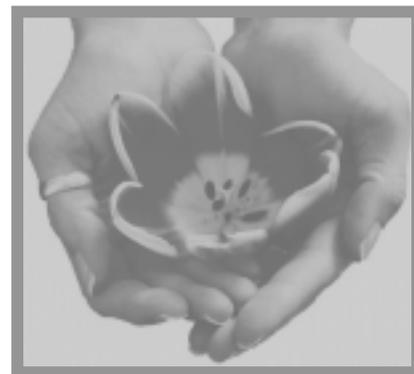
One strategic challenge facing METRAC in the next 3 years is funding stability. There is pressure for METRAC to do more with less in the face of shrinking resources and increasing competition for donor dollars. In 2004, there were a number of fundraising activities, including a *Magic and Mysteries* show by Bill Abbott, a magician who gave a stellar performance at the Senator in Toronto. Kelly Graff and Erin Watson organized an amazing benefit production of *The Vagina Monologues* at York University. Through much appreciated funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the support of Jamie Kennedy Kitchens, we held a special 20th Anniversary Dinner (our first big fundraising event), which raised more than \$20,000 for the Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau. We express our appreciations to the Gold Sponsors of this event, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and Hudson's Bay Company (Hbc). We also thank our Table Sponsors: Burgundy Asset Management Company, The Bank of Nova Scotia, The Royal Bank of Canada, and Woolgar, VanWeichen, Ketcheson, Ducoffe LLP. To Silent Auction and Gift Bag Donors, thank you for supporting METRAC and for your generosity.

METRAC is fortunate and grateful for the continued support we receive from the City of Toronto. On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank the City of Toronto for its funding. Our vital work would not survive without City resources. We also wish to thank the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Ontario Women's Directorate, the United Way of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Women's Foundation, Sears Young Futures Program, Hydro One, Jamie Kennedy Kitchens, Bill and Rebecca Abbott, and the cast of York University's *Vagina Monologues* 2004. In particular, we thank Charles S. Coffey, Executive Vice-President of Government and Community Affairs, for hosting yet another successful Annual Luncheon for METRAC.

We thank all other donors, including individuals, foundations, corporations, and unions. Without your ongoing support, our work would not be possible.

METRAC said goodbye and thank you to departing staff, Cristina Alcivar, Keira Grant, Puja Suri, and leaving Speakers Bureau Peer Facilitators. Your work is appreciated. We also welcomed Stephanie Ehret, Alana Lowe, Rosetta Springer, Hongli Wang, and new Peer Facilitators. Our deepest thanks go to the hardworking and talented staff of METRAC. We appreciate your commitment to ending violence against women, youth, and children. METRAC's dedicated volunteers and students worked many hours and helped us with a myriad of tasks to support the work of the agency – thank you so much for caring.

We would be remiss not to give special thanks to Kimberly Morris, outgoing President. Kimberly steered METRAC through challenging and dynamic years with her generosity of spirit and commitment. She will continue to play a vital role as she continues on the Board. We also thank departing Board Members Kerry Hughes and Pat Marshall, who made valuable contributions during their terms. Finally, we offer heartfelt thanks to the whole Board, a superb group of women whose leadership and commitment have kept METRAC true to the vision of a society that is *Safer for Women and Children, Safer for Everyone*.



Community Safety Program Report

Wendy Komiotis

METRAC's Community Safety Program continued to enhance its capacity to address safety issues for women and diverse communities across the City of Toronto and beyond. Working with City of Toronto staff and the Safety Audit Response System, we revised our *Safety Audit Resource Kit: For Women and Communities* to work more in tandem with the system. The revised kit was used in our 5th Annual

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Community Safety Night (CSN). Its new format provided more effective guidance to community audit facilitators and participants in gathering information about their safety concerns. We hope that this accomplishment will assist the City of Toronto in responding to safety issues in different neighbourhoods.

Our 5th Annual CSN also included a Public Launch, outreach, promotion, training, and support activities in diverse Toronto communities to conduct neighbourhood safety audits. The Launch brought together community agencies, neighbourhood groups, residents, local government, and media to speak about safety. This year, approximately 15 audits were conducted and more than 100 people participated in neighbourhood walkabouts. CSN was held in spring to give the City of Toronto's Safety Audit Response System sufficient time to follow-up with audit concerns and make changes requested in audits. Holding CSN in a new season was found to be challenging because it did not get dark until after 9:00 PM. Communities identified that it would be better to do audits during a time of the year when days are shorter. In discussion with City of Toronto staff, we decided to change CSN back to the fall season for 2005.



The Community Safety Program continued to work with school communities to conduct safety needs assessments and develop violence prevention initiatives. In partnership with METRAC's Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau, the program has been exploring a joint venture with youth agencies and peer programs to lead a community action research project with youth to identify the ways in which gendered violence and other forms of violence impact youth's safety and sense of safety in the school system.

METRAC continued as a member of the CityWatch Group, an affiliate of the City of Toronto Safety Secretariat. The group is part of an awards program

that recognizes municipal workers who go beyond their regular duties to help create a safer and more caring Toronto. Additionally, we joined the 519 Church Street's Trans Anti-Violence Access Project Committee to help make services safer and more accessible for transsexual/ transgendered communities. During the year, METRAC continued to provide safety consultation and safety audit support to City Councillors, MPs, and MPP offices, as well as to universities and colleges across Canada. We also worked with community agencies and housing projects to conduct audits of new developments and workplaces.

Community Justice Program Report

Pamela Cross

Access to Justice for women experiencing violence remains a serious concern in Ontario. METRAC's Community Justice Program addressed this issue in a number of ways in 2004.

In Toronto, we expanded our community legal information training to a two-day event. As in the past, the training would become fully booked very quickly and we had to disappoint some workers by turning them away. We found the two-day format a much better way to encourage dialogue among participants and to cover the legal material in a holistic way. Participants came from a wide spectrum of community-based agencies working with women experiencing violence.

We completed our Law Foundation of Ontario project with the development of legal information materials for women with disabilities and Deaf women and immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence. We translated our materials into seven languages, which increased access to legal information for women who do not speak English. At the end of 2004, we received further funding from the Law Foundation to focus on the legal information needs of young and older women experiencing violence. This is work that will carry on into 2006. The importance of the support of the Law Foundation cannot be overstated. Because of it, many of the most vulnerable women in Ontario now have access to accurate

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legal information that reflects the reality of violence against women.

Our legal information website, the Ontario Women's Justice Network, (www.owjn.org) continued to face funding challenges. However, the York University production of *The Vagina Monologues*, presented in February 2004, donated its proceeds (almost \$10,000) to the website, which allowed us to reactivate the site. As well, new funding received from the Law Foundation at the end of 2004 included money for us to conduct a thorough assessment of the site and develop a long term funding strategy, so we are hopeful we will be able to keep the site alive and serving women who have no other access to legal information or support.



In December 2004, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced his government's Domestic Violence Action Plan – the first such announcement by an Ontario Premier in a very long time. It included plans to revise provincial legislation dealing with such topics as restraining orders and custody and access – both of which are absolutely critical to the safety of women with abusive partners.

METRAC's Justice Program ended 2004 with plans to continue making legal information accessible to the most vulnerable women, to work for law reform – especially but not exclusively in the areas identified in the Domestic Violence Action Plan – that will improve the lives of women who have experienced violence and their children and to continue our work with community partners to understand and respond to the legal needs of women. *Contact the Justice Program at pcross@web.ca or 416-392-3148.*

Community Outreach & Education Report

Andrea Gunraj

METRAC's Community Outreach and Education Program saw key growth in 2004. Its change of title from "Information Services" signified a more distinct focus on the Program's core work – actively reaching out to diverse communities and offering educational tools to end violence against women, youth, and children.

In 2004, we began the ongoing process of making METRAC's written materials more up-to-date and accessible to the public, an important task as we distributed thousands of publications such as fact sheets, booklets, zines, and bookmarks on topics like sexual assault, healthy relationships, stalking, and community services. At the same time, we continued to act as a source of phone and email referrals to people who needed information and help, and our on-site Resource Centre provided a space for in-depth research on violence-related issues. The Outreach Program also attended several community events, including Pride, Caribana, and the Slam Jam to carry out public education about violence.

METRAC's website, www.metrac.org, continued to serve as a broadly accessible source of information about violence against women, children, and youth and the work that our organization does – we had more than 83,000 hits in 2004 alone. Through our bi-annual newsletter, available in print and online, METRAC shared its work further with the public. Additionally, the Outreach Program's Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau held numerous youth-friendly violence-prevention workshops and workshop series with young people across the city and beyond.

In keeping with the Outreach Program's enhanced focus on engaging communities, METRAC held its first annual Community Planning Meeting in November 2004. Here, we invited community members and workers to give their valuable feedback about our programs and discuss community needs that they have encountered. The Community Planning Meeting was one means through which the community helped to shape METRAC's future work.

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METRAC continues to participate in many networks to address violence against women, children, and youth on a systemic level, such as the Woman Abuse Council, City of Toronto Violence Against Women Working Group, The Toronto Police Services Domestic Violence Advisory Committee, The Cross Sectoral Strategy Group on Violence Against Women and Children, the Ontario Women's Directorate Advisory Group, and THRIVE, the Multicultural Women's Coalition Against Violence and Oppression, which METRAC facilitates. We hope to influence and help to create long-term policy and practice changes that will recognize the diversity of our communities and make violence-reducing change to benefit women, youth, and children who are most marginalized.

Thank you to our members, donors, funders, partners, and volunteers – your support of METRAC's Outreach and Education Program is much appreciated and needed. Together, we can reach out and make a difference. *Contact the Outreach Program at outreach@metrac.org or 416-392-4760.*

Speakers Bureau Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau Report

Farrah Bychalo-Khan & Alana Lowe

The Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau's workshops reached more youth this time around. With funding from the United Way, our new "Feeding or Starving the Hype" workshop series was created to address systemic violence that youth experience and the cycles of violence that they and their peers feed into. In this series, youth examined the types of systemic violence that caused them to commit acts of violence and explored solutions to end the violence – to starve the hype. Facilitators created new, innovative workshop activities that engaged youth who are often labeled "at risk", bringing them into violence-prevention discussions and strategies for change. The response from both youth and community workers was overwhelmingly positive and we received numerous requests for this series over the year.



From our "Feeding or Starving the Hype" workshop series, the Bureau went right on to start the process of creating another new, original workshop series. In partnership with Education Wife Assault, we were granted yearlong funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation. The funding enabled the Bureau to create a workshop series that would address issues of violence in the home, including woman abuse, incest, elder abuse, and sibling abuse. In Phase One of the process, Bureau members received training in anti-oppression, violence against women, youth in care and the shelter system, popular theatre, popular education, violence and the law, critical media skills, and women with disabilities and Deaf women's experiences of woman abuse.

Aside from workshop creation, another important goal in 2004 was to increase our visibility in the Greater Toronto Area. We accomplished this by participating in a number of panels and forums on youth violence and youth civic engagement. The Speakers Bureau tabled at the Toronto Youth Cabinet's *The Cause* event with agencies and organizations serving youth across Ontario. We participated in the Youth Police Summit and the City of Toronto's Youth Planet Conference on Youth Engagement. We also presented at the Islamic Foundation of Toronto's job fair. Additionally, we supported Central Neighbourhood House's Young Women's Power Project by sitting on their advisory committee and facilitating two training workshops for the young women in their group.

Through funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation, we were able to hire and train eight new diverse youth from marginalized communities across Toronto. We welcomed new Peer Facilitators Fatima, Farzana, Christine, Andre, Nicole, Alyssa, Elizabeth, and Jerry!

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The hiring didn't end there. Alana Lowe, former Peer Facilitator, joined the team as the new co-coordinator of the Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau. With her, she brings youthful energy and extensive experience in community work. With all of that hiring, the Bureau also experienced a number of departures this year: Tamika, Natasha, Saroja, Emma, Jehangir, Ariella, and Beth will all be missed. Thank you for your commitment to violence prevention. We wish you all good luck in your future endeavors.

Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank METRAC staff, and in particular Wendy Komiotis and Andrea Gunraj. As two young women new to positions of leadership, we could not have had such a successful year without their support and encouragement. A special thank you goes out to the youth who were Peer Facilitators in the Bureau in 2004 – thanks for your excitement, energy, and engaging work: Ash, Alyssa Asomani, Emma Beltran, Tamika Boyce, Fatima Chamali, Elizabeth Chen, Saroja Cohelo, Farazana Islam, David Lewis, Natasha Lindsay, Christine Luza, Ariella Meinhard, Beth O'Connor, Andre Ottley-Lorant, MJ Rwigema, Jehangir Saleh, Nicole Walters, and Melinda Zakye. None of this would be possible without you. *Contact the Speakers Bureau at speakersbureau@metrac.org or 416-397-0258.*

Volunteer Program Report

Stephanie Ehrét

2004 was an exciting year of growth in METRAC's Volunteer Program and we are thrilled to have many diverse and wonderful people from Toronto's communities join our team. Volunteer have provided support to METRAC's administrative and program needs as well as its Committees and Board.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks to all of those who supported us by volunteering in 2004: Aisha, Anita Corsini, Anna, Beth Palmer, Candice Coish, Dora Perez, Dora Diana Talamantes, Gabrela, Helen Vincze, Helen Anderson, Hongli Wang, Julie Margulis, Julie Fleming, Kathy, Lisa Price, Mabel, Mary Higgins, Nahid Najnin, Nicola Gordon, Nicolas Komiotis, Nicole Walters, Renee, Stephanie Long, and Vanita Dama. *Contact the Volunteer Program at volunteer@metrac.org or 416-392-4286.*



Resource Development Report

Stephanie Ehrét

In its second year of a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we are implementing our Resource Development Plan that focuses on building relationships funders and donors and includes special events and direct mail activities.

A highlight of 2004's fundraising activities is METRAC's 20th Anniversary Dinner Event, *Dining Out With a Difference*, at Jamie Kennedy's Restaurant and Wine Bar. The evening was a smashing success with Zahra Dhanani as Master of Ceremonies, performances by Marie-Jo Cyer, Craig Moffitt, and the Delightful Divas, a silent auction with an array of wonderful items, and over \$20,000 raised. METRAC would like to thank Gold Sponsors, Table Sponsors, Shelley Hamilton of the Delightful Divas, and Silent Auction and Gift Bag donors. *Contact the Resource Developer at fundraising@metrac.org or 416-392-4286.*

METRAC's 2004 Statement of Operations

YEAR (Ended December 31 st)	2004 (in dollars)	2003 (in dollars)
PROGRAM REVENUES		
Grants		
◇ City of Toronto – Community Services	219,770	219,770
◇ Canadian Women's Foundation	2,815	2,400
◇ Human Resources Development Services	2,402	
◇ Hydro One	10,000	10,000
◇ Law Foundation of Ontario	63,463	61,492
◇ Ontario's Women Directorate	9,420	60,273
◇ Ontario Trillium Foundation	48,269	66,836
◇ United Way	12,720	2,280
◇ Women's Health Council		26,184
◇ Other		5,000
Donations	28,179	49,418
Conference/ fee-for-service	2,575	53,349
Publications and library	14,390	10,087
Fundraising	38,823	912
Interest	70	822
Miscellaneous	5,965	9,960
TOTALS	458,861	578,783

PROGRAM EXPENSES		
Administration (Schedule)	144,022	142,914
Fundraising	13,385	1,171
Information Services	86,103	159,462
Justice for Women and Children	103,777	120,821
Trillium	48,269	66,836
Women's Safety	65,335	98,473
TOTALS	460,891	589,677
Excess of revenues over operating expenses	(2,030)	(10,894)

METRAC Staff

Cristina Alcivar*, Resource Devt. Coordinator
Farrah Byckalo-Khan, YWAVSB Coordinator
Pamela Cross, Legal Director
Stephanie Ehret, Volunteer Coordinator
Andrea Gunraj, Outreach Manager
Keira Grant*, Office Coordinator
Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director
Natasha Lindsay*, Summer Admin. Assistant
Alana Lowe, YWAVSB Coordinator
Beth Palmer*, Program Assistant
Puja Suri*, Program Assistant
Rosetta Springer, Resource Developer
Pam Thompson, Safety Director
Hongli Wang, Administrative Assistant
YWAVSB Peer Facilitators

METRAC Board

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Karima Esmail
Kimberly Morris, President
Peggy Nash
Deborah Niles, Treasurer
Marilyn Oladimeji
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Mazeena Rafi, Secretary
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* No longer at METRAC by end of 2004

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METRAC's Thanks Extend To:

Bill Abbott; Women of York University who performed *The Vagina Monologues* in benefit of METRAC; METRAC donors (including those who wish to remain anonymous); all individuals who donated generously; METRAC's many community partners in Toronto and beyond; METRAC's special contract staff – Sheila Berzitis (Bookkeeper), Colleen Whelan (IT Administrator), Irmina J. Ayuyao (Graphic Designer), and Paula Wansbrough (OWJN Web Mistress)

The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children works towards the goal of eliminating all forms of violence against women and children and is committed to the right of women and children to live free from violence. Our work is informed by anti-oppression principles that recognize that diverse communities experience violence in different ways and forms and that anti-violence measures must address the unique realities of diverse communities.



Metropolitan Action Committee on
Violence Against Women and Children

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