



We are delighted to send you our second newsletter. We hope that these newsletters help you be better informed about METRAC's projects, new publications and ongoing work. METRAC's website, www.metrac.org, will continue to provide you with information about us, in addition to printable fact sheets, tools for internet safety and evaluation, and links to many valuable websites. We encourage you to also visit the Ontario Women's Justice Network website, www.owjn.org - an online resource for women's organizations and individuals working on issues related to justice and violence against women and children.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Within the past year, METRAC has begun producing regular newsletters as well as our first Annual Report as part of our commitment to keeping the community better informed about and connected to our work. We are very proud of these initiatives, and hope that the information in all of these publications is helpful and interesting to you.

At this time, we are seeking two new members to join our Board of Directors. We are sad to bid farewell to Renu Mandhane who is leaving METRAC for the big lights of New York City and graduate studies in law. Renu first joined us as a summer student, where her intelligence and keen wit were much appreciated, and then moved on to become a valued member of our Board of Directors. We also are losing Wendy Saba, a new Board member whose work obligations unexpectedly made her ongoing participation on our Board unmanageable. We appreciate the commitment both these women brought to METRAC's work.

There are a number of Board committees that welcome community members. If you have expertise in the areas of human resources, fundraising or strategic planning, we would be more than happy to hear from you.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining our Board or one of our committees, please contact Pamela Cross, Executive Director, at 416-392-3148 or pcross@web.ca

As ever, no message from the Board would be complete without reminding you, our supporters, how keenly we need and appreciate your financial support. The funding challenges we face are as great as ever. We gratefully accept all donations and contributions – large or small. To inquire about supporting our work financially, please call Pamela Cross at 416-392-3148 or Kimberly Morris, President of the Board of Directors, at 416-392-3135

IN THIS ISSUE

1. Message from the Board
2. Welcome to New Safety Director
3. Safety Program
4. YWSB
5. Justice Program
6. OWJN and OWD
7. Women's Health Council Project

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working to reduce
its paper products.
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NEW DIRECTOR OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY PROGRAM

We would like to introduce Dreeni Geer, the new Director of our, Women's and Children's Safety Program. Dreeni brings a wealth of international experience and an in depth understanding of violence against women to her work at METRAC. She obtained her law degree at Queen's University, and during that time volunteered at L.E.A.F. as well as working on a research project for the Canadian Lawyers Association for International Human Rights. This was a "comparative sexual assault study" that focused on Britain, Canada and Guyana. The research was conducted in Guyana and Canada.

After completing her law degree, Dreeni worked with the UN in Thailand and the Philippines. She worked with urban and rural youth (15-24 years old) on capacity building. Her work with NGOs in Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand centered on refugee rights, women's rights and globalization respectively. Dreeni is also a first-time mother with a beautiful new daughter, Kiran.

We are delighted that Dreeni has joined the staff at METRAC.



ABOUT THE SAFETY PROGRAM

The Women's and Children's Safety Program at METRAC is undergoing some new and exciting changes. Joining the Safety Program are Dreeni Geer as Director and Andrea Gunraj as Safety Audit Night Coordinator.

Dreeni Geer, having spent the previous four years doing rights-based work internationally, returns to Toronto with great enthusiasm and vision for the Safety program. Andrea Gunraj, who is also continuing her work at METRAC as co-coordinator of the Young Women's Speakers Bureau, will be taking on the additional role of coordinating METRAC's third annual Community Safety Audit Night. Also working in the program for this summer are Beth Palmer and Puja Suri.

The Safety program's immediate goal is to examine the unique safety needs of the diverse women and children in Toronto. We hope to partner with women's organizations throughout the GTA to strategize and develop urban anti-violence tools and materials for the mosaic of communities.

Furthermore, we hope to understand how systematic oppression contributes to violence in its many forms. Some systems have an inherent bias or prejudice that they discriminate against, burden or even harm certain users who fall outside of the white, male, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual norm. Such oppression materializes in many forms including inaccessibility, marginalization, and discrimination. Only when these systems are examined and challenged can violence prevention begin.

UPCOMING EVENT

On October 24th, 2002 METRAC will be hosting the 3rd Annual Community Safety Audit Night, which is a Toronto wide event that involves citizens walking around their neighbourhoods and auditing the potential safety concerns of women and other vulnerable community members. METRAC will be training, providing Safety Audit Kits and lots of other freebies for any community organization, or group of concerned Torontonians who want to make their spaces violence-free. For more information please contact Andrea Gunraj at 416-397-0258, auditnight@metrac.org.

YOUNG WOMEN'S ANTI-VIOLENCE SPEAKERS BUREAU

BUREAU WRAPS UP ITS FIRST YEAR

The Speakers Bureau is wrapping up its first successful year. Our gifted and committed facilitators conducted anti-violence workshops with more than 1,500 youth in middle schools, high schools and community youth groups. The year was not without its challenges as we learned to adapt our workshops to meet the specific needs and realities of younger students, ESL learners and all-male classes.

We would like to thank many groups and individuals for their contributions to the project including our facilitators Afshan, Catherine, Ruth, Saroja, Farrah, Michelle, Patrica, Vinita, Deborah M, Deborah S., Rowena and Ruthann. We would also like to thank our community partners at the school boards as well as individual educators who are truly committed to anti-oppression and anti-violence initiatives.

We would also like to take this opportunity to introduce individual facilitators to the wider community. We hope to include facilitator profiles regularly in the newsletter. We begin with an interview with Michelle Bourgeois. Michelle has been with the Bureau since its inception and is leaving us in the fall to pursue full-time teaching.

What activist/community work have you done prior to joining the Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau?

- DWAVE – Deaf Women Against Violence Everywhere –doing all kinds of things... presenting workshops, creating materials, presenting plays - awesome experience working with Deaf womyn for Deaf womyn.
- Involved in womyn's issues with National Action Committee on the Status of Women and Canadian Federation of Students as Women's Commissioner for Ontario.
- Dis'n'tangle – started around the same time as YWSB - my favourite zine-making experience about shaking the foundations of normalcy.
- Deaf Rights Activist – held meetings and a press conference in North Bay for the issue of lack of interpreters in Northern Ontario

- Served as a Guest Editor for Canadian Women's Journal for a year for Young Womyn,
- Grrrrls, Activists... awesome experience, read so many articles and saw a beautiful book in the making.

What motivates your activism/community work?

If I had to pick what motivates me to do activism and community work it would be the feeling that mainstream society forgets us too often and drives me to make sure our voices are heard, that is, anyone who has a right to be in the game, in what people call a wonderful life with easy access and not stuck on the sidelines.

What are the most rewarding and challenging parts of being a facilitator in the Bureau?

Rewarding – learning through experience, working with wonderful womyn in the group, and seeing kids express themselves and enjoy the workshops.

Challenging – presenting a workshop that meets the students' needs. Making sure that they have the floor and not the teachers. We want to hear from them. It's rare that they have the space and safety to express themselves.

What did you learn from the youth you were working with?

Having a real honest, respectful and open connection with each other and with non-youth, it helps youth to be able to express their problems more easily as now they know support is available if situations arise. Some students have felt too scared to be able to confide in someone and have felt that their problems were not taken seriously.

Who are you feminist sheroes?

My mom and my sisters and my nieces... they all captivate me and give me a reason why life is essential.

What do you like to do for fun?

Hang out with my Deaf sistahs... jet ski, play baseball, canoe, dancing, chat... whatever, you name it

JUSTICE PROGRAM

METRAC's Justice Program is planning a busy and innovative fall. Our legal information workshops for vulnerable women, which have been very successful over the past three years of delivery, are going through yet another transformation. This year, rather than delivering the workshops directly to women in need of legal information, we will be training a team of approximately 24 women's service providers from across many of Toronto's diverse communities. These trained women will then be able to offer any of METRAC's nine legal information workshops to the clients of their agencies, making any changes and adaptations necessary to ensure the workshops are relevant and accessible. METRAC will provide the legal expertise and the materials themselves, the community organizations will provide everything else.

We have also recently completed work on the second in our series of four guidebooks on sexual assault. Guidebook One, entitled "Sexual Assault: An Introduction to the Law" was published in 2000 and has proven very popular with women who have experienced a sexual assault as well as with service providers, who use it as a client resource. Guidebook Two, "A Guide to the Criminal System," takes the reader through the steps involved if a sexual assault is reported to the police, offering a feminist critique and analysis of this system. This Guidebook is available, like all METRAC publications, by calling 416.392.3135 or filling in an order form can be printed from our website at www.metrac.org.

For more information about participating in our legal workshops "train the trainer" sessions, please call Pamela Cross at 416-392-3148 or email pcross@web.ca.

OWJN



The Ontario Women's Justice Network continues to provide online legal information for women experiencing violence. The website covers a variety of **Justice Issues**, such as sexual assault, partner abuse and child support. We post news articles, research papers, commentary and quick facts on these issues, written by Pamela Cross, our staff lawyer, as well as by outside contributors from women's organizations, the legal field and academia. A most recent addition written by a survivor; entitled "Duck – when you can't leave your abuser". This powerful and informative piece can be found at <http://www.owjn.org/issues/w-abuse/duck.htm>. For basic introductions to topics such as stalking, sexual assault, and custody and access, be sure to check out new question and answer fact sheets in our **Legal Info** section (<http://www.owjn.org/info.htm>).

Over the last year, OWJN has followed three ongoing issues. With proposed changes to federal divorce law that threaten abused women and their children, we have posted numerous articles on how this will play out for child custody and access cases. To learn more about these changes and their implications, visit <http://www.owjn.org/custody/index.htm>. OWJN is also tracking the proceedings of the Hadley inquest, as it challenges the provincial government to face the reality of woman abuse (<http://www.owjn.org/issues/w-abuse.htm#wo>). The jury recommendations are available on the site as well as media releases from the province-wide Cross-Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group. Finally, OWJN documents the on-again, off-again course of the *Domestic Violence Protection Act* (<http://www.owjn.org/issues/w-abuse.htm#do>).

Remember, we welcome your feedback and enquiries. Email us at: owjn@web.ca. Let us know what you need to see on OWJN.

WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNCIL PROJECT

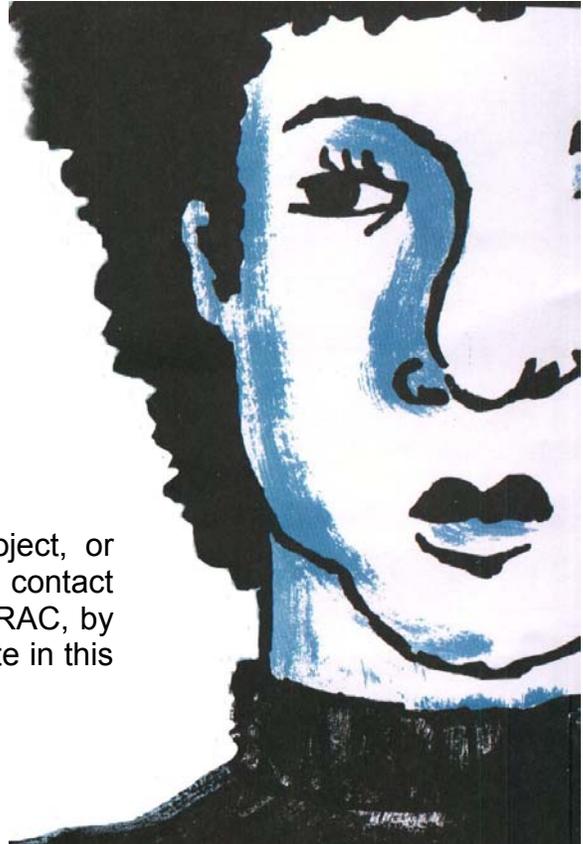
Approximately three years ago, METRAC produced two handbooks dealing with stalking/criminal harassment. These handbooks provide critical, current information about stalking and how women can keep themselves safe in plain, easy to understand language. We have made these materials available to organizations and individuals around the province for the past three years, and have distributed close to 15,000 copies. While this has been a real achievement for METRAC and has allowed many women to get access to important information, we are aware that there is a need for this material that we have not been able to meet. In particular, we have not been able to reach women in rural Ontario.

With the financial support of the Ontario Women's Health Council and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, we are embarking on a two-phase project.

Phase One is one of evaluation. We will be asking community organizations to review and evaluate both stalking publications. We will then revise the handbooks based on the evaluations. Phase Two is to develop an outreach strategy to reach women in rural communities. We will be working with community organizations, provincial networks and institutions to assist us in the development of this strategy.

If you would like more information about the project, or would like to complete the evaluation form, please contact Joanna Pawelkiewicz, Project Coordinator, at METRAC, by June 10, and let us know how you wish to participate in this project: 1.877.558.5570 toll free 1.416.397.0258

speakersbureau@metrac.org



OWD

Since March 2001, METRAC, with the support of the Ontario Women's Directorate, has been working with organizations from around the province to reproduce a wide range of violence prevention materials. Working with a representative Advisory Committee and the Women's Directorate we have selected between 17 and 20 documents for reproduction. These posters, booklets, flyers, posters and cards will be reproduced in print and electronic format and a selection will be translated into French.

We will be sending out announcements and order forms in the fall. Please let us know if you would like your name added to the list. Contact Sandy Fox at 416.302.3031, fax 416.392.3136 or sfox@metrac.org

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DONATION INFO

Your donations are important to us. To make a donation, make a cheque payable to METRAC and mail to 158 Spadina Road M5R 2T8. We will provide a tax receipt for any donation over the amount of \$10.00. We also accept VISA. Our charitable number is 13006 9123 RR0001.

Thank you!



**Metropolitan Action Committee on
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