

**CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
ONTARIO COUNCIL**

DATES & DATA

Ontario Council Newsletter
Vol. VII, Issue 5 (Electronic)

March 2009
Standing Committee Reports

**March 14th, 2009
CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES**

More than seventy-five members from Clubs in every region of Ontario met
at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge Street, Toronto

Please cut and paste website references into your browser

JOINT MORNING SESSION

The speaker was Christine Fortin, mother of Patrick Fortin, who died in 2001 at age 23 of AIDS contracted by tainted blood products taken to control his hemophilia. In her son's memory, Ms. Fortin founded *Patrick 4 Life*, a charity dedicated to educating youth about how to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS by "creating awareness through education, leadership, fundraising and partnerships."

Diagnosed at 7, one of the earliest and youngest HIV patients in Canada, Patrick Fortin in his older years visited high schools in his home town of North Bay to spread awareness of HIV and the message that HIV, while not curable, is preventable. This was the genesis of *Patrick 4 Life*.

The program began in 2006 with a Run /Walk 4 Patrick Family Fest, a family marathon, and in 2007, *ParticiPatrick* a 10-week program in schools which involves students in daily physical activity along with age-appropriate HIV/AIDS awareness and self-esteem-building activities, all during school hours. Children spend 20 minutes a day in physical activity that translates to the equivalent of a 40K marathon, followed by a 2.5K marathon with children from other schools. The program started in Grade 4, but has expanded to older grades. All North Bay school boards are supportive and involved, as are principals and teachers, who are provided with teaching materials. A program for high school students, *Youth 4 Youth*, aims to engage young people in HIV/AIDS awareness with the use of new media, such as podcasting and websites. *Youth 4 Youth* participants also assist in presenting the program to younger students.

The program has the support of politicians at all levels in the North Bay area, and while the province will not adopt HIV/AIDS awareness into the provincial curriculum, it does support school boards to run the program locally.

Christine Fortin claims that she chooses to relive the nightmare of her son's illness to demonstrate that something creative can come out of chaos in one's life. Her activities have catapulted her into several Boards and agencies dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Peggy Pinkerton

STATUS OF WOMEN & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session

Since September 2008, throughout much of the clamor about the federal and provincial budgets and the shocking economic downturn, our committee has been looking at ways in which poverty and violence against women can be alleviated. Unfortunately, we know only too well that we can only dream about eradication. Our concerns and hopes were shared by the members in the Legislation and Education Committees who met at the same time and looked at the manifestations of poverty through their respective lenses. The Ontario Government Poverty Reduction Strategy with a firm target of poverty reduction of 25% in 5 years seemed like a ray of hope. But recent budget predictions have dashed much of the expectations. Let's see what the March 26 provincial budget will bring.

This having been the last meeting for the 2008/09 Ontario Council Standing Committees, I want to thank the members from the Clubs for giving up a weekend in September, January and March and coming to Toronto and sharing their concerns, thoughts and suggestions for solutions with us all. It was important to find out directly from our members from across the province about the complexities of women's economic and personal security situations as they exist in their region and about the resources that are available to them. The Clubs represented in the Status of Women & Human Rights Committee were: **Ajax-Pickering, Aurora-Newmarket, Barrie and District, Brampton, Burlington, Etobicoke, Guelph, Hamilton, Kanata, Kitchener-Waterloo, Leaside-East York, Mississauga, Muskoka, North Bay, North Toronto, North York, Northumberland, Oakville, Orangeville & District, Orillia, Oshawa & District, Ottawa, Peterborough, Scarborough, Southport, St. Catharines, Stratford, Windsor.** I wish everyone a very good summer and I hope that we can all meet again next September same place, same time.

Our March 14 meeting was attended by 33 members from 21 Clubs. We appreciate the efforts of the members of the Sub-committee on Violence Against Women for digesting the *No cherries grow on our trees* report for us. Thank you to **Margaret Binek, CFUW Kitchener – Waterloo**, for arranging for and also for bringing our afternoon speaker to Toronto, and to **Anne Gilbert, University Women's Club North York**, for writing the following report:

Report March 14, 2009

The members of the Ontario Council Sub-Committee on Violence against Women, **Judie Arrowood (Leaside-East York)**, **Ann McElhinney (Etobicoke)** and **Wendy Schrama (Hamilton)** spoke to the METRAC paper *No cherries grow on our trees*. (more complete sub-committee comments on the *No cherries* report below.) This report indicates that "women's poverty often traps women in abusive relationships (intimate, employment, care-giving and dependency) and violence and poverty are seriously impacting women's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health". Ann felt it was time for action rather than issuing another report. Wendy found that the "us" vs. "them" (poor vs. wealthy) stance of the report was very frustrating. A sample letter (below) by Sub-committee member **Rhea Pretsel, CFUW Belleville & District**, was provided for Clubs to request the Ontario government to support the inclusion of women's poverty and violence against women in the Ontario poverty reduction strategy.

Speaker:

The main speaker was **Pamela Mank, M.S.W., R.S.W.** who is coordinator of the **Family Violence Project of Waterloo Region** (www.fvpwaterloo.ca). This project is three years old, started in March 2006. It is a one stop service for victims of family violence, including thirteen services in one physical location. The services included are **Medical/Emergency Response** (Waterloo Region Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre), **Shelters/ Community Outreach** (Women's Crisis Services, Community Action Program

for Children, Pathways to Education), **Child Welfare** (Family and Children's Services, Domestic Violence Team), **Counselling** (Catholic Family Counselling Centre (where Pamela Mank is also Assistant Clinical Director), Credit Counselling Services), and **Justice Partners** (Crown Attorney's Office, Victim/Witness Assistance Program, Waterloo Regional Police Service – Domestic Violence Investigations Branch, Elder Abuse Response Team, Waterloo Regional Police Service – Victim Services Unit).

This project was designed to best serve the client, reducing barriers and obstacles that women and family members in crisis face. We were told of an instance where a Canadian woman and her daughter fleeing from spousal abuse in the US were connected with thirteen different agencies to meet their needs.

Pamela spoke of the importance of cooperation between ministries to make this work successful and of the importance of relationships between people in the various agencies. A sense of trust is critical.

The Family Violence Project of Waterloo Region was modeled on the San Diego Family Justice Center. Other communities are looking at a similar model, including Edmonton, Brantford, Peel, Scarborough.

Pamela Mank believes that coordination/co-location is not the entire solution but it is a critical and fundamental part of the solution to family violence. The Family Violence Project is successful. Not only are clients' needs being met but statistics show that the incidence of homicide arising from family violence has decreased.

In light of the *No Cherries* report and the presentation on the Family Violence Project the meeting ended with a brief discussion of the provincial poverty reduction plan as it affects women. Some expressed that the poverty of single women (especially elderly) and the disabled need to be addressed. Others expressed that they felt that the focus of the Ontario Government effort should continue to be children.

Anne Gilbert.

March 14, 2009

Comments at Status of Women and Human Rights Standing Committee On

*No cherries grow on our trees:
A Social Policy Research Paper for the Take Action Project,
a public policy initiative to address women's poverty and violence against women.*

October 2008

by: METRAC (Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children), United Way Toronto and Woman Abuse Council of Toronto.

www.metrac.org/programs/info/take.action.report.dec08.pdf

This research study included two consultations with 50 partner organizations, interviews with 34 of these organizations, qualitative interviews by the project coordinator of 14 women who have experienced poverty and violence and a review of the literature.

Among the findings are:

1. Women's poverty often traps women in abusive relationships (intimate, employment, care-giving and dependency).
2. Violence and poverty are seriously impacting women's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

In addition to low income, poverty includes lack of opportunities to work, lack of access to education, vulnerability to physical and sexual violence and being without a voice (empowerment).

Recommendations are made to the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction (CCPR) with attention to links between women's poverty and violence against women. These are issues related to gender, childcare, education, housing, employment and health (social and income support).

In order to have the option to leave an abusive relationship, a woman needs childcare in order to seek further education and/or employment. Childcare in public schools would allow young mothers to complete high school. Women experiencing abuse by their partner are virtually homeless in their own homes. The study recommends a continuum of emergency shelters, second stage housing and permanent housing, especially in rural and remote areas. Existing social housing stock needs upgrading.

Legislative reforms are recommended to protect women experiencing violence: entitlement to paid leave, protection against employment termination, workplace accommodation to reduce violence, clear entitlements to Ontario Works without delay if they must quit their job. Education programs should be available which are specifically designed to the realities of their lives including violence.

Critical information that women need about their rights and available services should be readily accessible and timely.

By the Sub- Committee on Violence against Women:

Judie Arrowood arrowood@sympatico.ca

Ann McElhinney annmce@sympatico.ca

Rhea Pretsell pretsell@sympatico.ca

Wendy Schrama wschrama@mountaincable.net

**SAMPLE LETTER
PLEASE EDIT AS YOU WISH**

ON LETTERHEAD

Date

MPPs' addresses can be found at <http://www.ontla.on.ca> [click on Members on the left-hand side]

Re: Women's Poverty and Violence Against Women in the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

Dear:

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) {insert club name} would like to congratulate the government of Ontario on their Poverty Reduction Strategy documented in the report *Breaking the Cycle*. We support both the plan to break the cycle of poverty in our province, and the target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% in 5 years. This is an important first step.

While the Poverty Reduction Strategy recognizes women as one of the key groups that require "very specific and tailored types of support", CFUW members continue to be concerned about women living in poverty. As reported in *No Cherries Grow on Our Trees*, a project conducted by the Take Action Project, violence and poverty are linked in multiple and complex ways. In the current economic downturn, it is reasonable to expect existing levels of violence against women to increase. With this in mind, we urge the Ontario

government to consider the disproportionate impact of poverty on women facing violence in their lives, and to strengthen financial support and services to assist them.

CFUW *your Club name* was founded *in year*. Our Club is a self-funded, non partisan and non-sectarian organization. We promote equality for women and girls and are active in public affairs, public education, and human rights. Annually, we award scholarships (bursaries) to (female) students at the local *name high school(s) or local college or university*. We support *charity, or community activity* We are part of CFUW Ontario Council which has 5,400 members in 57 communities across Ontario. We are affiliated with the Canadian Federation of University Women.

Sincerely,

President
CFUW ...

Adjust the final paragraph to describe your club's activities

Edeltraud Neal, Chair
Status of Women & Human Rights Committee

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session

Christine Fortin of *Patrick 4 Life* facilitated our afternoon meeting. We were divided into four groups and given a series of questions to answer and discuss. The questions concentrated on:

- How much we knew about HIV/AIDS.
- What we would like children to know about HIV/AIDS.
- The benefits of having HIV/AIDS education as part of the school curriculum.
- The barriers to HIV/AIDS education in our schools.
- What the HIV/AIDS curriculum would look like.

After we discussed the questions in our individual groups, we came back as a large group to discuss the outcomes. It was very interesting to listen to the different perspectives on each question. Time unfortunately ran out.

Christine has taken all of our answers and will compile them into a report for us. I will distribute the report to everyone when I receive it from Christine. We will briefly discuss the outcomes of the report at our September meeting.

Judy Thomson from the Owen Sound CFUW Club gave us a brief overview of the proposed resolution they are working on. The report was distributed to all members before the meeting. The report has been compiled by Sandy Stevenson, Judy Keeling and Judy Thomson.

The focus of the report is on childhood poverty and the importance of early and sound education reports. They are concerned about the shortcomings in the preparation of teenagers for their future in the workplace, in post secondary education and society in general. Their primary concern is with some of the policies of the Ministry of Education in particular, policies governing evaluation of student performance in secondary schools.

As a committee we will be discussing this at our September meeting. Our homework from now until September is to gather information about how our secondary schools are evaluating students in school throughout Ontario.

Please see the report for more detailed information. If you did not receive the report either e-mail Wendy Taylor at wendyltaylor@rogers.com or Judy Thomson at harkawaychina@yahoo.com

Sally Smith, who is resigning from the Education Committee after three years, commented on the work of *Pathways to Education* that gave us a presentation two years ago. Sally commented on the positive aspects of the program and the success they have had with bringing down the drop out rate of students from 57% to 10%. More about Pathways can be found on their website at www.pathwaystoeducation.ca
Thanks for all of your assistance over the last three years Sally. I will miss seeing you at the meetings.

Marilyn Hill gave a report concerning a petition to the Federal Government about the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) that has been promoting and supporting university-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences. SSHRC funding has been used to complete ground breaking research in countless areas in Canada and around the world.

The Federal Budget, presented on January 27th, contains a sentence that has the potential to halt this kind of research: “Scholarships granted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council will be focused on business-related degrees”. These measures are backward and insulting to the thousands of Canadians that are students and researchers in the social sciences and humanities.

The petition is calling upon the government to remove this sentence from the 2009 Budget and ensure that SSHRC funding not be allocated to one specific discipline but to the range of studies in the social sciences and humanities.

The web link to the petition was sent out to all Education Committee members on March 19.

Wendy Taylor, Chair
Education Committee

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session

There were 24 members present representing 17 Clubs. Myrtle thanked all the members who submitted the vast array of projects addressing poverty in which their clubs participate and promised to try to assemble the list for the next report.

Linda Hall(Hamilton) spoke on CFUW advocacy regarding child care. Linda outlined the challenges from both the provincial and federal governments: the federal government rescinded its 2006 funding arrangements with the provinces, resulting in the cancellation of \$63 million in funding and in 2010 all federal payments will end. The result will be the closing of many child care programs and no new spaces. To date the provincial government has made no promises to spend the outstanding money still available. Ontario lags behind both Manitoba and Quebec in funding for child care and both of those provinces have significantly reduced poverty levels as a result. Linda asked members to send letters addressing the issue of child care funding in the upcoming provincial budget. There is also need for vigilance as to the entry of private for-profit agencies into child care.

Myrtle Greve updated the committee on the issue of “managed competition” for home care services. Although the Minister of Health had put a moratorium on the competitive bidding process following a community and provincial outcry in 2007, the process has been restarted following announcements regarding increased accountability and transparency. The issue of for-profit agencies permeating the home care industry and in many cases replacing long-term not-for-profit charitable agencies appears to be a “done deal” and so the advocacy needs to focus on making the system work as well as possible. A letter outlining the 3 key issues has been sent by the Hamilton Action and Advocacy Committee to a local MPP and is attached for your information.

The committee has been struggling with the issue of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). The LHINs operate very differently throughout the province and there is a lack of understanding of their role in health care. It was suggested that our committee devote a meeting to the LHINs. As their legislation is up for review until March 31, 2010 we may need to do this at the September meeting.

Other suggestions for next year were to invite Dr. Charles Pascal and more on the environment, possibly an evaluation of the waste-diversion act.

Myrtle Greve, Chair
Legislation Committee

Text of letter sent by CFUW- Hamilton Action and Advocacy Committee to a local MPP

March 4, 2009

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP
Unit 2- 952 Concession St.
Hamilton, ON L8V 1G2

Dear Ms. Aggelonitis,

As requested, we respectfully submit to you some key points about the present state of Home Care in Ontario which we hope that you will address when you meet with Minister David Caplan.

While you have improved the fairness of the competitive bidding process, the fundamental challenges associated with a “winner takes all” competitive bidding process still exist:

1. Although extending the terms of contracts may help with recruitment in the first half of the contract term, jobs remain part-time, unstable and precarious. In years 5+ of the contract all agencies are vulnerable to potentially losing their contracts which is a substantial barrier to the recruitment of health care workers. In all other health sectors the government is trying to mitigate the unstable nature of health care work. Add to the mix wages that are substantially lower than those paid in hospitals or long-term care and it is evident why the numbers of Registered Nurses and Personal Support Workers working in this sector continue to decline. An RN who recently left community nursing reports that the lack of staff made it impossible for her to stay. On several occasions she was assigned by the agency employing her to as many as 20 cases in a day which she could not fulfill safely or competently. The human resources challenges in home care have not been remedied by the recent reforms.

Currently, a Personal Support Worker (PSW) in Home Care is paid an average of \$14 an hour as compared to \$19 per hour in a Long-Term Care Facility. Both positions require the same skill, ability and training and should be compensated equally.

2. The purpose of the LHINs is to improve service integration across the continuum of care. Presently, only CCACs can deal directly with the service provider agencies. This results in delays and blocking the movement of clients to the most appropriate level of care. For example, St Joseph’s Health Care cannot establish a relationship with St Joseph’s Home Care whereby the hospital might provide particular training to a group of PSWs who would be on-call for the hospital and whose specific training would improve the discharge of patients from

hospital to home. The hospital must take whomever the CCAC assigns them. For St Joseph's Health Care to take on the training of all PSWs for a specific need is inefficient.

3. In Ontario there is exciting innovation occurring as a result of the requirements of the Aging at Home Strategy for collaboration among agencies providing community care. This stands in stark contrast to the managed competition model in home care in which competitors would undermine their own businesses if they were to share their innovative practices with their competitors. This blocks improvement across the system. All boats should rise as a result of innovation but this is not the case in home care.

The current funding model pits those providing acute care, long-term care and home care against one another which results in one sector balancing its budget on the back of another. For example, when the CCAC finds itself in a deficit position and instituting waiting lists for home care it is inevitable that more of the people needing care will show up in emergency rooms.

Hollander et al in a 2009 article present "new findings and a broad weight of evidence to make the case that it is possible to obtain better value for money in our health care system by adopting models of integrated care delivery for seniors and others with ongoing complex care needs". Integrated models could be structured in a variety of ways but would, at a minimum, typically include system-level case management; a single administrative structure; a single funding envelope; and a range of services appropriate to the care of seniors such as acute and chronic home care, home support, supportive housing/assisted living, long-term care facilities and specialty geriatric units in hospitals.

We ask that you consider our comments as your government continues to modernize the health care system. If you wish any further information please contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Hill
President

Myrtle Greve,
Co- Chair, Action and Advocacy