



*"Building the smallest democracies at the heart of society."
The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994*

Agreement# 40063171

The Laurel Centre: 25 Years of Service to the Community



by Suhad Bisharat, Executive Director, The Laurel Centre. Inc.



2010 is a special year for **The Laurel Centre**, as we celebrate our 25th anniversary. This event is held to celebrate the healing and success stories of the women we see at The Laurel Centre.

Before introducing the agency, it is important to provide the history of The Laurel Centre, including the significance of the name.

Significance of the Laurel Tree

A Greek myth tells the story of a wood nymph named Daphne, who is much like the Greek goddess Diana – independent, athletic, a huntress. In the myth, the god Apollo pursued Daphne in what is interpreted today as a sexual attack. Daphne called to the river god for help and was transformed into a laurel tree – a symbol of victory and triumph.

The Laurel Centre represents the transformation and triumph of its clients. The laurel leaf is a symbol featured in the Centre's logo.

History of The Laurel Centre

In the early 1980's, those who worked in the addictions field realized that many addicted women – up to 80% –also struggled to overcome the trauma that was a result of childhood sexual abuse. Many were unable to deal with their addictions because their lives were too painful.

At the time there were no services for women that treated addictions and abuse together. To meet this need, the Women's Post Treatment Centre was founded in 1985. In 1997 the centre changed its name to The Laurel Centre.

The Centre has evolved and grown into one of the most respected organizations of its kind and has gained recognition across the country for its unique contribution to women's health.

Who is eligible for this service?

Any woman who experiences the traumatic effects of childhood sexual abuse can receive group and individual long term counselling free of charge.

Effects of unresolved trauma

The Centre recognizes mental health challenges and compulsive coping behaviours, including addictions, as being some of the possible long-term consequences of unresolved trauma.

Because of the pain it causes, many adult female survivors have mixed feelings about talking to anyone about their childhood. Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuses often experience difficulties in later

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***Call for Proposals
for the
Next Publication in the RESOLVE Book Series***

RESOLVE is now accepting proposals from potential editors for the next book in the RESOLVE book series. Proposed books can represent a topic previously not covered in the existing books in the series or be an update of topics covered in some of the other books in the series, particularly some of the earlier books in the series (a description of these books can be found on the RESOLVE website). All books proposed must reflect a topic related to family violence and/or violence against women and children. Proposals must include the following information within a **maximum of 5 single spaced pages**:

1. Book Co-Editors

Include the names, titles, organizational affiliation, contact information and a professional or personal biography for each co-editor. The biography should convey how the individual is connected to the topic of their proposed book. Books require one academic co-editor and one co-editor from the community.

2. Tentative Title of the Book

It is understood that this title may change.

3. Brief Description of the Book Topic

Describe the topic of the book and what issues will be covered under this topic.

4. Explain Why this is a Topic that is Timely or that Needs to be Explored

5. A Tentative List of Chapters and their Authors

It is understood that all of the chapters and their authors may not yet be determined, therefore ideas for at least four chapters should be presented, with indication that other chapters will be included. Any other information about the remaining chapters will be welcome. Identify if you are open to other people submitting chapters.

Deadline for Proposals is Monday June 7, 2010, 4:00PM CST

Proposals must be sent electronically in Microsoft Word to:

Jocelyn Proulx

proulxjb@ms.umanitoba.ca

Questions can be directed to Jocelyn Proulx at the e-mail above or at **(204) 474-7410**.

Manitoba Update: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada



by Cheryl Fraehlich

From the 1800s until the last school closed in 1996, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were separated from their families and communities, and placed in Indian Residential Schools across Canada. The purpose of these schools was to isolate children from any influence of their families, values, and traditions, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. In many instances children who attended the church run schools experienced severe mistreatment that included emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect. Many children died while attending or trying to escape from these schools. Although it has been over a decade since the last school ceased operation, the residential school system has caused great harm for generations of Aboriginal people, and the devastating effects on individuals, their families, and communities contribute to existing social problems. Unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness among Canadians about the realities of the residential schools.

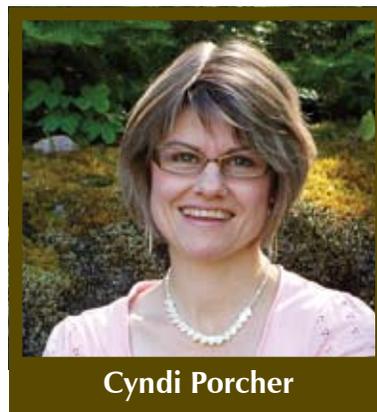
The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, an agreement intended to begin the repair of harm caused by the residential schools, was implemented in 2007. In addition to providing compensation to students of residential schools, the agreement involved the establishment of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The mandate of the TRC is to create a public historical record that documents what happened in residential schools, and the impact of these schools. A ten-member Indian Residential School Survivor Committee advises the Commission that is chaired by the **Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair**, Manitoba's first Aboriginal judge. Justice Sinclair serves with two other Commissioners, **Marie Wilson** and **Chief Wilton Littlechild**. The TRC made history with the official opening of their national head office in Winnipeg on April 8, 2010.

One of the primary activities of the TRC is to gather statements about residential school experiences from former students, their families and communities. These statements will be used to prepare a complete historical record of the operation of the schools. Equally important, allowing survivors and their families to tell their stories is an important step in the process of healing and reconciliation. There are an estimated 80,000 former students living in Canada today. The

TRC will also host national and community events, provide and support public education, and support commemorative activities that honour and pay tribute to residential school survivors. In addition, the TRC will investigate student deaths and disappearances from the residential schools. More information about the TRC and planned activities is available through their website at www.trc.ca.



Other RESOLVE Manitoba News



Cyndi Porcher

Although we were sad to say goodbye to Julie Shirliff when she moved to Ontario last year, we are very pleased to introduce our new office manager, **Cyndi Porcher**. Cyndi joined RESOLVE as acting office manager in April 2009 and brings 20 years of administrative assistant

experience to this position. Thanks to Cyndi's professionalism, outstanding skills and ability, and amazingly calm demeanour, the period of transition and settling in has been seamless. We are fortunate to have Cyndi on board.

RESOLVE Manitoba Steering Committee member **Sharon Taylor** has been honoured by being named one of Winnipeg's **Most Beautiful Women** by **Winnipeg Women**



Sharon Taylor

magazine. Winnipeg Women has a ten year tradition of celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of local women. This is the fifth year that the magazine has hosted the Most Beautiful Women contest, which asks readers to nominate women who they feel best exemplify the true meaning of "beauty." Sharon was nominated for her tireless work as executive director at **Wolseley Family Place**, a multi service family resource centre for low-income families in Winnipeg. Congratulations Sharon! ❧

Saskatchewan Update: Healing Journey Project Winding Down in Prince Albert



by Colleen Hamilton

With more than four years and 275 interviews since the first wave of participants in the Healing Journey project were recruited in Prince Albert, the project is now in the final stages of data collection. ***The Healing Journey: A Longitudinal Study of Women Who Have Been Abused by Intimate Partners*** is the first study of its kind in Canada, and examines the experience of intimate partner violence and the consequences it has on the lives of battered women in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta over a four year period. The Saskatchewan portion of the study is led by **Dr. Mary Hampton**, a Saskatchewan Population Health & Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) researcher and Psychology professor at Luther College. SPHERU Director **Dr. Bonnie Jeffery** is also a member of the research team and oversees the project in Prince Albert. Community agencies work with the researchers and form partnerships to create results that will help to understand the cycle of abuse and the intervention and prevention strategies implemented to address the cycle.



Director Carol Soles and Support Services Worker Theresa Lanigan in the newly renovated kitchen at the Prince Albert Women's Shelter

With the drop in project activity is an opportunity to reflect on what the study has meant to Prince Albert's community agency partner, **The Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women**. The Safe Shelter has been an invaluable contributor from the start, assisting with the creation of appropriate recruitment and data collection methods, and providing in-kind supports such as interview space and child care, as well as making staff time available for interviews. The experience has been a good one for Shelter Director **Carol Soles**, who was pleased with how the academic researchers viewed the community agencies, stating they were "embraced us as equals."

The director of the 24 bed Shelter fully expects that the hard work and dedication of the provincial team of researchers, community agencies and interviewers will be worth it in the end as findings from the study are

translated into policy and service delivery adjustments and improvements. She has already seen an impact from involvement in the study at the Prince Albert Safe Shelter, where a new position was created to provide continuing support services to women who had received services and were now back in the community. Although analysis of the study data is not complete, Soles says that through informal contacts with study participants "we became aware that clients who maintained some connection to the Shelter after receiving services seemed to be experiencing increased success in managing their lives," reinforcing a need for follow up services that had been previously identified. This allowed the Shelter director to make a stronger case for fund allocation to the position.

Having veteran Shelter staff member **Theresa Lanigan** involved in project interviews was also beneficial, as she contributed to a smoother interaction between agency and interviewer roles. As a research partner, the Shelter was interested in the success of the interviews and accommodated Theresa's schedule to allow interviews to

be held at times that fit the needs of the participants. This, in turn, allowed Theresa to stay with the project when other interviewers with less flexible schedules were not able to do so. Of the seven interviewers hired in Prince Albert over the life of the project, Theresa is the only one to have been involved in all seven waves of interviews. She has found it rewarding that the interviews "helped them to reflect on their journey and be able to see the small successes which over the period of time added up to change." She said many participants are interested in seeing the final report of the study and believe that positive outcomes will be seen down the road.

The project was funded by the **Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)**. For more information please go to www.uregina.ca/resolve/RESOLVE/research.htm. ☘

Alberta Update



by Leslie M. Tutty

A report entitled *Finding Their Voices: Women From Religious/Ethno-Cultural Communities Speak Out About Family Violence* has recently been completed. Part of FaithLink, an initiative of Calgary's **Alliance to End Violence**, the report was authored by Drs. **Irene Sevcik**, former Program Manager of FaithLink, **Michael Rothery**, a social work professor at the University of Calgary and **Nancy Nason-Clark**, a sociology professor at the University of New Brunswick and Director of the Rave Project. The summary below is abstracted from the report.

It is commonly accepted that culture and traditional values play significant roles in the way in which women respond to domestic violence (Bent-Goodley, 2005). Tutty, Giurgiu and Traya (2010) cite a number of studies suggesting that socio-cultural factors, such as ethnicity, language, gender roles and values related to the help-seeking behavior need to be explored in various immigrant and visible minority groups (Dasgupta, 1998; Perilla & Perez, 2002; Bhuyan & Senturia, 2005; Ingram, 2007).

The FaithLink study targeted three religious/ethno-cultural communities in Calgary: Christian, Khmer-Canadian, and Jewish, all communities with which the FaithLink program has established connections. The Jewish community is well-established within the city with a population numbering approximately 8000, including Reform, Conservative and Orthodox congregations. The Khmer-Canadian community is small, numbering approximately 2000, and includes those who came as refugees in the 1980's, more recent immigrants, and Canadian-born children. It is primarily Buddhist in religious tradition, with some Christian influences.

Eighty-five women were interviewed for the project: 35 from the Jewish community, 44 from various

Christian denominations, and six from the Khmer-Canadian community. The themes common to all three constituent groups include: the acknowledgement that family violence occurs in their respective communities; that abusive behaviours are culturally and religiously defined; that marriage and family are important cultural and/or religious tenets that significantly influence how women view themselves and the decisions they make in the face of abuse from a marital partner.

Further, patriarchal structures that place women in submissive and dependent positions also influence a community's acknowledgement of, and response to domestic

abuse and the support offered to victims. Abuse impacts every aspect of the victim's life, increasing the difficulty of extricating herself from the situation and, regardless of a woman's cultural/religious beliefs, the complexities and consequences of leaving an abusive marital relationship can be daunting and long lasting.

Regardless of the varied and numerous religious and cultural issues raised by each constituent group in the study, one predominant conclusion was that the safety of women is an over-riding principle. Safety must take precedence over gender-based religious beliefs and/or cultural practices and the idealism vested in marriage and family. It must also take precedence in addressing the barriers and challenges that constrain women from disclosing abuse and leaving abusive relationships; and in changing help-seeking patterns to allow victims to access resources that are available to them. Safety must be the guiding principle on which needed resources are developed and upon which existing resources incorporate religiously and culturally sensitive services.

The report is available from the senior author at imsevcik@telus.net and/or resolve@ucalgary.ca. ☘



Laurel Centre cont'd from page 1

life, including depression; anxiety; drug and/or alcohol problems; gambling; feelings of worthlessness; loneliness; anger; isolation; and feelings of being "different," "bad" or "evil."

In addition to these difficulties, nightmares and flashbacks may be experienced, as well as problems related to sexuality and intimacy, including possible negative feelings about men and women.

Victims of childhood sexual abuse may find it difficult to trust others. When the abuse occurred within the family as it often does, or when the abuser was a trusted friend or baby-sitter, extreme shame is felt and the victim may feel responsible for the abuse.

Client's Story

Allana knocked on the door of The Laurel Centre to seek what she identified as the last effort at finding help. Her childhood traumas had her live in flooded memories of pain. She tried to numb the pain and turned to alcohol and street drugs, but the pain far exceeded her ability to cope.

She tried to end her life so she could be free of this enduring pain. She made a suicide plan and decided to carry this out but failed, and found herself in a psychiatric ward. There she was medicated but the pain still did not go away.

Allana continued with street drugs, alcohol, and prescribed medication. She could no longer concentrate or keep track of her shift work schedule and was fired from her job. Her finances diminished and she could no longer afford to pay for rent or food. Her ability to cope diminished greatly and resulted in a cycle of compulsive coping to numb her pain. She arrived at a place where she saw her only solution as the sex trade—a joint, a couch, and a warm place to sleep in exchange for sex.

Allana knocked on the door of The Laurel Centre seeking help, as this was her last resort. Through long term individual counselling she was able to learn how her behaviours related to her childhood sexual abuse. She learned new ways to cope and admitted herself into a treatment program to address her addiction. Today, she is enrolled in a pre-employment program that will help her get back into the work force. She no longer uses street drugs or alcohol to numb her pain, nor is she involved in the sex trade. She has made significant changes in her life and now lives in her own apartment.

Allana's story is not unique to many of the younger and older adult women admitted to our program. Our statistics indicate that 79% of clients who complete our program report to be living free from substance use or reduced substance use; 86% report accessing employment, volunteering and/or going back to school.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY***Hope. Celebrate. Joy. Laughter***

Join us in celebrating the healing journey of Allana and the thousands of women like her who have accessed our services over the last 25 years.

The 25th Anniversary Celebration will take place on

Wednesday, May 26, 2010 at 6PM

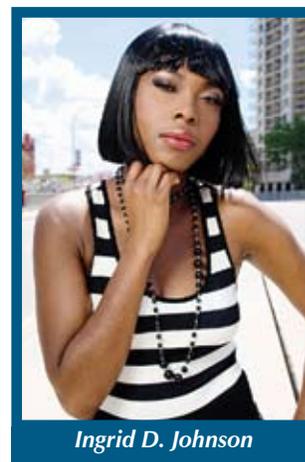
at the

Fort Garry Conference Centre, Grand Ballroom
in Winnipeg

At this formal event we dine and celebrate the healing journey of our clients, and hear the story of The Laurel Centre from our guest speaker **Jessica Holmes**. Jessica is best known as a popular member of the long running hit show CBC's Royal Canadian Air Farce.



Jessica Holmes



Ingrid D. Johnson

The healing journey of our clients will be celebrated through songs and poetry by **Ingrid D. Johnson**, a survivor of sexual abuse, of *In The Closet Productions: A Voice for The Voiceless*.

Please visit our website, www.thelaurelcentre.com, for more information. ☘

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS



May 26, 2010 - 25th Anniversary: Hope. Celebrate. Joy. Laughter presented by the Laurel Centre. Join us in celebrating the healing journey of the thousands of women who have accessed our services over the last 25 years. The celebration will take place at the Fort Garry Conference Centre, Grand Ballroom, in Winnipeg, MB. Please refer to www.thelaurelcentre.com for more information.

June 1–3, 2010 - First Nations National Child Welfare Conference: Building Healthy Communities Through Intervention & Prevention, hosted by First Nations Child & Family Services of New Brunswick and co-hosted by First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. The event will be held in the Moncton, New Brunswick, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. For more information refer to www.nsmdc.ca/content/242924; e-mail Byron Bushey, Conference Coordinator, at byronjb@nb.aibn.com; or phone (506)-854-6340 or toll free 1-866-854-4656.

June 7–10, 2010 - Pathways to Resilience II: The Social Ecology of Resilience presented by the Resilience Research Centre. The event will be held at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. This international gathering that will explore how individuals, families and communities from different cultures and contexts can overcome adversity and thrive. Over the past eight years, the Resilience Research Centre has worked with researchers, child advocates, policy makers and service providers from many different professional backgrounds to understand the social and cultural factors that shape children's and adolescents' pathways to resilience when they are seriously disadvantaged. For more information refer to www.resilienceresearch.org, telephone (902)494-3050, or e-mail rrc@dal.ca.

June 9–11, 2010 - Domestic Homicide Prevention Conference presented by HomeFront and the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work. The event will be held at the MacEwan Conference & Event Centre, 2500 University Drive NW, University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta. For information, please refer to www.homicideprevention.com or www.facebook.com/pages/Calgary-AB/2nd-Annual-Canadian-Domestic-Homicide-Prevention-Conference/275492668605?ref=mf. For additional information please contact e=mc2 event management inc. or (403)770-2698 or toll free in North America at 1-866-851-3517, or e-mail conference@emc2events.com.

July 11–13, 2010 - International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference presented by the Family Research Laboratory and the Crimes against Children Research Center. The event will be held in the Sheraton Harborside Hotel and Conference Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA. For more information refer to www.scra27.org/calendar/internationalfamilyviolenceandchildvictimizationre or e-mail frl.conference@unh.edu.

July 12–15, 2010 - National Family Law Program presented by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. The event will be held at the Victoria Conference Centre in Victoria, British Columbia. Topics include a session on Domestic Violence and Child Custody Issues. For more information refer to www.flsc.ca/en/pdf/NFLP2010-brochure.pdf or contact Heather Walker, Program Coordinator at (705)879-3082, or by e-mail at nationalfamilylawprogram@sympatico.ca.

July 31–August 4, 2010 - Changing Faces of the Movement: NCADV's and NOMAS' Collaborative Conference on Ending Violence presented by National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the National Organization for Men Against Sexism. The event will be held at the The Hilton Anaheim in Anaheim, California, USA. For information refer to www.ncadv.org/conferences/GeneralConferenceInformationandOverview-2.php or e-mail Gretchen Shaw, NCADV Conference Coordinator, at conference2010@ncadv.org.

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We're finding solutions to protect women and children from violence and abuse!

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Web site: www.prairieactionfoundation.ca

Teri Posyniak: Our Artist-in-Residence



Long before Teresa (Teri) Posyniak became our artist-in-residence in 2008, she participated in fund-raising events and lent her images for RESOLVE'S book covers. At RESOLVE's 2009 Research Day Teri presented a paper entitled *Exploring Resiliency Through Art*, and continues to promote our mission in her public lectures, exhibitions, and community work.

Her involvement in social issues is often reflected in her paintings and sculptures, the main example of which is her public sculpture *Lest We Forget*, where the names and ages of 135 murdered Canadian women are carefully written on the surface. The sculpture found a permanent home on the University of Calgary campus, where it continues to heighten awareness of violence against women.

Teri received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Regina and her Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Calgary. The recipient of many awards, Teri's paintings and sculptures have been exhibited across Canada. Her work is included in many national and international private, corporate, and public collections.

Neighbourhood Watch III, shown here, is featured in our new marketing materials.



Her website, www.teresaposyniak.com, clearly demonstrates her passion and creative advocacy for social justice. ☘

RESOLVE Manitoba

~ Dr. Jane Uršel ~
Director (Academic)

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