

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

Agreement# 40063171

## Women at Risk: Research and Response



*by Kathy Levine and Jocelyn Proulx, University of Manitoba,  
 and Rick Rennpferd, Opportunities for Independence Inc.*

**S**ince 1983, Opportunities for Independence Inc. (OFI) has offered services to adults and youth with intellectual disabilities who have been, or are at



risk of, involvement with the justice system. Services include residential support homes, therapeutic services, and life and employment skills training. With use of a client-centred approach, programs respond to individual client needs and capacities.

In the recent past the majority of OFI clients have been men. However, in the past decade the organization has seen an increase in the numbers of women who access their services. This trend is in line with reports that women represent the most rapid population growth in prison, and that many of these women have intellectual disabilities (Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, 2003). In response, OFI has developed a program for women at risk. Grounded in a feminist perspective, this program seeks to empower women through use of their strengths in order to help them develop a positive self-concept, gain a sense of personal control and agency in their lives, and to become more engaged in the community. The belief is that these factors will lead to better judgments and decisions, and thus less involvement with the law (Lindsay, et al., 2004).

Women who access this program present with

a variety of life circumstances that include experiences of violence and abuse, sexual exploitation, addictions, housing issues, poverty, and mental health issues. According

to literature, individuals with intellectual disabilities manifest such behaviour challenges as self-injury, aggression, socially inappropriate behaviour, noncompliance, and social withdrawal—all which increase their risk of involvement with the law. These behaviours have also been observed in many of the women who access services at OFI. Programs that manage anger, healthy sexuality, relationship skills, self-image, nutrition, and life and recreational skills are intended to address some of these issues. As with all OFI programs, the women's program is culturally sensitive, and elders are available for traditional counselling. Sharing circles and sweat lodges are also available on a regular basis. Given that a large

*Treatment Programs... continued on Page 6*

### Inside this issue...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. <i>The 2014 Manitoba Trauma Forum</i> | 5. RESOLVE Alberta Update              |
| 3. RESOLVE Manitoba Update               | 6. Treatment Programs, <i>cont.</i>    |
| 4. RESOLVE Saskatchewan Update           | 7. Announcements, Conferences & Events |
|  | 8. <i>Prairieaction</i> Update         |

## A Unified Voice on Violence Against Women: An Overview of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses



by Lise Martin, Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses

### Background

In 2009, provincial and territorial shelter associations began to give shape to the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses (CNWSTH). Until then there was simply no National forum in which the leaders and members of these organizations could share ideas and resources and innovate. The Network was incorporated as a charitable organization in December 2012, and hired its first executive director in April 2013.



Lise Martin

In these first two years the Network has operated on a minimal budget while establishing some of the important foundational pieces, and securing its financial stability. The Network's main areas of activity are centred on research and policy, knowledge exchange, and public education. We have a small secretariat in Ottawa with a staff of two! This, however, has not stopped us from working and engaging with partners in all areas of the country.

### Blueprint for Canada's National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Girls

Upon the release of our paper, *The Case for a National Action Plan on Violence against Women* in October 2013, the Network worked with a number of partners to develop a blueprint for Canada's National Action Plan (NAP) on Violence against Women and Girls. Currently, Canada has no comprehensive national plan or strategy to deal with violence against women. Without a plan, responses are largely fragmented, and services often inaccessible. Over 20 organizations that represent the violence against women sector collaboratively developed this blueprint, which outlines what Canada's NAP needs to cover, and how it should be developed and implemented. In the lead up to the 2015 Federal election, we will ask all Federal parties to commit to the creation of a

National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, and to make this blueprint its starting point.

We invite organizations to endorse our blueprint by sending an e-mail with the name of your organization, contact name, and an e-mail address to [info@endvaw.ca](mailto:info@endvaw.ca), with **Blueprint** in the subject line. Endorsement of the blueprint means that you are in agreement that Canada needs a NAP on violence against women, and that you endorse this blueprint as a starting point.

### Shelter Voices

With responses from shelters that represent all provinces and territories, Shelter Voices seeks to amplify voices of shelter workers, and the women and children they serve. For far too long the voices of these women have not been at the forefront. Results of our annual shelter survey are presented in this publication, which provides a snapshot of one day for shelter organizations in Canada. From the 2015 survey—which had 231 shelter responses—111 women and 66 children were admitted to the shelter on one day. We also know that 294 women and 215 children had to be turned away on that same day. As well, shelters provide much more than a safe place to stay; in one day these 231 shelters provided their services to 3,781 women and 2,508 children.

### Sheltersafe.ca

The Network will proudly launch this new program in early June. The primary purpose of **sheltersafe.ca** is to help women who seek safety from abuse to connect to the helplines of their local shelter as quickly and simply as possible. In the absence of a national crisis phone line, women can go to **sheltersafe.ca** any time of the day or night, in any part of the country, and with one click connect to help in their neighbour-

*A Unified Voice... continued on Page 6*

## Manitoba Update



by Jane Ursel

In the last issue I indicated that I would be one of a number of Canadians to participate in the *International Visitor Leadership Program* sponsored by the American State Department. This was an exciting whirlwind trip to Washington D.C., Tucson, Arizona, and Seattle, Washington. There were eight Canadians, and one of the best parts of this trip was getting to know the seven other women who work to reduce violence against women. One of our fellow travelers, **Lise Martin**, Director of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses based in Ottawa, has contributed to our newsletter this issue. In addition, from west to east we traveled with **Jasvir Gill** (John Howard Society); **Caitlin Scarpelli** (Atira Women's Resource Society), from Vancouver; **Diane Redsky** (Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata), from Winnipeg; **Roberta Wesley** (Ontario Native Women's Association), from Constance Lake, Ontario; **Isabelle Paille** (Quebec Native

Women Inc.), from Montreal; and **Mary Ellen Henderson–Martin** (St. John Police, Victim Services), from New Brunswick. Despite snow storms in D.C. and a few delays we met with representatives from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the National Coalition for the Homeless, in Washington D.C. In Tucson we met with the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Police, Victim Services, and the Tribal Court, and in Seattle we met with the Domestic Violence Unit of the Seattle Police, and the Native American Law Centre at the University of Washington School of Law. While this is not a comprehensive list of all of our meetings it gives you an idea of the breadth of the issues covered. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet with people across North America addressing the same issues, sharing their experiences, as we all seek solutions to violence and abuse. ☘

### Introducing Our Steering Committee Members

#### **Suhad Bisharat**

by Jocelyn Proulx



Suhad Bisharat

For 29 years, **Suhad Bisharat** has worked to help people deal with violence and oppression. Over those years she has served as the Director of the Immigrant Women's Centre, the Organizational Coordinator at Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, and the Director of Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. In 2001, Suhad became Executive Director of The Laurel Centre and within that position in 2010, added the Men's Resource Centre as one of the programs available at the Laurel Centre. Under her leadership both centres provide a variety of programs to women and men who have been affected by childhood sexual abuse and related impacts. Through her efforts, Winnipeg has the only Canadian shelter for men who leave violent home situations. In addition to her work at the Laurel Centre, Suhad has co-chaired the Family Violence Prevention Consortium of Manitoba and the Manitoba Community Action

Program for Children. She is a past President and current board member of NEEDS, an organization that works with immigrant and refugee youth. Holding degrees in accounting, business administration, and non-profit management has not only made her a successful administrator, but also contributed to her considerable experience in management and financial training for non-profit organizations. In 2008 she co-authored *Lighting the Road to Success: A Handbook for Non-Profit Executive Directors*. Suhad places great value in evidence-based programming and therefore has been involved in a number of research projects with Jocelyn Proulx from RESOLVE, including developing a system for assessing improvements in clients and developing and evaluating a program model for the male childhood sexual abuse program delivered at the Men's Resource Centre. She has also served on the RESOLVE Steering Committee since 2008, and on the Regional Council and Partnership Boards since 2010. ☘

## Saskatchewan Update

### *Rural and Northern Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence: SSHRC/CURAs Project Update*



by Ann Bishop

**T**he Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council/Community–University Research Alliances (SSHRC/CURAs) project’s research team was very busy over Summer and Fall 2014, and into 2015. Over this time interviews (that had taken place the previous 12 months) were transcribed, and the data analysed. Global Information System maps were finalized in many instances, though this remains an ongoing process as more data is gathered and dissemination needs of the researchers evolve.

Last June’s team meeting discussed use of grounded theory as the next step in the project. A suggestion was made to use the term Disheartened in the core category of the grounded theory data analysis. While many services providers are disheartened, many team members felt that Frustration would be a more positive category name, since the word implies that providers have not given up. Resistance was also suggested, as was Ineffective, and Resilience. A key decision at the meeting was to conduct focus groups in selected rural and northern communities, and that these focus groups would take place over the summer and into the fall.

At the end of 2014, data transcription, cleaning, and coding for the interviews was, for the most part, completed and analysis is now underway. By the end of the year, researchers made many presentations, often using the maps generated from the environmental scans completed early in the project.

Focus groups in all regions are now complete, with the exception of one in the Northwest Territories, where researchers will travel to what is one of the most violent communities in Canada. They hope to have a focus group made up of elders from that community. As well, **Pertice Moffitt** plans to interview a priest who has lived in this community for some time.

Alberta conducted three focus groups in two communities—two rural and one northern. Data from the first focus group has been transcribed, cleaned and analysed; second and third focus group



Ann Bishop

data is being cleaned. The Alberta team also uses narrative inquiry for their analyses. Saskatchewan conducted two focus groups—one rural and one northern. Transcripts from their focus groups have been transcribed and cleaned, and analysis is well underway. The Saskatchewan team hopes to do an in-depth case study this summer, likely of the aforementioned northern community.

Manitoba conducted three rural and two northern focus groups. The rural focus groups have been transcribed and analysis has begun; transcription and cleaning for the early February northern focus group is underway. After one or two more interviews the team will complete transcription, clean up, and analysis.

**Darlene Juschka** developed a “template” for the narrative inquiry that will be used by all regions. While this template is not definitive, it is a good guideline for the regions to follow. Understanding that each region has differences, the teams need to have some similarities in each regions’ analyses in order to make it easier to write the final narrative for the project. One thing that stands out from the data the teams have collected is how similar the issues are across regions.

Each region will present its findings at the next CURA team meeting scheduled for June 26, 2015, in Regina. As well, all four regional teams plan to present at *RESOLVE Research Day* in October. The Alberta team is in the process of manuscript development, and discussions are underway for other journal articles. This team may also write a book that will encompass the whole project.

All in all, the SSHRC/CURA research team is on schedule to complete their work on time and within budget. This year—2015–16—is the final year that the project is funded, but the team hopes to get a one year extension from SSHRC to continue dissemination of results and conduct extensive knowledge transfer of its findings, possibly including that book! ❧

## Alberta Update

### *Alberta Council of Women's Shelters Second-Stage Shelter Project: Transitioning from Domestic Violence to Stability*



by *Jordana Linder*

**Note:** The original report was prepared by **Jan Reimer**, Executive Director, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

**W**ith sixteen of its member organizations, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters engaged in the Second-stage Shelter Project to collectively develop strategies to promote common understanding of and support for second-stage shelters in Alberta. Second-stage shelters provide safe, transitional housing for six months or more, in order to give a woman the necessary time to begin healing from an abusive relationship, to find counseling, as well as a job or educational opportunity. They provide wrap-around services and a safe home for a woman and her children (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2012).

At this time there are 12 second-stage shelters across Alberta, and the need for their services greatly exceeds available resources. In 2013–2014, 611 women and children were admitted to second-stage shelters in Alberta, with 1,096 turned away due to lack of capacity. This is a gross underestimate of the need, as women's emergency shelters do not refer women to second stage when they know there is no chance of them getting in. Further, of the 12 second-stage shelters in Alberta, only two receive Provincial funding for programming, while the remaining shelters totally rely on fundraising and rent in order to sustain service delivery and building operations. For more than 30 years two second-stage shelters in Alberta have remained as Government of Alberta "pilot" projects despite recommendations from the Premier's Roundtable on Family Violence, the women's shelter program review (2006), and the *Family Violence Hurts Everyone Domestic Violence Strategy*. In one way or another, each of these reports spoke to the importance of women and children having access to a continuum of safe housing options with wrap-around supports and the importance of research and evaluation of interventions and promising practices. To that end, with funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation, the Second Stage Project was initiated.

The aims of this project were to:

- 1) Develop key messages necessary to support second stage shelter funding;
- 2) Support collective public education and

awareness efforts;

3) Develop appropriate terminology and service description;

4) Develop and adjust as necessary a logic model;

5) Gather data in accordance with the logic model parameters;

6) Review data aggregated by ACWS and provide advice with respect to data collection, analysis and reporting based on these data; and,

7) Support applications for funding on behalf of Alberta's second-stage shelters.

Between August 2013, and June 2014, eleven organizations gathered information about women and children who resided in Alberta Second-stage Shelters. Over a period of 11 months the shelters recorded a total of 354 admissions, which represented 349 individual women and 571 child admissions.

Highlights of the findings from the data analysis will be presented in Part 2 of this report in the September 2015 RESOLVE newsletter. ☘



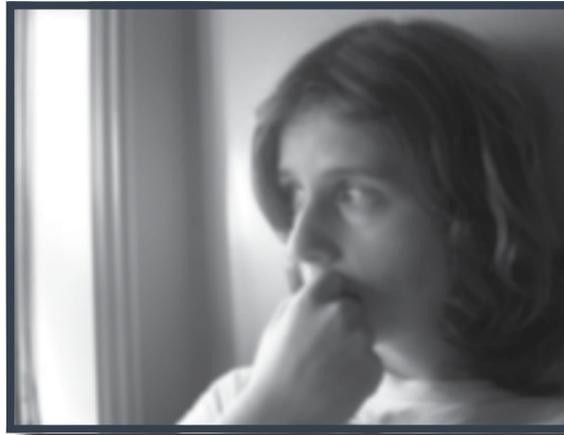
*Jan Reimer*

*Treatment Programs...* continued from Page 1

proportion of women who are involved with the justice system are Aboriginal (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts, & Johnson, 2006; Correctional Services Canada, 2013), OFI's cultural sensitivity is further evidence of responsiveness to individual client need.

The role of gender and gender-based analyses specific to intellectual disability and criminal justice service provision remains largely unexplored, which is problematic given the increase of numbers of women in the correctional system. In hopes of expansion of their program for women, OFI has been working with **Kathy Levine** from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, and **Jocelyn Proulx** from RESOLVE Manitoba, on a research project intended to advise the direction and content of program expansions. Historically, service delivery models react to crisis situations and have failed to take into account that these women may have been readily identified at a significantly earlier period in time, and that because their needs were not met with an appropriate social service response, their risk of future criminal involvement was increased. Available information is based on male populations and it is likely that the risk factors for involvement with the law, the pattern of circumstances that leads to involvement with law, and thus the service and program needs differ for men and women.

This gap in research and knowledge has led to the joint project between OFI and the University of Manitoba. The researchers will gather data from Provincial program managers and staff who provide services to women with intellectual disabilities, women with intellectual disabilities who are in the federal prison system, as well as those who access services in the community,



and the staff of community agencies who provide services to women with intellectual disabilities. Literature reports that women with cognitive disabilities are likely to have earlier contact with the criminal justice system, have more incidence of contact with the law, and have more offenses, convictions, and sentences (Baldry, Dowse, & Clarence, 2011). Gathered information

will help to determine the factors and patterns of circumstances by which women with intellectual disabilities become involved in the justice system, and early risk indicators and how these can be assessed. The types of interventions and services that are required by this population to either prevent them from entry into the legal system or to prevent them from a return to the correctional system once they have been released will be examined, as will the existence of barriers to obtain these services.

Research results will be combined with a literature review to produce service recommendations for women with intellectual disabilities who have become involved with—or are at risk of—involvement with the law. These recommendations will be used to modify and/or add to current women's programs at OFI. This information can then provide the potential for program model development and subsequent evaluation. Thus, this partnership will contribute to the literature and development of recommendations for programs in Manitoba, and potentially other provinces and territories. ❧

*For references, contact Jocelyn Proulx at [Jocelyn.Proulx@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Jocelyn.Proulx@umanitoba.ca).*

*A Unified Voice...* continued from Page 2

(region).

The site is meant to be used by women who are victims of abuse, or by their families, friends, colleagues and/or employers, who are often in a situation of urgency and distress when looking for this information.

**Practice Exchange Project (PEP)**

The PEP will make it easier for women's shelters across Canada to share, develop, and implement successful shelter practices. We are developing a set of tools to help shelters create shareable practice guides, along with a framework and a manual for reviewing, implementing and discussing these practices. ❧

## Announcements, Conferences and Events



### RESOLVE AWARD

The RESOLVE Regional Council and our three Provincial Steering Committees are pleased to announce the RESOLVE AWARD that will be given annually to acknowledge the contributions made by service providers and researchers who work in the field of domestic/interpersonal violence. An award will be given to these unsung heroes of our community in each prairie province. Nominees can be members of our steering committees, or any member of our community who has made an outstanding contribution to the support of peace and security in our homes and society. Award recipients will have their expenses paid to attend our Research Day, at which the three provincial RESOLVE awards will be given. Contact a member of your provincial Steering Committee to get more information on how to nominate a local hero you have in mind, or check our RESOLVE website at [umanitoba.ca/resolve](http://umanitoba.ca/resolve) (under the category RESOLVE News). ☚

### Shelter Voices Online Launch

As of April 22, Shelter Voices has launched online across Canada in English and French via email, Facebook and Twitter with the tags [#sheltervoices](https://twitter.com/sheltervoices) and [#maisonxpriment](https://twitter.com/maisonxpriment). Our stakeholders are invited to amplify the launch messages by sharing a version of our launch tweet: "Today @endvaw releases the [#ShelterVoices](https://twitter.com/ShelterVoices) 2015 report on the state of women's shelters in [#Canada](https://twitter.com/Canada). Share widely! [bit.ly/1Oemh8P](http://bit.ly/1Oemh8P) [#VAW](https://twitter.com/VAW)" Shelters and allies are encouraged to use Shelter Voices to help start conversations in their own communities on the importance of shelters and the need for further support.

"It's great that there's been increasing recognition of the prevalence of violence against women in Canadian society," says Lise Martin, Executive Director of the CNWSTH. "But the flip side is that there simply are not enough resources to meet the demand for services."

Despite the resource crunch, Shelter Voices testimonies reflect the impact that shelters have on the lives of women and children fleeing abuse. "I thought I would never be able to speak my mind," says one woman via Shelter Voices. "Thanks to shelter staff I have my voice back." A child's voice puts it even more succinctly: "We are in a magical house."

**October 14 - 17, 2015 - 34th Annual Research and Treatment Conference** in Montréal, Québec. Sponsored by the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. This conference will offer symposia, workshop presentations, poster sessions, discussion groups, and advanced clinics relating to issues in victim and perpetrator research and treatment. All sessions, with the exception of posters, have been approved for Continuing Education credits. Clinics are designed to provide participants with extensive training and skills enhancement. For more information refer to [www.atsa.com/conference](http://www.atsa.com/conference).

**October 22 - 23, 2015 - Research Day 2015: Intimate Partner Violence: Engaging Beyond the Survivor**, in Regina, Saskatchewan. Sponsored by the Prairieaction Foundation, RESOLVE is a triprovincial research network seeking solutions to violence and abuse. The call for papers, poster, and registration form are now on the conference website at [www2.uregina.ca/resolve/ResearchDay2015.html](http://www2.uregina.ca/resolve/ResearchDay2015.html).



Inspired by our healing wheel, conference topics may include physical, mental, spiritual, and/or emotional healing; abuse prevention programs; abuse in communities and families; community-based program implementation and evaluation; institutional healing (human rights conventions, civil/constitutional). If you have any questions or comments, please contact the conference facilitator, **Ann Bishop**, at **306-337-2511** or e-mail [ann.bishop@uregina.ca](mailto:ann.bishop@uregina.ca) and she will be pleased to help you. If you know of anyone who might be interested in presenting at or attending this conference, please pass along this information.

RESOLVEnews is a quarterly newsletter published by RESOLVE Manitoba. Any submissions, announcements and inquiries can be directed to the RESOLVE office in each of the three prairie provinces or to the editor, Ilze Cepulis, RESOLVE Manitoba - phone (204) 474-8965; fax: (204) 474-7686; e-mail: [newsedit@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:newsedit@cc.umanitoba.ca)



**Prairieaction**  
FOUNDATION



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

Telephone: **1-877-926-8129**

E-mail: **[info@prairieaction.ca](mailto:info@prairieaction.ca)**

Web site: **[www.prairieaction.ca](http://www.prairieaction.ca)**

## Prairieaction Foundation (PAF) Announcement & Call for Letters of Intent

The PAF is pleased to announce **Mia Dykstra** as our new Administrative Assistant. Welcome Mia!

This year PAF introduces a second call for Community Action, Research & Education (CARE) grants. If your organization or institution is interested in applying for a 2015 CARE grant, please note that the deadline to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) is **July 15, 2015**. For more information on the CARE grants, including whether or not your organization qualifies and how to apply, refer online to [prairieaction.ca](http://prairieaction.ca).

### **RESOLVE Manitoba**

*~ Dr. Jane Urşel ~  
Director (Academic)*

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO: 40063171

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

**108 Isbister Building  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2**

Ph: (204) 474-8965 Fax: (204) 474-7686

E-mail: [resolve@umanitoba.ca](mailto:resolve@umanitoba.ca)

Website: [www.umanitoba.ca/resolve](http://www.umanitoba.ca/resolve)

### **RESOLVE Saskatchewan**

*~ Dr. Mary Hampton ~  
Academic Research Coordinator*

**LC 210, Luther College  
University of Regina  
Regina, SK S4S 0A2**

Ph: (306) 337-2511 Fax: (306) 585-5267

E-mail: [resolve@uregina.ca](mailto:resolve@uregina.ca)

Website: [www.uregina.ca/resolve](http://www.uregina.ca/resolve)

### **RESOLVE Alberta**

*~ Dr. Nicole Letourneau ~  
Academic Research Coordinator*

**PF 2282  
University of Calgary  
2500 University Drive NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4**

Ph: (403) 220-8181 Fax: (403) 210-8117

E-mail: [resolve@ucalgary.ca](mailto:resolve@ucalgary.ca)