

# Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre 2008/2009 Annual Report

Respect, Equality, Safety, Dignity  
Every Woman's Right

## *Special Thank You to Staff and Volunteers*

### Staff

Anne Walzak  
Bogi Tessier  
Carrolyn Johnston  
Charu Malhotra  
Chelby Marie Daigle  
Habiba Ali  
Ikram Jama  
Josephine Basudde  
Lalita Salins  
Laura Cain  
Lee-Anne Lee  
Muna Issa  
Nicole Bedard

### Resource Volunteers

Carla Parchelo  
Harmeet Singh  
Lois Larade



### Board Members

Heidi Hauver  
Katy Davies  
Jenny Poon  
Melissa Haggerty  
Rhiannen Putt  
Samantha Lamb  
Sue Sheane

### Public Education Volunteers

Alba Arteaga  
Alexandra Tzzannidahkos  
Andrew Wong  
Christa Jones  
Helen Balanoy  
Jennifer Vanderburg  
Maria Alexopoulos  
Marie-Claire Burnet  
Madelaine Bluteau  
Melanie Mathieu  
Nadine Jobes  
Michael Colussi  
Michelle Navarro

### Students

Alba Rodriquez  
Debra McCollough  
Elise Harris

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### Crisis Line Volunteers

Adena Eliasoph, Anneke VanderKooy, Arshina Kassam, Bonnie Johnson, Caroline Melia, Carolyn Sharp, Danielle Consitt, Darhylxe Calixte, Emily Martin, Elise Harris, Ioana Nistorescu, Kristin Martin, Lara Kinkartz, Leigh Spanner, Lynn Williams, Maria Alexopoulos, Melanie Doucet, Melissa Heimerl, Natalie Brulotte, Natasha Popora, Onessa Robertson, Priya Kumar, Rachel Slater, Rachelle Bedard, Sara Afa, Shellie Warnock, Sherry Ritchie, Svjetlana Delic, Vanessa Blair

## *Executive Director's & President's Report*

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2008-9.

This year was marked by a strengthening of community partnerships and by upgrades to our building.



We continued to foster understanding and strengthen our relationships with Ottawa Police Services. Sandy participated in the Process Improvement exercise with the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse section (SACA). The objectives of the day were to bring sexual assault investigators and community partners together to identify the strengths of the current investigative process and identify areas for improvement.

The OC Transpo strike was somewhat difficult for many of our clients; however the counselling team did their best to be available by telephone to help support women through this time. Despite the difficulties related to the strike we are appreciative of the donated bus tickets we received from OC Transpo which was an invaluable support to many of our clients.

We continue to participate as a steering committee member at the Ottawa Coalition to End violence Against women (OCTEVAW), ensuring that sexual violence issues and concerns continue to be addressed on a city wide level. We are also a member of the Advocacy and Public Engagement Committee which is a subcommittee of OCTEVAW. This committee's mandate is to work strategically to effect positive change through collective action and to coordinate and conduct advocacy and communication efforts on behalf of OCTEVAW and to promote understanding of violence against women issues within the community. We are excited to be a part of this coalition and are looking forward to continued participation, engagement and discussion on how to eliminate violence against women.

This year we focused on many long overdue maintenance concerns of our building. We received a \$5,000 grant from The Clear Skies Project (Ottawa MacDonald-Cartier International Airport Authority) and contracted the Project Manager from Amsted Construction to work on repair and upgrades for the building. Thanks to Bogi, Finance and Administrative Coordinator who oversaw all the building maintenance work.

Sandy was selected to sit on the Ottawa Community Agency Pension Plan Board of Directors on behalf to the Centre.

This year, Elise Harris was hired as our summer student with support from Canada Summer Jobs (HRSDC). Elise worked very hard to contact companies requesting donations for the Centre. Thanks to Elise we received two large donations of office supplies from Xerox and M3.

Special thanks to all the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre staff and volunteers who continue to provide quality programming and service to the Centre.

Thanks to all the funders and donors to the Centre this year:

Canada Summer Jobs (HRSDC)  
Clear Skies Project - Ottawa MacDonald-Cartier International Airport Authority  
Community Safety & Correctional Services  
Department of Justice Canada  
Status of Women Canada  
The City of Ottawa  
The Ministry of the Attorney General  
United Way Centraide

Donations received from:  
CanadaHelps.org  
Givemeaning.org  
OC Transpo  
Xerox  
3M



Sandy Onyalo, Executive Director  
Heidi Hauver, Acting President, Board of Directors

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## Program Reports

### *Counselling Program*

The counselling program continues to provide excellent services from a feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppression perspective for women survivors of sexual violence including recent sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, incest, and ritual abuse. Although our focus is sexual violence, our service users deal with a variety of issues, which are related to sexual violence. Some of these issues include: legal issues, interpersonal relationships, mental health (depression, addiction, eating disorders, etc), physical health, and socio-economic issues. The program provides many opportunities for survivors to work in collaboration with their counsellors on their experiences of sexual violence and reclaim their lives and sense of well-being.

#### **Counselling Team**

Our counselling team, is comprised of Charu Malhotra, Laura Cain, Anne Walzak, Tanya Cook, and Carolyn Johnston. Each woman brings her own wisdom and insight to the team. The program is fortunate to continue having the excellent support and guidance of Lalita Salins, the Clinical Supervisor, through monthly group sessions with the team and individual sessions with counsellors. Her knowledge and insight have had a profound effect on the quality of our services and is greatly appreciated.

#### **Placement Student**

Debra McCullough joined us as a placement student from September 2008 to April 2009. Debra was a student in the M.Ed Counselling program at the University of Ottawa and was a great addition to our team. She provided individual crisis counselling, worked with one long-term client and co-facilitated information sessions with other students. We wish her all the best in her career as a counsellor.

#### **Individual and Group Counselling**

Our services included short-term crisis (1 to 6 sessions) counselling, long-term (up to 12 months) individual counselling, support groups (first stage for women without previous group experience and a variety of second stage groups for women with prior group experience), yoga, Nia Dance, and information sessions.

In the summer of 2008, former placement student Melissa Heimrl joined the counselling team as a Crisis Counsellor, providing short term crisis counselling to clients. She ended her contract in the winter of 2009. We wish her the best in her future endeavours.

## Counselling Program Report cont

Laura offered an introductory yoga class as well as Chair yoga for women with limited mobility throughout the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009. The yoga group has provided women with a holistic opportunity, connecting mind and body, in their healing journeys. Moreover, in the winter of 2008, Melissa and Elise facilitated information sessions on topics such as anger, flashbacks, coping mechanisms, and the role of survivors' support persons and family.

We were also fortunate to partner with Marcela Rojas a Nia dance instructor. Nia creatively blends movements, concepts and philosophies from both Eastern and Western traditions. This movement form helps to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Marcela offered an 8 week session of dance in the fall of 2008 and in the spring of 2009 and the ORCC opened registration to all women in the community. Marcela is currently studying dance in Spain and we wish her all of the best in her endeavours.

### **Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC)**

The ORCC has a long-standing partnership with the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre, providing a psycho-educational drop-in counselling group to inmates in the women's unit. Charu and Lee-Anne facilitate these groups once a week. Lee-Anne is a consultant with the ORCC, and has been working in the Violence against women sector for several years. The topics that are presented include Sexual Violence, Partner Violence, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Boundaries, Self-Esteem, Coping Mechanisms, and the Impact of Violence on Women. This past year has been very successful, as the women have opened up more about their experiences of violence and exploring ways to cope and make changes in their lives. Charu and Lee Anne also provide one-to-one crisis intervention to any women who request it.

### **Professional Development**

Lalita continues to provide us with presentations on different topics. In addition, the team has participated in numerous professional development activities. We received training on Sandtray Worldplay and Working with Clients transference and counter-transference issues. We also received training from Madeline Dietrich (a therapist and consultant) on Counselling and Spirituality.

In addition to the group trainings, counsellors participated in many workshops to enhance their counselling skills:

- Laura attended a workshop entitled Nurturing, Compassion and Resilience, with Rod Jefferies, which was held at Wabano Community Health Centre;
- Charu participated in a 5-day intensive training session on Co-Current Disorders, hosted by the Canadian Mental Health Association, and attended a course on Aboriginal Women's issues, at the Ottawa University;
- Anne completed the coursework for the Play Therapy certification, through the Canadian Association for Play Therapists;
- Tanya attended a workshop on working with Aboriginal clients, sponsored by Minwaashin Lodge.

We would like to thank all of the counsellors for their ongoing dedication to their clients and their commitment to ongoing professional development.

Charu Malhotra  
Counselling Coordinator



## ***Crisis Line Volunteer & Training Program***



In the past year, the crisis line volunteer training program successfully trained and welcomed the following women to our dynamic team of volunteers: Jennah-Lee Milks, Arshina Kassam, Katie Tam, Lydia Gebera, Mimi He, Mory Di Yuan, Priya Kumar, Kirstin Martin, Shellie Warnock, Sherry Richie, Natalie Brulotte, Sara Afa, Shankari Sharma, Diane Gordon, Tina Abdulghafari and Tina Keohane. Congratulations on passing your evaluations and a big welcome to the crisis line volunteer team!

### **Crisis line training:**

Crisis line training is conducted three times a year. Recruitment for crisis line volunteers is on-going so please feel free to contact Josephine Basudde at (613)562-2334x22 or at [jbasudde@magma.ca](mailto:jbasudde@magma.ca) for more information.

### **Placement Students:**

Alba Rodriquez a social work student from Carleton University worked with the crisis line program on various projects such as outreach to various communities while providing support to clients on the crisis line

### **Fond Farewell:**

Due to life changes we unfortunately bid farewell to some of our staff and volunteers. Nicole Bedard, Lynn Williams, Melanie Doucet, Greta Hall, Maria Alexopoulos, Daryle Calixte and Adena Eliasoph. We appreciate your commitment on working towards ending violence against women. We wish you the best in your future endeavors

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the volunteers on the crisis line. Your work is valued and appreciated. Thank you.

Josephine Basudde  
Crisis Line Volunteer and Training Coordinator

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## ***Public Education Program***

Another year has passed and the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre's Public Education Program continued to educate the community about sexual violence against women and related issues. We reached 910 people through presentations, workshops and information fairs. We conducted class room presentations in high schools and universities; we have also facilitated discussions for community groups and social service agency workers. Through our annual outreach campaigns we connected to new groups and introduced the Centre and its services. We have also provided resources to students researching sexual violence and related issues. Since last year fifteen volunteers have been trained for the program.



### **Sharing Knowledge-Facilitating Discussion**

To commemorate May – Sexual Assault Awareness Month we organized a conference titled: *War Related Sexualized Violence: Responding with Survivors in our Communities*. The conference provided a forum for front-line service providers, policy makers, and community members to gain further knowledge on the needs of women who are victims of war, rape and trauma. Dr. Sophie Yohani, a psychologist and Assistant Professor at the University of

*Public Education Program Report con't*

Alberta was the guest speaker. The event was well attended and Dr. Yohani shared her knowledge of the subject and also presented case studies of the work she did with women who experienced sexual violence in the context of war. This conference was funded by the Department of Justice Canada as part of the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, 2009 and was a joint initiative of the Public Education Program and the Counselling Program.

### **Committee Work**

We are a member of the Women's Event Network of Ottawa (WEN), which is a network that organizes four annual events (Take Back the Night, International Women's Day, December 6<sup>th</sup> Vigil and the Clothes Line Project). The committee meets throughout the year and organizes events that keep the issue of violence against women in the public eye. The goal of the committee is to outreach to the Ottawa community and create forums, marches and rallies that call for an end to violence against women. The Public Education Program staff and volunteers represent the ORCC and participated in all WEN events.

### **Projects**

#### **Girls Chat**

The Girls Chat project had another successful year. This is a two-year project funded by Status of Women Canada. The goal of the Girls Chat project is to assist young women (high school age) from immigrant and refugee backgrounds in discussing issues such as sexual violence, inter-generational conflict, self-esteem and body image in a safe and confidential environment. Weekly discussion groups for girls are organized in the following five Ottawa high schools: Rideau, Ridgemont, Brookfield, Woodroffe and Gloucester. More than seventy-five girls participated in the project.

#### **Kids on the Block Teach About Sexual Abuse and Sexuality**

This project, which aims to reach out to kids in elementary schools to talk about sexual abuse, was funded by the Community Foundation of Ottawa. It was a one year project; we trained volunteers as puppeteers to perform educational shows for kids in elementary schools. The funding for the project has ended however the volunteer puppeteers continue to be available to perform shows in schools and in the community.

### **Appreciation**

Our appreciation and thanks to Melanie Forget who organized a fundraising event (titled: Feed Your Soul) on behalf of the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre. Thank you, Melanie, for supporting our work and for organizing an excellent event.

I would also like to extend our appreciation to the following partners: Rideau H.S, Gloucester H.S, Ridgemont H.S, Brookfield H.S, Woodroffe H.S and the Multicultural Liaison Officers at the Ottawa Immigrant Community Services Organization (OCISO). Your support and commitment to the Girls Chat project has been crucial to its success.

Finally, my appreciation and thanks to the Public Education Program volunteers. Your commitment, contribution and enthusiasm keep this program going. Thank you for the work you put into educating the community about sexual violence and for supporting the ORCC.

Ikram Jama  
Public Education Coordinator

## **Board Committee Reports**

### ***Policy Committee***

The Policy Committee was active this year in creating new and updating existing policies on a variety of topics. As usual, our work was split between policies identified in the annual work plan, and dealing with new issues as the need arose.

Work on the fundraising and corporate sponsorship policies addressed potential conflicts of interest and decision making processes that will allow the ORCC to respond quickly to potential sponsorship and donation offers.

The major task of updating the ORCC's by-laws remains outstanding as our efforts to recruit a law student volunteer to assist with this task over the summer were unsuccessful.

The Policy Committee would like to thank the Recruitment & Development Committee for their efforts to recruit volunteers to join the Policy Committee as there is no shortage of work that needs to be done.

The Policy Committee would like to thank the staff for their hard work and support on the Committee over this past year. The Committee looks forward to another active year in supporting the Centre's goals and objectives.

Samantha Lamb, Chair  
Sandy Onyalo, Executive Director  
Boglarka Tessier, Finance and Administrative Coordinator  
Charu Malhotra, Counselling Coordinator



### ***Finance Committee***



The mandate and work plan of the Finance Committee of the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre remains fairly constant from year to year. The committee ensures careful accountability within the Centre and stewardship of ORCC assets. We regularly review funding submissions and reports, monthly financial reports, bank reconciliations, monitor the budgeting process and oversee the annual audit process including following up on the Auditor's Management Letter. This year the Finance Committee continued to successfully carry out its role and responsibilities.

During the year, ORCC invested in some much needed repairs and maintenance to the property to ensure that a safe and comfortable space will be available to women for years to come. Thus, the negative balance in this year's financial statements is largely due to these one time capital expenditures. The Committee regularly assesses the Centre's financial position to ensure the long-term viability of the ORCC. It is currently in a healthy financial state.

We would like to thank Boglarka Tessier, the Centre's highly organized and efficient Finance and Administration Coordinator, for her indispensable support to the committee. She has put in many extra hours this year to accommodate the changes within the committee and to help the Centre reduce its costs. We would also like to thank our auditor, Brenda van Berkom, for her services and advice over the past year.

Jenny Poon, Treasurer  
Sandy Onyalo, Executive Director  
Boglarka Tessier, Finance and Administrative Coordinator  
Sue Sheane, President

## ***Fundraising Committee***

The board worked with the staff to create a donation page with the website [www.givemeaning.com](http://www.givemeaning.com) for the Girls Chat Project. To date we have raised \$500 for the project. The link to this site can be found on our website.



## ***Board Recruitment and Development Committee***

The strategic objective of the ORCC Board Recruitment and Development Committee for 2008/ 2009 was to help develop a stable and effective board that has strong leadership skills, solid understanding of the ORCC and its work, and an ability to work well together and with staff to fulfill its responsibilities for leading the ORCC.

In particular, the committee wanted to improve board stability and cohesiveness, build leadership capacity on the board, increase the board's understanding of the ORCC, and improve structure, processes, knowledge, etc. as required to address board weaknesses. These objectives were selected in part due to a desire of board members to improve their effectiveness, and also in response to the auditor's 2008 management letter which identified board member turnover as an issue.

A major focus of the committee this year, therefore, was on recruiting and retaining board members. As a start, the committee systematically reviewed the board's existing and desired skill requirements and revised its recruitment process and advertising approach to attract qualified, committed and diverse candidates. The committee met with a number of potential board members and was able to invite five new members to the board during the last fiscal year.

To improve retention, we endeavoured to change some of the culture and processes on the board, for example by developing a smaller board of more active members, increasing communication between members outside of regularly scheduled meeting times and implementing a confidential exit interview process. The cohesiveness between and within certain committees seems to have changed significantly because of closer collaboration and more ongoing contact. However, its impact has yet to be measured in numbers, since we continue to have resignations because of relocation, health issues and work/ life balance choices.

While some substantial gains have been made in board recruitment and development, the committee did not accomplish everything in its work plan and will be carrying a number of items into next year (e.g. completing the board evaluation, revising job descriptions for director positions, holding more training sessions). The committee is pleased that the auditor's management letter for this year recognized the board's improvements and we look forward to building on the positive changes that have taken place.

Rhiannen Putt, Chair  
Katy Davies, Member  
Heidi Hauver, Member



## THE OTTAWA RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

*Everyone is responsible for ending violence against women and creating a violence-free environment*

### **History**

The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre first opened its doors on December 15, 1974. Originally located in a small apartment on Somerset Street West, it was the third such Centre in Canada (others had been established in Toronto and Vancouver). Initially, the Centre was comprised of three volunteers offering crisis line services to victims of sexual assault.

The ORCC has developed over the past thirty-five years into a community leader in the field of sexual violence. In 1976 the staff at the ORCC included four full-time staff members and 40 volunteers. Today the staff at the ORCC consists of eleven full-time and three part-time staff members. There are around fifty volunteers that work on the 24 - hour crisis line, provide public education activities and sit on our Board. The staff and volunteers also act as liaisons with the police, hospitals, lawyers and other social service resources.

### **Mission**

The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre is a proactive, anti-racist, feminist organization working to end all forms of sexual violence. We counsel and support women, educate for change and work to create a safe and equitable community.

### **Contact Us**

Mail:

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**Safe city website:** [www.safecity.ca](http://www.safecity.ca)