



The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2009

ORCC Newsletter

Winter 2009 Edition

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A Message from the Executive Director

Greetings!

I had the opportunity to travel home to Kenya over the recent holidays. As with all trips home we journeyed up country to visit family. Our journey to the country is always very scenic, colourful and vibrant, with a flood of activity along the roadside. Children were in colourful uniforms walking to school, toddlers were struggling with their sugar cane and merchants were on bicycles delivering everything from bread, to chickens, to building supplies and cans of water. Sometimes we would see the odd woman or child walking their goat, other times we had yield to cattle, who knew they had the right of way.

Although I had travelled the highway through western Kenya many times, I found myself gazing at the gigantic oval and round rock formations that dotted the Kenyan countryside. For the first time I was really looking at them.

The rock formations were not only huge, but they sat on steep hills as if to defy gravity,

looking unbelievably immobile.

The rocks reminded me of us at the ORCC, working collectively to raise awareness about, and eradicate sexual violence. Like the rocks we remain steadfast in our determination to combat racism, sexism, homophobia, and all oppressions. And we are unwavering in our determination. As we enter a new year, I remain confident that we too will defy gravity in the various roles we play to address sexual violence.

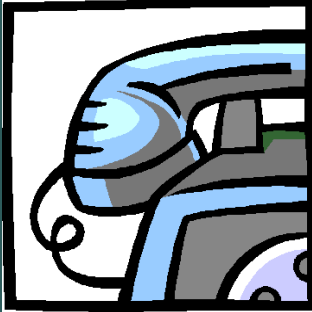
All the best to you and your family in 2009. May you have good health, eat well and have fun all year round.

Remember to send us your writings, poems, thoughts, and inspirations throughout the year so that we can inspire and support each other as we do this work.

Sandy Onyalo
Executive Director
January, 2009



A Note From the Crisis Line Coordinator



Greetings from the Crisis Line and Volunteer Program!

We had such a wonderful year that included a group of women joining the team. Please join me in welcoming, Caroline Melia, Natalie

Brulotte, Sherry Ritchie, and Elise Harris. I wish to also thank and bid farewell to Andrea Easton, Andrea Martell, Alicia Bastin, Linda Liu, and Lisa Vance. Best wishes and luck in your future endeavours.

Update on Crisis Line Volunteer Training

The crisis line volunteer training was unfortunately put on hold due the bus strike. I am glad to report however, that we have 15 women ready to go and we start on February 10th –April 14th 2009.

Spring training takes place on April 28th –June 30th and Fall training begins on September 1st-Nov 3rd 2009. Please pass the word on to friends and family members about the benefits of volunteering at the Ottawa Rape Crisis centre.

Student Placement

This year the crisis line and volunteer program was fortunate to have Alba Rodriguez, a student from the Carleton School of Social Work Program. Alba works on the crisis line 2 days a week supporting women survivors of sexual violence. Welcome Alba!

As we slowly move towards longer and brighter days, I wish you all a safe and health year.

Josephine Basudde
Crisis Line Coordinator

24-HOUR
CRISIS LINE

613-562-2333

Crisis Line Volunteering - July to December 2009

	JULY 2008	AUG 2009	SEPT 2009	OCT 2009	NOV 2009	DEC 2009
Active Volunteers	17	15	17	16	14	14
Volunteers on Leave	10	11	4	2	4	5
New Volunteers	0	1	2	1	1	2
Volunteers who Left	1	2	7	3	2	0
<i>Total Volunteers</i>	28	27	21	19	19	21
<i>Total Volunteer Hours</i>	281	237	278	317	288	282.5

Crisis Line Calls - July to December 2009

	JULY 2008	AUG 2009	SEPT 2009	OCT 2009	NOV 2009	DEC 2009
Childhood Sexual Abuse	35	31	27	20	16	21
Adult/Recent Sexual Assault	20	16	20	31	28	21
Sexual Harassment	0	3	3	0	1	3
Combination	24	18	20	15	13	8
Other	55	24	26	27	41	32
Information Request	10	7	7	3	10	10
<i>Total Calls</i>	144	99	103	96	109	95



The Importance of Self-Esteem

someone is reluctant to make use of your organiza-

By Susan J. Ellis
President of Energize Inc.

Recently, a librarian in Indiana was being interviewed on National Public Radio about the increase in usage of public libraries, particularly of their resources for job hunters. The reporter asked if the library staff was feeling the strain, and the librarian mentioned that volunteers were really helping out. She noted that "gratitude" for library services was evoking all kinds of donated help, including one out-of-work patron who -- on his own initiative -- had been shoveling snow off the library steps after every storm to show his appreciation for what was available inside.

This story made me think about how people react to being helped. A lot of volunteering is based on the assumption that recipients of assistance acknowledge being "in need." But that may actually be the hardest thing about being helped: lowering one's self-esteem to accept the

kindness of others.

In emergencies, people are instantly forced to change their self-image. After losing a home to flood or becoming unemployed due to layoffs, a person may shift suddenly from being a proud donor or dedicated volunteer to a human service agency's "client." It takes a while to adjust how that person sees him/herself.

Even in times without crisis, it's vital to see recipients of service holistically. The patient in dialysis is also a high school teacher; the parent picking up donated food is a skilled but out-of-work carpenter; the homeless teenager is a budding artist. All individuals are multi-dimensional, even if we are focusing on one aspect of their situation. Can recognizing this uncover new volunteers and increase the self-esteem of clients?

If you know that someone is unemployed, invite him or her to apply as a volunteer, even if only temporarily. If you think that

tion's services out of pride, consider presenting the transaction as barter or exchange. For example:

"There are a number of families in this same situation. Let's talk about how -- together -- we can help everyone. Maybe one of you can pick up the emergency supplies for those who have no transportation, while someone else can prepare larger recipes that can be frozen into portions for the one who is home-bound."

No one should ever feel that this invitation to help with the solution is in any way an expectation in order to get the help. You might not use this approach with everyone. But if you see a client who seems uncomfortable with "accepting charity," taking a "volunteer recruitment approach" might be win-win.

The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre is looking for volunteers to support women survivors of sexual violence. Please contact Josephine Basudde, Crisis Line/ Volunteer Coordinator at 613-562-2334 ext 22

Energize empowers and inspires leaders of volunteers worldwide. Our specialty is creating and selecting the most relevant, innovative resources in volunteer management. We're advocates for the power of volunteers and for the recognition of the leaders who unleash it.

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Public Education Program Update

Greetings Everyone!

The Public Education Program had another busy and exciting year. Besides our usual public education activities we are working on some exciting projects.

Kids on the Block Teach About Sexual Abuse and Sexuality

Kids on the block is an education puppet program, volunteers are trained to educate children about sexual abuse. Using very life-like and colourful puppets the volunteers will do presentations in the community. We are at the last sessions of the training, and the volunteers are very excited and are

looking forward to doing shows for the community.

Girl's Chat

The objective of this project is to provide young women from immigrant backgrounds the opportunity to better integrate into the social life of Ottawa by facilitating opportunities for them to address their issues in a confidential and supportive environment. Through weekly discussions, young women with immigrant and refugee background receive information on different topics such as healthy body image, self-esteem, healthy sexuality and sexual violence. These weekly sessions provide an op-

portunity for the participants to express themselves and share their thoughts with peers who are facing similar challenges. The project is implemented in five Ottawa high schools.

Announcements:

- The next public education volunteer training will be in **February 2009**.
- International Women's Day organizing committee started meeting on Wednesday January 28th, if you want to contribute to this event as a volunteer please contact me: 613-562-2334 Ext:31

I wish you all a good productive year.

*Ikram Jama
Public Education
Program Coordinator*

Placement Students



At the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, we are fortunate enough to have students complete placement with us on a regular basis. They bring a lot to our Centre, and we're always delighted to help them gain experience in their chosen fields.

This year, we're very pleased to have Debra McCullough and Alba Arteaga with us.

Debra McCullough

I am a student from the University Of Ottawa. Currently, I work as a counsellor and have been at the center since September, 2008. It has been a rewarding experience and I have appreciated this learning opportunity. My peers have been extremely supportive in my

learning needs. I especially enjoy the weekly meetings as it affords me the chance to bring client issues forward.

The center is definitely a needed resource for women in the community. My hope is that when my internship is completed that the skills I have learned as a counsellor will be integrated into my practice of work. It is a honour to work with such dedicated, caring professionals.

Alba Arteaga

I am a student in my third year of Social Work at Carleton University. I am also doing a minor in Women's Studies, and I felt that the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre would be a perfect fit for my desire for activism with women. I have been at the centre since September and have worked as a cri-

sis counsellor on the 24-hour crisis line.

I have started to participate within Public Education sector of the ORCC with the Project, 'Kids on the Block', which has been a great way to create a sheltered environment for children to ask questions about sexual assault. I have also had the opportunity to exercise my skills in public speaking by going out to the community and giving workshops on our centre. All the women at the centre create a safe atmosphere where women feel heard, validated, and unjudged.

The centre has also taught me so much about the importance of self-care and exploring what type of self-care works for me. It has been inspirational to see the amount of resiliency and empowering nature women have. Thank you for this experience.

*I've come a long way
from the girl who
grabbed the wrist of
her best friend when
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nounced with icy
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touch me."*

The Greatest Taboo

A Feature by Emily Keays

Every now and then, I still flinch when someone touches me, when someone offers me affection. I've come a long way from the girl who grabbed the wrist of her best friend when he went to touch her face, stared at him coldly, and pronounced with icy clarity: "Don't ever touch me." The look on his face that served as response is what caused the wheels in my head to begin slowly turning. His confusion, his clear regret, and honest concern were clear. He was silent for several seconds,

seconds that lasted far too long, until I released his arm and turned back to face my computer monitor.

"What's wrong?" he asked me. My stony silence was the only response, and he quickly turned away, and carefully changed the subject. If he knew, if he could see it in my face at the time, he didn't say. I just followed in suit, picking up this conversation as if nothing had happened, and as if nothing had changed for me, for him, or for us.

Later, I could only sit and

wonder: what was wrong? Why did I choose silence over admission? I trusted him, more than many other people in my life, including my own parents. I could have easily released his wrist and said, "I was molested as a kid, and I'm still not comfortable having physical contact with the opposite sex." Clear, direct, hard to refute. Such a sentence, however, doesn't roll off the tongue. At that point in time, at the tender age of seventeen, I still hadn't even come to fully understand the weight

(cont'd on p. 6)

The Greatest Taboo (cont'd)

(cont'd from page 5)

of my childhood experience. After all, it was only at the age of fourteen that I'd found a word to describe that experience: I had been molested.

Even after discovering a way to define what had happened to me, I never talked about it, or told anyone about it. My main reasons for this odd vow of silence were that I didn't want to burden others, and I didn't think it was that big of a deal. It had happened, it was in the past, and I was fully able to bury it and move on. It worked for three happily ignorant years before I finally began coping with the effects. Nightmares, depression, and anxiety attacks resulted; not to mention my long-standing determination to keep anyone from having any real physical contact or intimacy with me. Even with all of these horrible afflictions, these compounding problems and conflicts, I kept my vow of silence.

It's estimated that between 15% and 20% of women were sexually abused as children, and 5% to 15% of men were abused. The numbers are undoubtedly inaccurate. The number of children who don't admit their abuse, like me, must be considered. They may suffer from maintaining a vow of silence long into adult years, such as numerous mental health issues because they have yet to come to terms with their abuse. Of all of the women and men I've known to have suffered sexual assault in their youth, not one of them has ever reported the event to an authority figure.

So why is it so hard for these children, even in their adult years, to find solace in just saying the words that may very well set them free? The burden lying on their shoulders, weighing with each wasted chance of confession only gets worse with time. Many victims of sexual abuse feel shame and guilt, especially in the case of incest. Young children who are molested or raped by family mem-

bers and report their abuse are often blamed for causing discord within the family. Around 60% of the predators who abuse these children are close to the family, or close to the victim's family. Besides—how is a child's word supposed to compete with an adult's, when it is the adults' duty to control the world children lives in, and to protect them?

About two years ago, I read an article that claimed that women who suffered sexual abuse as children were likely to become targets for abusive men, and were much more likely to be re-victimized. Reading this made me extremely angry. Being regarded as a victim, or living under the possibility of being "re-victimized" disturbed me. I wasn't a victim. I had a story to tell, to share, like thousands of other women and men like me. Still, I hadn't discussed my own story with anyone. What good could come of my experience, or the experiences of others, if we kept this vow of silence?

It was after reading this article that I picked up *Invisible Girls* by Patti Feuereisen and Caroline Pincus, a book about survivors of sexual assault. After connecting with the stories of dozens of women—women who had been raped by their fathers, molested by their camp counsellors, and slipped GHB at parties—I decided to declare myself one of them. I would no longer be a victim, but a survivor.

Although some are willing to come out and say it; to say they were molested, raped, or harassed, sexual abuse against children still remains an extremely taboo subject. Even now, having admitted it aloud, I still find myself whispering if there are other people within earshot. The feeling of being ashamed or scared still lingers, for me and for others, because our trauma is socially unacceptable to discuss. What happens behind closed doors is meant to stay there, and the public at large seems happy to keep



it that way.

Several months ago, I sat that old friend of mine down. "I want to tell you something about me," I told him. "I want to tell you that I was molested when I was seven. He was my teenage next-door-neighbour. When I asked him why he did what he did to me, he told me it was 'because he wanted to show women what he could do.' But I wasn't a woman. I was just a little girl, and it scarred me. But I'm getting better, I'm talking to people, and I'm coping. I just wanted you to know."

He wasn't surprised, he didn't pity me, and he didn't get uncomfortable. He just held my hand, smiled at me, and said, "I'm glad you told me."

While it still may be considered taboo to discuss our sexual abuse at large, it's a sad notion. With the staggering number of children who suffer, we should be able to stand up, offer our hand, and offer our support. To share our stories and help them cope before they experience carrying that trauma alone on their shoulders for so very, very long.

The greatest taboo, in fact, is our silence.

Finding Place for Faith in Workplace



Caitlin Crawshaw, Canwest News Service

EDMONTON - While it remains gauche to talk up your Bible study or meditation group at work, faith plays an instrumental role in employees' health and can even benefit their workplaces, says a Vancouver psychologist.

"Spirituality is part of mental health," says Carole Kanchier, author of *Dare to Change Your Job and Your Life*.

"When a person is a fully functioning person, he or she is intellectually growing, emotionally at peace. ... (They have) good relationships and take care of their physical health. ... They also have spiritual practices."

Ms. Kanchier says more and more people are becoming spiritual.

"Certainly different kinds of religion are growing -- one is fundamentalism, but another is spirituality that doesn't involve any religious practice."

She stresses that spirituality needn't

involve religious practices, per se. More and more people are spiritual, says Ms. Kanchier, but not religious, and may practise their beliefs in a wide range of ways -- simple things like meditation, listening to music or appreciating nature.

A 2006 study by Statistics Canada suggests adult Canadians may not be attending religious events in high numbers, but engage in spiritual practice at home. Fifty-three per cent did this at least once a month, 11 per cent a few times a year, and 32 per cent attended religious services at least monthly.

Those who have a sense of spirituality often have a number of positive personality traits that help them relate to people and succeed at work, Ms. Kanchier says.

"They respect others' beliefs and their rights to hold them, they expect good things to happen, and they befriend new employees. ... They're positive, helpful and accepting. That's part of being a spiritual and/or religious person." Spiritual people are also inclined to help others, and are both trusting and trustworthy. Many are excellent team players, which is crucial for a company's success, she says.

"There are lots of work teams, so lots of people are in teams to achieve department and company goals."

However, while people may practise their spirituality at work by helping the team and treating others with respect, there's a limit to what you should say about it, Ms. Kanchier says. "They shouldn't blabber about everything."

This can be problematic. For many people, happiness at work requires making friends at work, which requires a certain degree of openness. "Certainly, many people do place associates high in one of their needs for a job," she says.

However, it's important to choose your friends wisely, and to be very careful about what you choose to reveal, and to whom.

"Just like there's appropriate (office) dress, there's appropriateness in what you should share or not share."

While you wouldn't necessarily post your Bible group meetings on the bulletin board, if you know someone well enough, and you know they're thinking about spirituality, you might mention them gently.

For many people, their interactions at work are similar to how they conduct themselves in their religious communities.

"One gentleman I worked with was very involved in church activities, and of course, he was a very nice man and practised the principles of his religion with his work colleagues and subordinates without flaunting what he did at church," she says.

"And what he did at church was similar to what he did at work, being nice and helpful, and so forth."

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The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC) 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 three full-time and six 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.