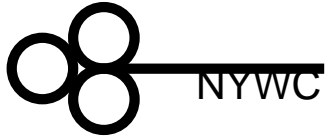

KEY NOTES



North York Women's Centre: Opening Doors for Women

Welcome to CultureTalk!

By Rabea
Murtaza

In my ideal summer job, someone would drop the perfect project into my lap on the first day of work. This project would be fun, technically and intellectually challenging, suited to my skills and something to which I am personally and passionately committed. Unbelievably, that's exactly what happened to me this summer at the North York Women's Centre! I have been very excited to work on CultureTalk, an online discussion forum for young women who are facing cultural conflict, religious stereotyping, racism, sexism or heterosexism. This summer, Leah Micallef and I picked up where past workers, Rathika Vasavithasan, Laura Nangini, Archana Kurichh and Aamna Ashraf left off. Earlier in the year, I knew as soon as I heard of this grassroots, feminist and anti-racist agency that I wanted to work with it. It is particularly great to be here working on such an interesting and worthwhile project.

Many of us have come to Canada through immigration; we have also come as refugees, migrant workers, domestic workers or with no 'legal' status. CultureTalk is designed for young women roughly between the ages of fourteen to twenty-four who are from families who have recently come to Canada or who have been here a while.

The anonymous discussion list is a space for women to have authentic conversations, share their experiences and feelings, give each other informal support and share information. Only a nickname picked by the participants will show up in the daily digest of emails. Women are free to bring up anything including their school, family and intimate relationships, friends, racism, health, cultural issues, jobs and stress.

We have asked ourselves a lot of questions, like how can we empower women with the basic computer skills needed if they want to get online and cannot? What does a feminist anti-racist online community look like? What is an anti-oppressive intervention policy for conflict? And how can we design the moderator's role to minimize the power in the position?

We have had a steady stream of interest in the group and so after a summer of testing sample lists we are excited about going online in the fall. We will be taking our cue from activist Howard Rheingold when he writes, "Communities can't be manufactured, but you can design the conditions under which they are most likely to emerge, and encourage their growth when they do so." To subscribe and/or send us your thoughts, email moderator@nywc.org.

Anti-Oppression Training at the NYWC

By Leah Micallef

Robyn and Iris once asked me to consider what my ideal summer job would look like if I had the freedom to create the perfect opportunity. As a social worker, it is very important to me to work within an organization that is committed to anti-oppression, feminism and social justice. So I was happy to receive the invitation to spend my summer months working with women at the North York Women's Centre committed to the same issues.

One of the first tasks for Rabea Murtaza, my fellow Program Worker, and me was to develop an anti-oppression session for the NYWC volunteer training that was held on Wednesday, June 25th, 2003.

For me, anti-oppression work begins with my own personal struggle. From the outset of my social work education I have been challenged to critically reflect on my own social location and how I am at once privileged and oppressed. This can be a difficult ongoing process and I am still constantly learning about how my social location (my white skin, able body, etc...) privileges me and provides me with unearned power and social, political and economic advantages that other people are denied. But anti-oppression work does not stop at recognizing my own sites of power and privilege. To stop the analysis at my own situation does nothing to support other people. I must also get together with the women at the NYWC to reach out to others to talk about oppression and what we can all do challenge it in our own lives and in the world around us.

The anti-oppression session for new volunteers was one opportunity to reach out to others and discuss the issues we all face. Our session focused on three main areas: what is oppression? the personal is political; and active resistance. As a group we identified and discussed forms of oppression and what they mean for our lives. We then began the work of understanding that what happens to us as individuals is influenced by larger forces in our society. So the sexism, racism, homophobia, class oppression, ageism and ableism we experience in our daily personal lives are all also experienced at the institutional and system wide levels

of our society. We each considered our own social location and determined the areas in which we are privileged and disadvantaged. As a group we then came together to discuss active resistance and what volunteers, and the Centre as a whole, can do resist and challenge oppression within the NYWC and beyond.

The NYWC is committed to feminism, anti-racism, and social justice. It is important for us all to affirm these values. One way to do this is to begin the personal work of examining our own social locations. Becoming anti-oppressive is a life long process. What better time to begin than now?

Bingo volunteers urgently needed!

- Maximum 4½ hour commitment per bingo
- 3-4 bingos per month available
- Training provided
- Expenses reimbursed (travel, childcare, etc)

If you are already an NYWC volunteer, call us at (416) 781-0479 to sign up.

Volunteer application forms are available at www.nywc.org or in the NYWC office.

We need volunteers for the following dates:

Wednesday, September 24 th	4:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Monday, October 6 th	11:30 am - 4:00 pm
Friday, October 10 th	9:30 pm - 1:30 am
Tuesday, October 28 th	4:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Friday, October 31 st	6:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Friday, November 7 th	9:30 pm - 1:30 am
Friday, November 14 th	9:30 pm - 1:30 am
Saturday, November 22 nd	6:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Monday, November 24 th	11:30 am - 4:00 pm
Monday, December 1 st	11:30 am - 4:00 pm
Friday, December 6 th	9:30 pm - 1:30 am
Monday, December 8 th	11:30 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday, December 10 th	6:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Wednesday, December 17 th	4:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Thanking our Supporters

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations to the North York Women's Centre

\$500 & more

Mary-Ellen Anglin

\$100-499

Carol Baker	Anne McNeely
Jane Bernard	Jacqueline Nadler
James Bremer	Connie Reeve
Jeanette Brox	Elizabeth Ross
Karen Dunk-Green	Pam & Doug Weir
Sharissa Ellyn	Michael Stephenson
Nancy Forster	Mary Jane Stitt
Sue Griggs	Lorna Yufe
Jill Lawrie	Creative Baskets Plus
Toronto Dominion Bank	

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Mariane Amodeo	Jane Baker
Richard Borins	Vanessa Dickens
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Patrick Kelly	Kathryn Manning
Beverley Ohashi	Gloria Shaw
Leslie Young	
Veronica Estrada Flores	
Barbara Gutman-Erlich	
Araba Obeng-Arhin	

Thanks to all those who specifically designated the North York Women's Centre to receive their workplace United Way donation

Programming Update

By Robyn Bolivar

I am happy to announce that wishes do come true at the North York Women's Centre. When I started working at the NYWC, one whole year ago, I began looking at the needs of the community and the gaps in programming at the centre. For example, after "Outwrite" ended we no longer offered supportive programming for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) women at the NYWC. The need was obvious; women were calling and asking for a group. There are few resources for LGBT women in the North York community and the evaluations from the workshops offered in partnership with New Directions indicated women were looking for long term programming.

As of this coming Fall 2003 the North York Women's Centre will once again be offering LGBT programming! Please welcome "The Rainbow Series". The "Rainbow Series" will consist of an 8-week supportive group called, "The Pink Triangle Discussion Group", a workshop called "Being Bisexual", and other LGBT legal and supportive workshops offered in partnership with New Directions. Big thanks go out to the new and current volunteer facilitators who helped to grant this wish! Like all volunteers at the NYWC - without you none of this would be possible.

Community News

Congratulations to:

- Breaking Free Volunteer Facilitator, Roz Giller, for getting better quickly!
- Telephone/Office Volunteer, Nancy Demone, on the marriage of her son.
- Telephone/Office Volunteer, Sonia Tzotcheva, on finding a job.
- Telephone/Office Volunteer, Fermida Dhanani, for also finding a job.
- Speak Up Volunteer Facilitator, Jeanette Williamson, on her wedding.
- Board Member, Emma Luca, on her upcoming wedding.

Our Condolences to:

- Telephone/Office Volunteer, Mary-Ellen Anglin, for the sudden death of her friend.
- Telephone/Office Volunteer, Kithar Thsui, for the death of her father.

A big welcome to the following:

New Staff:

Super Star Summer Students, Leah Micallef and Rabea Murtaza. And a big thanks for doing such a fabulous job at the NYWC!! You will be missed, if only we could keep you both throughout the year. Thank you so much.

Our new volunteers:

Co-facilitators:

- Adebisi Adepo - Employment Programming
- Julietta Gabriel - Employment Programming
- Cheryl Dobinson - Rainbow Programming, "Being Bi-sexual" workshop
- Elana Trainoff - Rainbow Programming, "Pink Triangle Discussion Group"
- Marney C.H. Winn (current workshop facilitator) - "Finding Centre: Building Self-esteem"
- Kaila Feldman - Nutrition workshop

Office and Telephone Volunteers:

- Ina Shao
- Michelle Lunski
- Allie Gilmour
- Amtul Rauf
- Kulit Alcaraz
- Sherry Turcotte
- Yanique Salmon-Chin
- Saba Nasir
- Dhurata Kuka

Legal Clinic Reception:

- Nikki Stanco

Placement students:

- Amy Favalaro - George Brown College - Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program. Amy has been with us since May, so thanks for your help thus far.
- Celia Joseph - George Brown College - Community Worker Program
- Michelle Lunski - Seneca College - Social Services Social Worker Program

Committee Members:

- Shelly Baker - Program Committee
- Jeanette Williamson - Program Committee
- Sushma Smaddar - Fundraising Committee