



Nellie's Newsletter

Nellie's Mission

Our Mission is to operate programs and services for women and children who have and are experiencing oppressions such as violence, poverty and homelessness. Nellie's is a community based feminist organization which operates within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework. We are committed to social change through education and advocacy, to achieve social justice for all women and children.

June 2007 , Issue #22

Message from the Executive Director



HRDC Summer Students

have sufficient services especially for our children during the summer holiday.

It was a great pleasure to have friends and volunteers joining us May 24, at our 5th annual fundraiser "Jazz It Up with Nellie's." Special thanks to our fabulous performers Jackie Richardson and Dr. Draw. They made our evening alive! The money raised will directly support Nellie's programs through the year.

May was Step it Up for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Ontario. Members of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres held events across the province to raise awareness of sexual violence against women and children. Check HYPERLINK "<http://www.stepitupontario.ca>" www.stepitupontario.ca for the 10 steps towards freedom from violence and equality for women.

In March, we celebrated International Women's Day by participating in the rally and March and booth at the fair as well as holding celebrations and educational session as part of our programs. Thank you to everyone who came out to support Nellie's and the Assaulted Women's Helpline's "Awakenings" dance on March 9th at St Lawrence Hall.

Thanks to funding from MCSS and the City of Toronto, we now have full capacity of new computers in operation. Our software has been upgraded and staff has completed or is in the process of completing computer training.

Summer is on the way and the Barbecue and Boat Cruise organized by the staff of the Summerhill LCBO are next on

Welcome to our summer students Hailey Hu, Priscilla Boateng & Monica Lin from Ryerson University and Natasha Brien from York University, Thank you to HRDC for the amazing funding, it enables us to

our fundraising agenda. Drop by Summerhill LCBO at lunchtime for the barbeque on Sat. June 16 or come to the 5th Annual Dinner Cruise Saturday August 18th. Enjoy the warmth of the islands without leaving the city; feast on the Caribbean buffet, dance the night away under the stars to the live steel drum band, and join the limbo contest for a chance to win great prizes. Tickets are \$50 each, or \$450.00 for a table of 10.

Celebrations for National Aboriginal day on June 21 are being planned in partnership with our local library. Come to join us on Wednesday June 20 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at our outreach location at 754 Queen Street East. Nellie's will be taking part at Pride in the Dyke March on June 23 and have a booth at the Community Fair on Sunday June 24 with information on important community issues, as well as face painting and other fun activities. Throughout the rest of summer we will be collecting back-to-school donations. Gifts of new children's clothing, folders, paper and pencils are welcomed.

In the fall, join staff and volunteers in support of the United Way CN Tower Stair Climb in October. You can either climb with us or you can pledge on behalf of Nellie's participants.

Violence against trans women is one of the least studied and documented problems. In an effort to raise awareness and education on this topic, this issue of Nellie's newsletter is dedicated to presenting some of the work that the Social Justice Committee has been working on.

On a sad note, I would like to express sympathy to June Callwood's family on behalf of the Board, staff and residents of Nellie's. June passed away in April 2007. She was one of Nellie's founding members.

Justice and equity,

Margarita Mendez

Trans Inclusion – Creates a Safer World for All

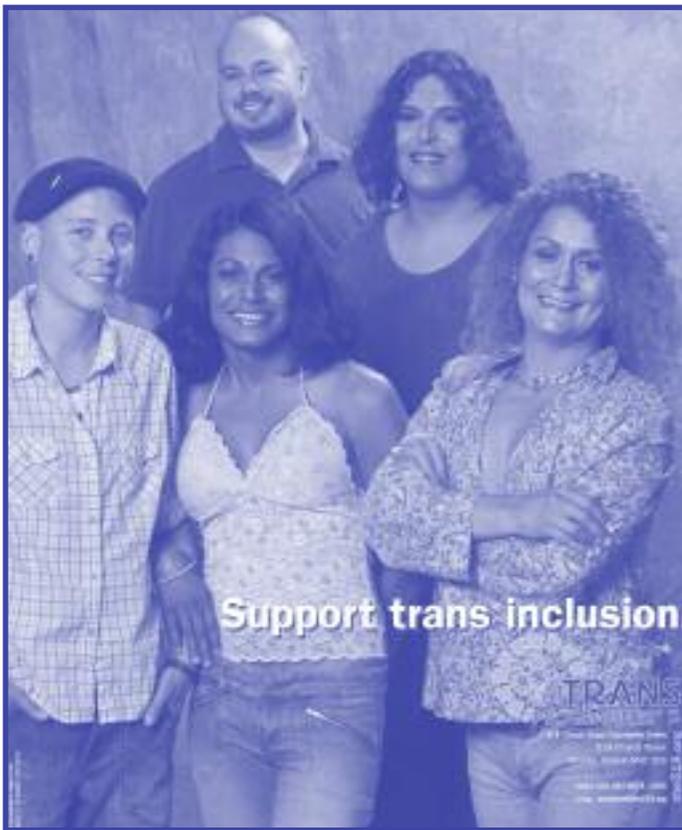
By Lynda Roy, Nellie's Board Member



For many of us, social inclusion is a hard concept to understand and often a harder concept to put into practice. The level of social inclusion a person enjoys is often based on how close you are to “the ideal.” In Canada, the ideal is often the white, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon, non-disabled, middle-to-upper class male. Social inclusion, simply put, is the ability for an individual or group to reach their full potential as defined by that particular group or individual. Social inclusion is a

Nellie's serves all individuals that identify as women. All women will receive services based on the sex/gender by which they themselves identify they are living, not by genital designation as it is specific to the sex/gender by which Nellie's is mandated to serve.

Nellie's is committed to on-going resident development and awareness workshops/activities on the needs issues and realities of trans women.



shaped by the gender label ascribed to us at birth. Most of us, whether we identify as trans or not, would find it difficult to completely identify with the strict gender expression and codes which have been established for us. Lulu, a trans woman who volunteers at Nellie's, explains that, for her, the change from man to woman was not just a physical change but also a change in mindset. Whereas once she identified as a gay man; she now identifies as a heterosexual woman. Lulu's experiences can teach us how fluid identity can be.

Trans women have been extremely marginalized and socially excluded because of ignorance and fear. The process of transitioning from one gender to another is quite expensive and out-of-reach for many. Official identification and even appearance may reveal gender inconsistencies that identify someone as a transgendered person. As a result, trans women often have difficulty finding employment or keeping employment; they also have difficulty finding appropriate, safe and affordable housing. As with all women, lack of affordable housing and access to stable, quality employment leave trans women extremely vulnerable to intimate partner abuse.

process which does not deny diversity or difference but accepts and celebrates that all human beings are unique and that all share the commonality of being human.

In order to speak about social inclusion for trans women, it is important to take a step back and explore what is meant by “trans.” Trans is an umbrella term which is used to describe all people who cross socially constructed gender boundaries. Gender boundaries are set for us the moment we are born. They're crossed when gender expression does not match the reproductive and sexual parts we were born with. The way we speak, engage with others, the body language we use to express ourselves and/or the clothing that we wear is often

One must remember that bending gender boundaries is never a choice. For Lulu, the process of changing her body to match how she felt inside came at a great cost. She was forced to leave her country of origin, leave her support network and start a new life in an unfamiliar country. But she does not regret this decision, because she is confident this was how she was meant to live her life: as a woman. Enforcing gender codes of conduct and punishing those who bend them affects us all in some way. The most obvious way is by not allowing us to celebrate people's diversity. Social inclusion is not about allowing people to live amongst us. It is about removing the barriers that prevent people from reaching their full potential and perhaps making a better world for all of us.

Transphobia From Global to Local – A Women's Story

By Maureen Caines-Comrie, Nellie's Child/Youth Worker

It was challenging to realize all the barriers and difficulties trans women face. After meeting Jackie, I came to realize how transphobic many systems, people and places remain today.

Jackie is a 35-year-old, transgendered woman of colour, from Trinidad. She was forced to leave her home due to safety reasons approximately 10 years ago, because of the transphobia that existed within her community.

Back in Trinidad, Jackie was constantly harassed for being a trans woman. She couldn't walk down the street without having rocks thrown at her or slurs yelled at her on the streets. She was regularly assaulted and lived in fear for her life. Jackie carefully recalled an incident in which she was beaten by five men and pistol whipped for simply being who she was. Thankfully she survived the attack, but news of her being a trans woman got around town and soon both she and her family were in serious danger. She had no one to turn to for support or protection.

Jackie feared for her life; there were no services in place to assist her, and her community did not accept her. The last straw for her was when people began harassing her family. She couldn't live with the fact that her family had to endure what she had been enduring for years. Her family also questioned her identity and pressured her to live her life as a man.

As a result, Jackie fled to Canada to start a new life. She thought she would be accepted for who she was. Upon her arrival in Canada, she found that many services and people would continue to judge her. Not only did she experience judgment and disbelief that she was a woman, she also experienced racism.

	WOMEN	TRANS WOMEN
Are they discriminated against because of their gender?	YES	YES
Are they at high risk for domestic violence?	YES	YES
Are they at risk for developing breast cancer?	YES	YES
Are they struggling with body image and impossible standards of beauty?	YES	YES
Are they more likely to be poor than men?	YES	YES
Are they the last hired, and the first fired?	YES	YES
Are they told that governments have power to control their bodies?	YES	YES

There are many different kinds of women. Women of different colors, women of different financial resources, women of different religions, women of different ages, women who are lesbian, bisexual or straight. And there are women and differences of bodies too. One thing they all have in common is they're all real women.

TRANS WOMEN
519 Church Street Community Centre
519 Queen Street
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1B7, Canada
www.519cc.org
Tel: 416-363-0071 ext. 404
Fax: 416-363-0072

Finally after being in Canada for several months, she came to Nellie's. She spoke to staff about how she did not feel judged here and that she was accepted as a woman. She talked about how many services, including Nellie's, were known in the community for being trans-inclusive. However, her experience was that many of these systems did not support her. Nellie's, she stated, was the one organization where she felt safe to be who she is, and that this was the first time in her life she felt truly safe and accepted.

Poster courtesy of
519 Church Street Community Centre.

Shelter Update *By Joanna Shawana and Julia Nieri, Counsellors*



Clair pampered our women with a new hair style

Winter programming at the shelter was abundant. In January, we started off with knitting and crocheting. Women had the opportunity to share stories and sing songs while their fingers were flying. It was great to see the women interacting with each other and hearing them laugh as we try to teach each other our gifts. A circle was held weekly for women to discuss the impact of violence in their lives. Many women participated in this new program.



Enma, our House Coordinator were happy of our new dishes donation

In February, Black History month activities had a great turn out. We had the privilege to listen to our staff member Cecilia do some role playing with one of our residents.

What they shared brought awareness to the group. On Valentine's Day, women received roses and little gifts for the children. Joanna, another talented member of our staff, showed us how to make jewelry and the women enjoyed handcrafting their own pieces. Jewelry- making is still an on-going event. It is very rewarding to see the smile on the women face when they accomplish a project.

In March, we had the opportunity to bring in Rebecca Trudeau, who has been doing catering within the Native community. She came in to prepare a supper of corn soup, fried bread, fish pie, and wild rice casserole for the women and children. As the meal was being prepared, we all shared a few games of Bingo. On Mar. 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racism, we discussed the impacts of racism and how we can work towards eliminating it.



Speakers from Housing Connection

For International Women's Day, we invited hairstylist Clair to pamper the women and make up artist Amber to talk about how to apply cosmetics. Friday night, we took the women out to Nellie's IWD dance and the next morning the women were up and eager to take part in the IWD Rally and March.



Staff Hawa expressed our appreciation to Ayallah Greenberg, Student Placement from Ryerson who worked at the shelter for 6 months

We are busy planning the next three months of programming, gearing up to mark National Aboriginal Day, Mothers Day, Pride and host summer programming activities for children.

We would like to thank Jackie Tanner from the Assaulted Women's Program at George Brown College and Ayallah Greenberg from the Social Work Field at Ryerson University. Both students have completed their placements. Thank you, Jackie and Ayallah, for contributing your knowledge and for supporting the women and children at Nellie's.

CSO Update - By Priscilla Boateng, Student Placement



CSO had an open house to promote our community services at Riverdale Art Walk in June

With the arrival of spring, the CSO team has been engaged in an assortment of activities. We have had several guest speakers featured in our Her-Share program including a lawyer from the Children's Aid Society, the Toronto Credit Counsel Service, Women's Health in

Women's Hands and Parkdale Legal Services. In honour of Mother's Day, the participants of Her-Share celebrated with a special breakfast, where mothers and mothers-to-be received a rose.

During March, participants and staff at the CSO celebrated International Women's Day by marching to Queen's Park where other agencies and supporters rallied in support of women.

The month of March also began with the start of the new Young Women's Program. Led by Adrianna, Natasha and Priscilla, the program has already had several guest speakers and activities including "dinner and movie" night and manicures courtesy of Rita's. We expect the program to gain popularity and are sure it will be a success, so we're busily planning our future slate of speakers and workshops. For more information or to register, please contact us at 416-461-2052 or [HYPERLINK "mailto:nelliesyoungwomen@hotmail.com"](mailto:nelliesyoungwomen@hotmail.com)

The summer promises to be fun-filled and very busy at the CSO. We took part in the Art Walk on June 3 and 4, where Nellie's displayed various artwork and crafts in support of our upcoming children's projects and activities, which are planned for this summer. These activities will include art projects, mosaics and musical instrument instruction. We received many visitors and some generous donations from our community members, making the event a success. The children will have some great summer programs to look forward to.



Art Program



Women Artists from "Toronto Play Back Theatre"



Mother's Day Celebration!



Jolene was having fun in "Her Share" Program



*right:
Summer Student
Priscilla planting
flower for CSO front
door*

WAYS to make a difference at NELLIE'S

By Marcia Beck, Board Member

EVER CONSIDERED BEING ON THE BOARD?

We are looking for new board members at Nellie's! Are you passionate about issues affecting women? Are you committed to anti-racist, anti-oppressive, feminist change? Do you have some time to share with your community? Would you like to make new friends, share your expertise, and help Nellie's flourish? Being a board member at Nellie's is a wonderful way to give back; it's fun, interesting, and a great way to make a difference. We're careful to ensure that each board member brings diverse skills and experiences. At this time, we're especially interested in women who have experience with labour issues. If this sounds interesting to you, please fill out an application at www.nellies.org. We would love to hear from you!



Welcome to our new Board member Caroline Chikoore. Caroline joined us in April with her 15 years of experience in the non-profit sector

Nellie's Community Events

ARE YOU A MEMBER YET?

Okay, so you are too busy to volunteer at Nellie's. And you already give what you can to Nellie's, because you believe in what we do. You count on Nellie's to help make women's lives better. But what else can you do to help? Become a member. It's easy, and meaningful. Did you know that Nellie's requires new members every year to maintain our standing? When you become a member, you tell the community that you believe in the work that we do here at Nellie's. And it is simple: one phone call, one letter, or one email is all that it takes! If you can, we suggest a donation with your membership (up to \$20 on a sliding scale, where you decide what you can give). If you support Nellie's, please become a member. Call us at (416)461-8903 or fill out this form. Let us know that you are out there!

Nellie's Membership Application Form 2007/8

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No.: _____

I agree & support the mission of Nellie's

Signature: _____



Community celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 20 at Nellie's outreach program



Nellie's team at the IWD march



Nellie's joined Women's Housing Takeover Rally and March on June 3

All I Ask

by Joanna Shawana

My fellow woman
My sister's
I am weak
I am hurt
All I ask of you is
Please
Hear what I have to say
Hear what I have to share

I am not here
To be looked down
I am not here
To be judged
For what had happen to me
All I ask of you is
Please
Hear what I have to share

My fellow women
My sister's
Listen to my words
See the pain in my eyes
All I ask of you is
Please
Hear what I have to say
Hear what I have to share

Help me
To get through my pain
Help me
To understand what is happening
Help me
To be a better person
So please
Hear what I have to say
Hear what I have to share

Nellie's Fundraising Events



Awakenings 07 -
International Women's
Dance in partnership with
Assaulted Women's Helpline.

Top: Executive Directors Huong Pham
(Left) from AWHL
& Margarita from Nellie's

Right: DJ Verlia Stephens

Below:
Volunteers from AWHL & Nellie's



Jazz It Up with Nellie's



Thank you to all the sponsors, volunteers,
performers & guests who came out to
support our annual fundraising evening at
the Harbourfront Centre.



Nellie's volunteers working at the reception table



Rebecca Rogers receiving a donation from Zellers



Margarita with CAW Local 1980 Reps receiving a generous gift from the Social Justice Committee



Craig Robertson, age 12, went out busking to raise \$151 for Nellie's



Congratulations to Oakwood Collegiate students for winning the Youth Initiative Project for Nellie's



Thank you to UFCW for their generous gift!

Nellie's Calendar of Events

Jun 15-24	Toronto Pride Week
Jun 21	National Aboriginal Day – Canada
Jun 27	Multiculturalism Day - Canada
Jul 1	Canada Day
Aug 4	Caribana
Aug 12	International Youth Day – UN
Sept 3	Labour Day
Sept 13	Ramadan begins - Islam
Oct 1	International Day for the Elderly – UN
Oct 8	Thanksgiving
Oct 10	World Mental Health Day – UN
Oct 13-14	Rosh Hashanah - Jewish
Oct 17	Int'l Day for Eradication of Poverty
Oct 13	Eid-ul-Fitr – Islam
Oct	United Way CN Tower Climb

Note: Please visit our website at www.nellies.org for all community and cultural celebrations for 2007

Nellie's Contact Information

Mailing Address:

970 Queen Street East, PO Box 98118
Toronto, ON M4M 1J0



Shelter

Tel: 416-461-1084

TTY: 416-461-7561

Fax: 416-461-0976

E-mail: programs@nellies.org

Community Support

Tel: 416-461-3404, 416-461-2052

Fax: 416-461-0970

E-mail: outreach@nellies.org

Transitional Housing & Support

Tel: 416-461-0980

TTY: 416-461-0625

Fax: 416-461-0970

E-mail: tsw@nellies.org

Administration

Tel: 416-461-8903

Fax: 416-461-0970

E-mail: community@nellies.org

Website: www.nellies.org

Program, Volunteers, Students: 416-461-0739

Financial Donations: 416-461-0769

In Kind Donations: 416-461-0521

Charitable No.: 11930-2727-RR0001

Thank you to Nellie's volunteer Editor, Julie Allin, for her help.

