



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.

Message from Executive Director

February 2004 , Issue #11

Happy 2004! It's the Year of the Monkey and we want to send best wishes for health and happiness to all our friends in the community.

I want to say a very special thank you to all of the community supporters who provided donations of funds and goods to make the holiday season special for the women and children at our Shelter and in our Community Support Program. I also want to thank the staff and volunteers who, for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and Children, sold buttons in the subway stations. Nellie's raised over \$2000 for the December 6 Fund. Our third annual "Jazz It Up" fundraiser was held on February 7th and special thanks to the performers, volunteers and our friends for a fabulous evening of music, food and fun.

Nellie's is marking two celebrations; February is African Heritage /Black History Month and on March 8 we will celebrate International Women's Day. Nellie's will be having an information table at the rally and we'll be carrying our banner and showing off our new Nellie's t-shirts in the march. Nellie's will also be holding our first annual IWD Women's Dance, in partnership with the Assaulted Women's Helpline, on Friday, March 5. The event will be held at the Opera House on Queen St. East and we will have five outstanding women DJs. So come party and celebrate with us. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and the doors open at 8pm.

March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and this year's theme is "Empowering Youth to Fight Racism". Our Students Educating Against Violence project explores the intersection of violence and other forms of oppression in our community. Please visit our website or call us for details about what is happening at Nellie's and in the community.

One of our priorities in Nellie's new Strategic Plan is to enhance our work in the area of Social Justice. Currently we are involved in over 30 community coalitions and groups working on issues of poverty, violence, homelessness and anti-racism/anti-oppression. We bring over 30 years of experience working, from a grassroots, feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppression framework. Our work has been largely at the local and provincial level. Some of the work is project/campaign-based and some involves standing groups and coalitions. Over the next three years, we will evaluate our current work. We will enhance our social justice work throughout our organization, including working with women directly affected by issues, volunteers and staff. We will work in partnership and across sectors to achieve social change for women and children who are marginalized. We will increase the profile on important issues through public education and advocacy.



It seems fitting that this issue of Nellie's newsletter is dedicated to the looking at Women's Equality Issues globally and locally. As we mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day, we look to women who have made a difference and make a commitment to continue the struggle.

"When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." Audre Lorde

In Sisterhood,
Cindy Cowan

Women's Rights, A Global Perspective

By Renu Mandhane, Nellie's Board Member

International Women's Day is a time to consider the achievements of and challenges for the international, national and local women's rights movement. Women benefit from a strong articulation of their human rights in a variety of international treaties including, most importantly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (or CEDAW). CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and has been signed and ratified by Canada.



CEDAW sets up an agenda for national action to end discrimination, which it defines as any state action that impairs the exercise by women of their human rights. It also sets out the specific economic, social and political rights which women are entitled to exercise without discrimination. CEDAW recognizes that women should not face discrimination in relation to political participation, education, employment, health care, marriage and so on. Other human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights protect women's rights to education, food, healthcare and so on.

International Women's Day is an appropriate time to consider how global politics are threatening the protection of legally recognized women's rights. Since September 11th, 2001, a rise in militarism has characterized the international scene. Militarism means not only armed conflict, but also increased military spending, the rise of racial profiling and a culture of surveillance and fear. Despite their right not to be discriminated against in politics, women are grossly underrepresented in national governments. As such, many women feel that the increase in militarism has gone on without their consent. Women have a lot to lose in a society where militarism is prevalent. Women must work at the local, national and global levels to secure our rights in the face of this threat.

Some of the negative impacts of militarism on women's rights are more obvious than others. Women are often subjected to rape during war, either as the result of genocide or in situations where rape is considered a war prize. Rape during war violates the laws of war and is a gross violation of women's rights. Women and children are often displaced as a result of war and disproportionately represented in refugee camps. In such camps, women's rights to food, healthcare and nationality are often threatened. Many women whose partners are killed in war, either as civilians or soldiers, lose their economic security, especially in areas where they have little or no access to paid employment.

While Canadian women should feel thankful that they do not live in a war zone, they are not shielded from the effects of increased militarism. Increased government spending on national defence almost always means a decrease in social spending. In Canada, the Department of National Defence has received three successive budget increases totaling more than \$5 billion, to be delivered between 2001-2002 and 2006-2007. At the same time, Canadians have experienced less spending on health care, social services and welfare. It is women, especially poor women, who are the primary users of social services; they lose the most when money is diverted from the social service sector to the military. The decrease in social spending resulting from militarism has a discriminatory impact on women and threatens their economic and social rights.

In the last few years, Canadians have been forced to tolerate increasing surveillance of their activities, a culture of fear and intimidation, and state-sanctioned racial profiling. Surveillance is often targeted at poor and racialized communities. The impact on women from these communities is profound. Increased public discrimination against people of colour has led many women to feel shame and embarrassment, divided allegiances, and has likely affected their access to social services. Moreover, women who have historically pressed for changes to cultural practices that have negative impacts on their rights may be less inclined to "go against" their culture in the current climate. Women's rights in relation to religious and cultural freedom are being curtailed.

Militarism is affecting women all over the world; in the Middle East and here at home. One of the great ironies of the increase in militarism is that it is often justified in terms of securing women's rights. For example, the American and Canadian governments justified their actions in Afghanistan in part to secure the rights of Afghani women. However, women in that country continue to face extreme discrimination, while the world's focus has shifted to Iraq. In the end, women's rights must be secured through sustained attention to ending oppression rather than quick-fix military "solutions".

Protecting women's rights in the context of militarism requires a local, national and global response. Thankfully, many women here and abroad are raising their voices against a culture of fear and intimidation. Movements range from protests to marches to passive resistance.

While International Women's Day is a logical time to consider how the global and local connect, it should not be the only time we think about issues such as poverty, violence and homelessness through a larger lens. There is tremendous energy and inspiration that comes from the global women's movement, including language regarding women's rights, as well as local struggles in other countries. We must tap into that energy and utilize it to hold our governments accountable for the protection, promotion and fulfillment of women's rights.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Sept '95



Platform for Action

Education and Training of Women

- ensure equal access to education
- eradicate illiteracy among women
- improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education
- develop non-discriminatory education and training.
- allocate sufficient resources for, and monitor the implementation of, educational reforms
- promote lifelong education and training

Women and the Economy

- promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources
- facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
- provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women
- strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks
- eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
- promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Women in Power and Decision-making

- take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making.
- increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership

Violence Against Women

- take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women
- study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- eliminate the trafficking of women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

Program Updates - The Shelter, by Irene Jaakson, Program Manager

Casper came to visit, along with a fashion plate from the 1950s, a guest from a pajama party, a puffy pumpkin and a not-so-wicked witch. We sure didn't worry about our teeth that night as all of our spooky guests joined in for gooey Halloween treats.



Staff from the Riverside Café collecting a full truck load of toys for Nellie's

Halloween gave way to November, and the holiday season. We were abuzz with activity, starting with a celebration of Ramadan and Eid. We were privileged to enjoy a most wonderful feast, as well as a fascinating discussion on Women in Islam facilitated by Amina Sherazee, a lawyer and activist in Toronto. November also saw the transformation of our living room into a regal place of comfort and warmth. Thanks to our friends from



Staff held a celebration of Ramadan in the shelter

a flurry of activity starting to happen downstairs in our Quiet Room. Why were so many bright boxes and bags going in there? Something was definitely going on. As

...In December, the children in the shelter noticed that there was a flurry of activity starting to happen downstairs in our Quiet Room....

The Designing Challenge, our living room is the image of homey solace. Our warm thanks also to our sisters from Women's Habitat who made our decoration dreams come true! Our new living room was the perfect place to celebrate the holidays.

In December, the children in the shelter noticed that there was



Nellie's staff team at United Way CN Tower Stair Climb, our fastest time was 33 minutes to climb the 1776 steps

December crept along, the activity that started in the Quiet Room extended all the way to the playroom...what was being planned? Everyone had to wait for a few more weeks, though, hard as it was.

During December, we remembered women who had been killed as a result of domestic violence. We sold December 6 buttons at Broadview subway station, and didn't waste an opportunity to raise awareness about violence against women. Staff and residents joined together for the annual December 6 banquet, where we honoured those women who had lost their lives, and committed to working towards an end to violence against women.

We held a holiday party at the shelter. The delectable feast stretched for miles. We all pulled apart our holiday crackers, wore the bright paper hats, and giggled over the jokes that we found inside. And of course, presents were given to everyone! We were almost too tired to even consider yet another event on New Years Eve, but naturally we did. In the wee hours of the morning, we toasted 2004 together.



Thank you for the wonderful gifts from Winners and to our Union UNITE for their coordination again this year.

Program Updates - cso



Amazingly packed at the holiday celebration

December was witness to the second annual Festival of Lights celebration at the Community Support Program. The whole room shimmered with the most beautiful glittering lights. The program space was packed with women and children enjoying a turkey dinner with all the fixin's, and holiday cakes in the shapes of trees and gold-and-silver adorned wreaths. Profuse thanks to the Riverside Café who donated this wonderful meal! A special thank you also to Toronto Community Care Access Centre and Montcrest School for their holiday gift drives.



A reading from Shelly about Hanukah at the Festival of Lights celebration

The highest privilege, however, came when the children performed for us all.



Faduma was reading about Ramadan at the celebration

The Wimbawee singers and the Second Chance dance troupe displayed their remarkable talents. Using traditional African instruments, the Wimbawee singers serenaded the partygoers, and the Try Again dancers donned sparkling t-shirts and showed their rhythmic style.



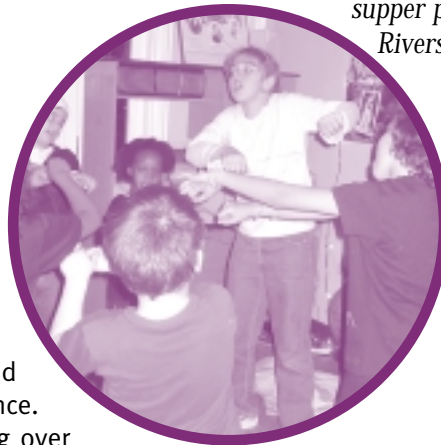
Wonderful holiday supper provided by Riverside Cafe



The Wimbawee Singers had an excellent performance

We can look forward to another busy winter here at Nellie's. In January we will celebrate the Lunar New Year and welcome the Year of the Monkey. February will have us grooving at "Jazz it Up" of course, and in March we will celebrate International Women's Day with our sisters in true Nellie's fashion – which means lots of dancing!

Our Students Educating Against Violence Project has been a resounding success so far. Riverdale, Marc Garneau, Winston Churchill and North Albion Collegiates have been working with Jiin Yiong on violence against women, and have been planning their civic actions to make a difference in the lives of women and children who are survivors of violence. In total the SEAV project is reaching over 1,600 students. Congratulations!



Amazing "Try Again" dancers

Meet the Nellie's Board of Directors

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful, skilled, diverse group of women on our Board of Directors. The board is charged with implementing the vision, and providing leadership and strategic planning for our organization. We would like to thank our past Board members and introduce to you this tremendous group of women.

Safia Ahmed has her MBA and is currently working as a Clinical Director in a community health centre. Safia has an extensive background in systems advocacy, finance and women's anti-violence issues. Safia is the Board Treasurer.

Paula Chapman is a lawyer has done extensive work in the areas of employment and human rights law, and also has experience in disability and immigration law.



Current Board members from Left, Nadine, Percy, Paula, Sherece, Jyoti and Renu

Percy Lezard is a counselor and is currently working in women's anti-violence services. Percy has extensive experience in health promotion, HIV/AIDS, women's health, First Nation and disability issues.

Renu Madhane is a lawyer and has worked in the area of women's human rights, both in Canada and internationally. She is a published writer on issues of women and the law. Renu brings strong skills in the area of policy analysis and research.

Theresa Shilling is a Counsellor and is currently working with persons with disabilities at an Aboriginal health center. Theresa has extensive experience in the areas of shelter, addictions and women's issues.

Jyoti Singh has a Masters degree in political science and has experience in marketing. She is currently working in the area of shelter and as a Global Education Coordinator. Jyoti was a presenter at the Canadian Consortium on Asia Pacific Security and at the Canadian Asian Studies Conference.

Nadine Sookermany has a B.A. in women's studies and is currently working as manager in the area of adult literacy. Nadine has worked in women's shelters and brings extensive experience in the areas of health, including HIV/AIDS and sexual health. Nadine is the Board Co-chair.



Lambrini Soulos, former Board Treasurer, thank you for your hard work, we will miss you!

An Invitation to our friends...

Come celebrate International Women's Day with Nellie's and the Assaulted Women's Helpline. This is our first Annual Women's Dance Fundraiser. It will be held on Friday Mar. 5 at the Opera House, 735 Queen St. E. from 9pm to 2am. Dance tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. There will be five spectacular women DJs spinning a great mix of tunes. Call 416- 461-8903 to order your tickets.

Daisy of Hope Campaign

Join us to support Nellie's by buying and/or selling daisy pins for a toonie. This campaign is a fundraiser for shelters for assaulted women and children across the province and occurs during the month of May, in honour of Mother's Day. All the money raised will go to support Nellie's Shelter and to build awareness on violence against women. If you are able to help and sell pins at your work, school or in the community, please contact Adrienne at 416-461-0769.

Vagina Monologues

Aries Productions is proud to present a benefit production of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues. Proceeds will go to Nellies and the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre. Join us as we celebrate women, raise awareness and envision a world without violence on Friday, Feb. 27 at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts at 8pm. Order your tickets (\$35 each) at 416-366-7723. 416-461-0739 for more information.

"Jazz It Up"

***... an
evening to
remember...***

Nellie's Thanks to everyone who helped make our third annual "Jazz It Up" fundraising event an evening to remember!

Over 120 people gathered at the St. Lawrence



Hall to enjoy the vocal stylings of the Etobicoke Collegiate Jazz Trio, Lily Frost and Shelley Hamilton. Guests partook of sumptuous h'ors d'oeuvres by Urban Source Catering before indulging in hand henna, tarot card reading and a fantastic silent auction.

Special thanks to all of our silent auction donors!

This evening would not have been possible without support from The Counselling Foundation of Canada, Dasd Contracting Inc., UNITE!, NOW Magazine and Urban Source Catering.



Special Thanks...

We appreciate the support from all of our donors, however due to limited space, we could only include donors who gave over \$500 for the period of July to December 2003. Special thanks to our many donors who prefer to remain anonymous.

*Melanie Bailey
Bank of Montreal Fountain of Hope Foundation
Banyan Society of Toronto
Bennett Family Foundation
The Brenninkmeyer Charitable Foundation
Caldwell and Company
CHUM Charitable Foundation
The Counselling Foundation of Canada
Crown Industrial Roofing
Jean Davidson
The Donner Foundation
The Great Atlantic & Pacific Co. of Canada
Ann Guillen
Linda & Jim Gurd
Hydro One Employees' Trust Fund
IBM Employees' Charitable Fund
Insurance Solutions Plus
Doug Keeley
LCBO
The Manchee Foundation
Estate of William A. May
Mazon Canada
Ron & Linda Miller
Heather Mitchell
Ontario Nurses' Association
OPG Employees' and Pensioners' Charity Trust
Michael Pitman
David Reed
Edward Richardson
Senang Investments Ltd.
Taylor Thomson
Toronto Fire Fighters
University of Toronto, Office of the
Vice-President, Human Resources
Nancy Young
Zeller's*



Nellie's Calendar of Events

February	Black History Month
Feb.21	Losar- Tibetan New Year
Feb 27	V Day until the violence stops Benefit Performance – Vagina Monologues 8:00 pm, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts Call 416-366-7723 for tickets <i>Proceeds go to Nellie's & Toronto Rape Crisis Ctr.</i>
March	Women's History Month
Mar 5	Nellie's Annual Fundraiser - IWD Women's Dance @ Opera House, 735 Queen St. East
Mar 6	Holi (Hindu, Sikh)
Mar 8	International Women's Day Theme: "Because I want to change the World"
Mar. 21	International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Mar 21-28	Week of Solidarity with People struggling Against Discrimination
Apr. 6-13	Passover
Apr. 11	Easter
Apr 7	World Health Day
Apr 13	Baisakhi (Solar New Year)
Apr. 18	Yom ha-Ahoah- Holocaust Memorial day
Apr 22	Earth Day
Apr 22-24	Gathering of Nations Pow Wow
Apr 22	Bring your Child to Work Day
May	Daisy of Hope Campaign
May 3	Labour Day
May 4	Wesak (Buddhism)
May 9	Mother's Day
May 23	African Liberation Day
May 24	Victoria Day



Thanks to the women who joined the Curves Community Challenge to support local charities including Nellie's



We very much appreciate the tremendous support from our Community partner, the Riverside Café. They organized a toy drive for Nellies during the holiday season and our kids' holiday wishes all came true



We are grateful to Zeller's for their continued support

Nellie's Contact Information

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Shelter

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Community Support

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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

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