



# 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

August 2004 , Issue #13

We hope everyone has been enjoying the summer months! I want to send a very special thanks to all the community artists who donated their fabulous art for Nellie's first annual Art Auction. We're very proud to partner with our friends in the arts community and be able to both celebrate immense talent and raise much needed funds for Nellie's Shelter. We also want to invite you to mark your date books and join Nellie's for the United Way Campaign Kick-off at the Leaps & Bounds Walk on Sunday, Sept 12 at Nathan Phillips Square. Nellie's is a proud United Way member agency, we will be meeting in front of City Hall at 10:00 a.m. Look for Nellie's Banner and join our team of board, staff and women and children for the walk. We will also be participating in the United

Way CN Tower Stair Climb as a team on Sunday Oct.24. If you want to join Nellie's team please e-mail us at [community@nellies.org](mailto:community@nellies.org).

Last year at this time, we were poised in Toronto for three elections and we hope for new opportunities for furthering women's equality rights. With the federal election over, we must now turn to ensuring action. Women's issues are economic, social and political. They include the economy, the environment, education, and funding for our cities. They also include affordable housing, childcare, immigration and settlement (including the protection of human rights), access to labour market, family reunification and the protection of refugees. Nellie's was proud to be a part of the Voices for Choices coalition that organized an all-candidates debate in June for the Toronto-Danforth riding. Women from the community were able to hear directly from all the federal candidates before casting their ballots.

We talk about linking local to global as a way of looking at and understanding what is happening socially, politically and economically for women and their children across the

world, and as a means of working towards change. In the world of globalization, an increasing number of decisions are being made far way from local realities that have major impacts on our communities. The United Nations is one place to look at global issues. In 2004, two UN designated decades are coming to an end, the "International Decade for the World's Indigenous People" and the "Decade for Human Rights Education". When we examine what has been done to address the issues of racism and discrimination faced by First Nations and racialized communities in Canada, it is hard to see progress. This fact was highlighted in the recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur to Canada. The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World is from 2001-2010. We've seen this decade begin with a new war, which politicians have promised will never end. It will take the action of all citizens globally and locally to stop the growing militarization that has led to increasing death, destruction and world insecurity. It remains important that the UN establishes these dates as a reminder of the work required to end the oppression and suffering of people across the world, to remind us that their struggles are ours, and more importantly, to focus us all to take action.

This issue of Nellie's newsletter is dedicated to looking at women's issues from a women-centred social and legal perspective. You'll hear from women from our Community Support and Outreach Program who engaged in the election process in their communities, and made their voices heard. They believe, and we believe, that another world is possible.

In Sisterhood,

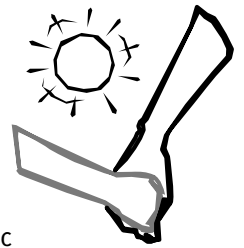
Cindy Cowan

# From Suffrage to Sovereignty *By Rikha Sharma, Board Committee Member*

This past June, Canada elected its first minority government in 25 years. For many, this means more thorough debate of the issues in Parliament, increased cooperation among opposing parties and greater onus on the governing party to fulfill promises made throughout the election campaign. Time will tell whether these predictions ring true, but if the number of women elected to Parliament is any indication of the new government's priorities, then women have reason to be concerned. Disproportionate representation continues to be a barrier to the advancement of issues that affect women, despite the fact that Canadian women are experiencing the highest rates of poverty in two decades.<sup>1</sup> In fact, this year's election saw the number of female House members actually drop from 21% to 18%.<sup>2</sup> With inadequate access to childcare, lack of affordable housing and insufficient protection from violence, issues affecting women are as important today as ever. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider some of the issues that are of particular concern to women, as there is a direct correlation between legislative policy relating to these issues and the overall welfare of women in Canada.

## Childcare

Presently, the government provides little childcare support to low-income or single-parent households, the vast majority of which are headed by women. Consequently, women are prevented from entering the workforce or are forced to take low-paying jobs with no opportunity to further their education and earning potential. It means they have to forgo paid work by staying home or switching to part time. Future income is also reduced through lower or non-existent pensions, and opportunities for career advancement are lost (i.e. promotions, raises). Non-monetary costs are felt in the form of exhaustion, isolation from social networks and the absence of satisfaction derived from paid work. From an economic perspective, the cost of limiting access to the workforce is significant, and investment in a national childcare program could bring substantial social benefits in the form of higher female employment, disposable income and tax revenue. The government has pledged to create a nationally coordinated program ensuring that all families have access to childcare – a program that is supported by the large majority of Canadians.



## Housing

One of the most crucial issues affecting low-income women in Canada is lack of affordable housing. In this year's election, three major parties publicly expressed their support for new housing programs, and there have been several initiatives designed to address this issue. Among these are the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) that provides funding for renovation of aging housing units, and the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI) to assist the homeless. The fulfillment of these initiatives will, if implemented, help to alleviate the housing crisis that we are currently experiencing. Homeless women, however, have distinct housing needs, as they often live in unsafe, unhealthy environments and are at greater risk of physical harm. The death rate for homeless women is significantly higher than that of homeless men.<sup>3</sup> To effectively address these differences, more attention needs to be paid to the systematic factors that lead to homelessness. For women, these include an over-representation in single-parent households, discrimination in the workforce and experiences of violence at home. A long-term solution would require not only the creation of additional affordable housing, but also a focus on closing the wage gap, cracking down on perpetrators of domestic violence and increasing the income levels of Canada's poor; a group disproportionately represented by women.



## Violence

Women are considerably more likely to be victims of violence, whether through "stranger-danger" (i.e. random assault/homicide) or in their homes (domestic battery). Women's disproportionate percentage as victims of violence is further exacerbated by the fact that they are least likely to be the actual perpetrators of violence. Aboriginal women are among the hardest hit victims of such violence since their protection under the Canadian Human Rights Act can be overridden by any provision of the Indian Act. In 2003, the UN denounced the Canadian government for its failure to address violence against women by reducing funding for rape crisis and transition houses, cutting legal aid and inadequately sentencing perpetrators of violence.<sup>4</sup> Despite being a signatory to various international human rights treaties, the Canadian government has failed to adequately protect women from violence.



It becomes evident that despite some advances in such areas as education and employment rates, women as a social category remain less empowered than their male counterparts. Likewise, there has been an enormous disparity between the progress of minority and Aboriginal women as compared to white-skinned women, who suffer nowhere near the extent of poverty and



discrimination that do women of colour. Although the underlying factors fuelling these problems are many, strong political representation is a fundamental channel by which to mitigate, if not wholly cure, this social malaise. Increased efforts are required to explore not only methods by which female and minority constituents within the government can be increased, but as well to deconstruct and isolate those factors that have caused female representation to decline.

1 [www.canadaelection.net/issues/](http://www.canadaelection.net/issues/); The Elimination of Poverty for Women

2 Toronto Star; Black, Debra and Monsebraaten, Laurie; June 29, 2004; Disappointing Result for Women

3 Toronto Star; Carey, Elaine; April 14, 2004; Homeless Death Toll Gets Province's Attention

4 [www.canadaelection.net/shock](http://www.canadaelection.net/shock); Still in Shock



The first permanent legislation in Canada gave women the vote in Federal Election was in force in 1919.



Cindy discussed the importance of voting with our program participants

*I voted ...*

- to make a change
- to have a voice
- because it was my right to vote and to make an impact on the social safety network
- because it gives me the right to have an opinion

*The issues that were important to me during the election were...*

- housing
- health system for seniors, they really cut down on the seniors
- health care system, the Liberals cut a lot
- child care, welfare rates and access to programs

*What I learned about the election and parties was ...*

- campaign promises are not kept, I don't trust politicians
- NDP's Jack Layton would enlarge the healthcare system paid by government for everyone

*I want to see the new government ...*

- fulfill campaign promises; voters will watch them like hawks
- make prescription and dental care available from the government for people who do not get health benefits
- social democratic

*I am worried that the government will not...*

- protect seniors' pension, healthcare benefits and nursing home care
- improve healthcare, like it promised
- raise social assistance
- take responsibility for political corruption and correct it
- follow through their campaign promises and stay committed despite opposition

## Program Updates - cso



Our season at CSO continued with a spectacular fundraiser Open House, which took place the last weekend of May. Our kitchen was sizzling for days beforehand, as women made mouthwatering samosas, delectable spring rolls and sweet Somali biscuits. We saw many visitors to our site, all of whom were most impressed with all we do here! Participants sold t-shirts and jewelry,

gave out lots of information and answered all sorts of questions. We made sure our walls were dressed with fine art to "tease" the crowd; after all, Great Art/ Glad Heart was just around the corner!



Maureen from St. Christopher House gave a workshop on "Income Security"

Safety in the community started with Nellie's this spring. About twenty women and children audited the area around Nellie's with an eye for safety. With the help of METRAC's safety audit handbook, we determined if street signs needed to be more visible, if pay telephones were in working order, and if the park in our area was well lit and safe for children. What an empowering evening!

Naturally, we joined our sisters for Saturday's Dyke March. Along with the shelter, we marched and danced through the streets of Toronto, and helped out with Nellie's booth the next day. What a blast!!!

We had the opportunity to hear from some guests recently as well. First, a visit from Coping in Tough Times discussed finances with the women, and later we learned about Ovarian Cancer and importance of women getting tested for this serious disease. Of course, we were actively involved in the federal election, too. We had a strong presence at our community's all candidates meeting and made sure that our voices were heard.

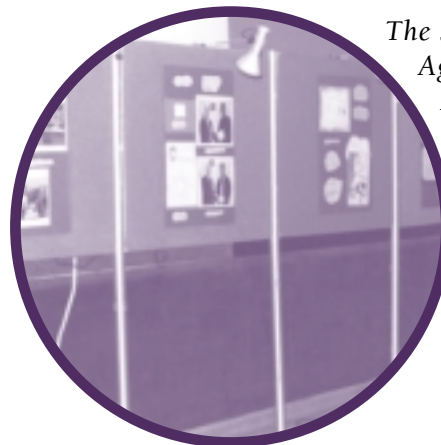


Open House at Nellie's Community Support and Outreach Program in May

Kids were on the way to the park



Women & kids conducted a safety audit of the South Riverdale neighbourhood



The Students Educating Against Violent Against Women Project had a weeklong exhibition at City Hall in July



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

The festivities began this season with a spirited Easter egg hunt. All the children spent Easter morning peeking behind books and under pillows for chocolate bunnies and candy eggs. We had a yummy supper in the evening, and ended the day with smiles and full stomachs.



As is our tradition, on Mother's Day we gave roses to all our women. We celebrated the women in our lives who have made a difference to us by their strength, courage, creativity and wisdom.



*Thank you Paula for planting flowers at our office entrance*

As you may know, June 21 was National Aboriginal Day, and has been since 1996. The day honours the many contributions made by the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people of Canada. The day was originally chosen for its significance as the summer solstice. Nellie's women and children joined in Toronto festivities including a sunrise ceremony following a grand entry, teachings, song, dance and art.

We started Pride week off with a visit from Mexican filmmaker Alez Flores who shared her film *The First Latin American Dyke March* with us.

Shown at this year's Inside Out, Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, *The First Latin American Dyke March* is a powerful piece about Pride in Latin America, and gives voice to Latin American lesbians. Following the film, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to engage in a question and answer period with Ms. Flores who talked about her experiences making the film. In addition to being a filmmaker and activist in the Queer Community, Ms. Flores is also a painter and producer.



*Above: Staff member Jiin sold handmade jewelry for Nellie's at the Pride Community Fair*

*Left: Nellie's participated in the DYKE March on June 26*

Naturally, women and children joined Saturday's Dyke March. The sun was strong and our spirits elated. Everyone was dancing, water bottles in hand, as we took over downtown Toronto. Sunday was the day to visit the Nellie's booth at Wellesley and Yonge; we were hard at work, applying tattoos and selling hand-made jewelry, but we found time enough to party once again.

With only a short break, we're getting ready for more summer fun – a raucous trip to Wonderland is set for July, so stay tuned to hear about the fun and see the pics.



*Our kids gave Camille, the CSO placement student, a surprise farewell party*

## Meet our Board Members

*Nellie's is pleased to welcome our two new board members, Monika and Mary, who joined our Board in June of this year. We would also like to take this opportunity, to introduce to you Sherece, Board Secretary. We are very fortunate to have these wonderful women on board.*

### Monika Badih

has been an activist and advocate for the women's anti-violence movement for the past 30 years. She has a degree in political and social science and worked internationally and locally in shelters and sexual assault/rape crisis centres in the frontline and management. Monika is a new Board member and a member of the Fundraising Committee.



### Mary Byberg

is a lawyer practicing in the areas of union-side labour, administrative law and civil litigation. Mary was a mature student when she returned to school in 1999 to earn a law degree. Her work experience prior to law school included time at Planned Parenthood of Toronto and Best Start Barrie. In both positions, Mary had an opportunity to work at the community level on such issues as reproductive health, violence against women, poverty and addictions. Mary joined the Board in June 2004 and is now a member of the Finance and Fundraising Committees.



### Sherece Taffe

has a background in business, including project management, web technology and the literary arts. She has extensive volunteer experience with women's anti-violence services and co-founded both Dajuce Magazine and Blackberry. Sherece is the Board Secretary and is a member of the Social Justice/ Anti-oppression and Fundraising Committees and has been on the Board since September 2003. Sherece was the Chair of Nellie's fundraiser "Great Art/Glad Heart" in June 2004.



## Voices of Women

### No Love Here

By Anjel Henry

*I am a woman of marriage  
From hell with a swelling eye  
That you could never tell  
Shades on my eyes  
Beatings on my chest  
Would you like to know the rest?*

*I am a woman of pain  
That doesn't show  
As low as I'm feeling  
You'll never know.*

*I am a woman of sorrow  
And regrets can't tell nobody  
I don't realize it yet.*

*I am a woman who was told  
To shut up crying, tears don't belong here.  
I'm full of fear, stamping feet;  
loud voices make me scared.  
Love is a like, beatings are just honesty.  
Forgiveness for what was done.*

*I am a woman who is in denial  
Who is going to save me when  
I take my last breath?*

*Take me with you when I pray  
"love is blind"  
I'm not here to stay.*

## Great Art/Glad Heart

On Monday June 14th Nellie's held its first art show and silent auction, Great Art/Glad Heart at Gallery 1313 and raised over \$4,000.00 for our programs and services for women and children.

Many thanks to the artists who participated in this event:

*Robert Allen, Elizabeth*

*Bacon, Irina Badescu,*

*Ross Bonfanti, Dave*

*Brookes, Edwin Chan,*

*Phillip Che, Ethel*

*Christensen, Babs Collier, Rosemarie Dickob, Teri*

*Donovan, Marita Engel, Kevin Fainbloom, Fran Freeman,*

*Christa Galligan, Christa Gampp, Alva Gao, Anna Gauci,*

*Margaret Glew, Herman Grunfeld, Hawra Harianawala,*

*Rika Hawes, Catherine Heard, Tao Wei Hong, Tracy*

*Horvath, Nancy Howell, David Hu, Michael Hui, Jeanne*

*Isley, Irene Jaakson, Helen Kan, Leslie Karniszewski,*

*Gellien Lai, Joan Latchford, Eva Lewarne, Diana Li, Marilyn*

*Lightstone, Olina Lin, Eddy Lui, Beau Ross Lukes, Bernice*

*Lum, David Mayer, Bao-Qing Meng, Menno Krant, Michelle*

*Michener, Noxious, Jane Orr Novotny, Ramona Persaud,*

*Chiquita Phillips, Hugh Poon, Terri Robertson, Gregory*

*Robins, Alma Roussy, Berte Rubin, Runt, Yi Sang, Toba*

*Shapiro, Jen Silk, Clint Adam Smyth, Nicholas Sou, Helen*

*Stalker, David Swartz, Ken Syrette,*

*Sherece Taffe, Sharmylae Taffe,*

*Charles Taylor, Judy Thorley,*

*Ken Tobias, Keng Wong,*

*Evelyn Yeh.*



*Cindy introduced our Guest of Honor, MPP Marilyn Churley, of Toronto-Danforth*



SPECIAL THANKS TO PHIL ANDERSON OF GALLERY 1313 FOR THE GALLERY SPACE

## Nellie's Invitations

### 2nd Annual Boat Cruise

The Summerhill LCBO is hosting their Second Annual Boat Cruise for Nellie's shelter on Sunday September 12, 2004 aboard the Captain Matthew Flinders and Mariposa Cruise Line. Enjoy an evening to remember on this 144-foot, 600 passenger-capacity vessel.

Dinner, dancing and a silent auction are included.

**Tickets are \$45.00 each.**

**Art Show** Featuring new works by Susan Rosen Well-known Toronto artist Susan Rosen is presenting new artwork at Fusilli Ristorante at 531 Queen Street East. Join us for the opening reception on Sunday September 19, 2004 from 6:00 – 8:30pm. Her show and sale continue through to Saturday October 30, 2004 *A portion of the proceeds from this event will be donated to Nellie's.*

*For more information please call Adrienne at (416) 461-0769*

### Leaps and Bounds for United Way



Join Nellie's team for a 4km walk on Sunday, September 12, 2004 at Nathan Phillips Square, or you can choose to sponsor our women and children to walk. Call Janna for details at 416-461-8903. The walk starts at 11:00 am for about 2 hours. Come and have some fun with us.

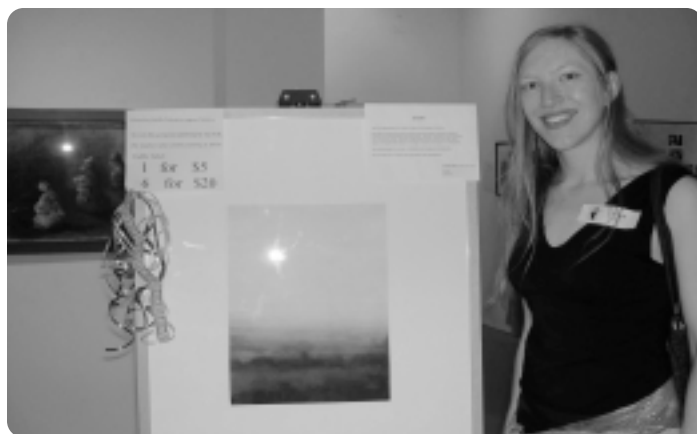
### The CN Tower Stair Climb for United Way

Join the Corporate Team Challenge! Nellie's will form a team to climb the CN tower on Sunday, October 24. Don't miss the chance to challenge yourself and support the charity. If you're interested, please register with Janna at 416-461-8903 before October 1, 2004.



## Nellie's Calendar of Events

Aug. 9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Aug. 23	International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
September	Violence Against Women Awareness Month in Toronto
Sept. 6	Labour Day
Sept. 12	Leaps & Bounds 4 km Walk for United Way Nathan Phillips Square
Sept. 12	LCBO Boat Cruise
Sept. 16	Annual Community Safety Walkabout
Sept. 19	Susan Rosen Art Show Fusilli, 531 Queen Street East
Sept. 27	Take Back the Night
Oct. 1	International Day for the Elderly
Oct. 11	Thanksgiving
Oct. 17	International Day for Eradication of Poverty
Oct. 24	Team Challenge - The CN Tower Stair Climb for United Way
November	Wife Assault Prevention Month
Nov. 6	Int'l Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in Armed Conflict



Special thank you to Jen Silk who donated her artwork as a raffle prize.



Thank you to  
Sears Canada  
Merchandising Services  
(D/7021) for donating  
boxes of children's clothes  
& winter jackets for our  
"Back to School " program

## Special Thanks...

We appreciate the support from all of our donors, however due to limited space, we could only include our major donors; those who've donated over \$500 received from January – June 2004. A special thanks to our many donors who prefer to remain anonymous.

*The Banyan Society of Toronto*  
*Bell, Employees Volunteer Program*  
*Bell Mobility Foundation*  
*Christie Bentham*  
*Dasd Contracting*  
*The Counselling Foundation of Canada*  
*First Church of Christ, Scientist*  
*Fountain of Hope, BMO Employees Foundation*  
*Honda Canada*  
*Hydro One Employees' and Pensioners' Charity Trust Fund*  
*Mackenzie Financial Charitable Foundation*  
*MAZON Canada*  
*MTMP & Associates*  
*Jonathan Nicholls*  
*Sears Employee Charitable Fund*  
*Toronto Professional Fire Fighters Association*  
*Linda Whelpdale*  
*Workplace Safety and Insurance Board*

## Nellie's Contact Information

### Mailing Address:

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 Toronto, ON M4M 1J0

### Shelter

Tel: 416-461-1084  
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 E-mail: programs@nellies.org

### Community Support

Tel: 416-461-3404, 416-461-2052  
 Fax: 416-461-0970  
 E-mail: outreach@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

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