



# 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

Many good wishes to all of you, your families and friends over the next several months as the holidays of Ramadan, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas are celebrated.

My wish for the New Year seems to be the same each year. It's not a simple one, but one that we believe is possible. My wish is that poverty, violence, homelessness and oppression are eliminated in the lives of all women and children. There are many reasons to be hopeful for change, but it will take hard work, public and political will, legislative changes and new resources.

Nellie's challenges this year have been great. The lack of core government funding over the past nine years has really hit the not-for-profit sector, and Nellie's has felt this impact. As we once again struggle to meet the needs of women and children over these long winter months, we want to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals, businesses and foundations that support our programs and the work we are doing out in the community. You make it possible for us to make a real difference in the lives of the over 750 women and children who rely on our services annually.

These are some of Nellie's highlights since our last Newsletter in August. In September we kicked off our United Way Campaign. Our staff has been out, as part of the United Way Speakers Bureau, speaking to groups about Nellie's work and the importance of the United Way.

We participated in the Toronto Danforth Community Picnic with an information table and did face painting for tons of children. We were honoured to welcome a group of women from Japan who visited our shelter. They left behind a wonderful piece of artwork that will hang in our shelter. Nellie's provided a written submission to the Attorney General's office for the Public Review of the Police Complaints System.

Many thanks to the Greater Toronto Apartment Association of their generous donation to Nellie's Community Support and Outreach Program. Each year we are privileged to welcome a new group of wonderful women to Nellie's who volunteer in three areas: Fundraising Administrative and Special events, Programs and on our Board Committees.

November 2004 , Issue #14

Welcome to Tatiana Baltrushevich, Latoya Cushnie, Voahirana Rakotoarijaona, Sanjida Rouf and Mona Sevasamy; Bong Castro, Josie Chundamala and Lindsey Connell; Jazel Alon, Deborah Gillis and Carrie Weis. We are also pleased to continue to provide an opportunity for learning for students. We warmly welcome Felicia Oiboyh, Danielle White and Tamara Castillo Gomez from George Brown College.

During November we will be having an information table at Native Earth's Performance of The Unnatural and Accidental Woman on November 18th opening night. We will also be participating in a Provincial Day of Action on November 25th to mark Woman Abuse Prevention Month.



*Welcome to our wonderful volunteers for 2004/05.*

This issue of Nellie's newsletter is dedicated to examining the issue of violence against women as a health issue and explores the impact of violence on women's emotional and physical health. Each year in Ontario, countless women and children will die as a result of violence. As we commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6th, we need to say for our grandmothers, sisters, aunts, friends, neighbours, co-workers and children, that we remember and we will work for change.

Justice and Peace for the New Year!

In Sisterhood,

Cindy Cowan

# Women Abuse, a Critical Public Health Issue

By Cindy Cowan, Executive Director

Violence against women is rooted in social, political and economic inequality of women. Health Canada defines "violence against woman as acts that result, or are likely to result, in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such an act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life." Furthermore, it estimates that the health related costs of violence against women exceed 1.5 billion a year and that these costs include "short term medical and dental treatment, long term physical and psychological care, lost time at work and the use of shelters and crisis centers".



Women and girls are most at risk of violence from men they know, particularly in the family.

Rape and sexual torture are used as weapons of war.

Violence against women has serious mental, physical and sexual health consequences.

**Violence against women  
is a public health problem.  
It can be prevented.**

27 per cent of all victims of violent crimes were victims of family violence. Among all family violence victims, 62 per cent were victims of violence at the hands of their spouse. In 2002 women accounted for 85 per cent of all victims of spousal violence and young women age 25-34 experienced the highest rate of violence at the hands of their spouses. In the Province of Ontario, since June of 1995, 181 women and 22 children were murdered according to Statistics Canada's 2004 report Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, which analyzed data provided by 94 police departments.

The National Clearing House on Family Violence says that "while the research linking family violence to a range of both short term and long term effects is not conclusive it does suggest a growing awareness of the far reaching health impacts of violence. This includes a few of the following; children likely to suffer in utero damage during assaults in

pregnancy, physical abuse resulting in death, injury and permanent disfigurement or disability, mental health issues including depression, addictions and suicide, sexual violence which results in unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and/or other pelvic, urinary infections."

We know that racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, classism, ageism, ableism, heterosexism, and transphobia are forms of violence against women. While all women live with the threat of violence, aboriginal women, racialized women, recent immigrants, women with disabilities, lesbian, bi-sexual and transexual and transgendered women, older women, young women and poor women face multiple oppressions that place them at greater risk of violence and abuse. There have been numerous studies that demonstrate links between racism and oppression, poverty and homelessness and identify the negative health consequences for women.

We believe that all women have the absolute right to live their lives free from violence. This right is included in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

One of our greatest national priorities is our healthcare system. Nationally and provincially, attention has been focused on healthcare. There has been discussion of the need to focus resources and reform how we respond to the health needs of all Canadians. Violence against women is a serious health issue in our communities and we would suggest that investment in ending violence against women would be a wise investment in health prevention and would yield both financial and social benefits.

It has been said that if any other group in the world was subject to the systematic violence in the way that women are we as a society would declare this war and fight to stop this violence. We would suggest that this is accurate and that violence against women needs to be viewed as a serious public crisis and that any focus on healthcare solutions must include a comprehensive approach to ending violence against women.

Social change is necessary, and requires a commitment of resources at all levels. Social programs, community and governmental services, particularly those having responsibility for providing services such as income security, health care, education, housing, legal aid, and women-specific anti-violence services and neighborhood supports, are essential to assisting women and children. Government has a social, legal, moral and ethical responsibility to use and enhance public resources to stop violence against women and children. The women and children who come to Nellie's, rely on all of us to work to end violence against women in our community.

## Jessica's Story\*

\* not real names

Jessica, aged six, and her eight-year-old brother Michael, arrived at Nellie's shelter with their mother after witnessing her father abuse her mother for many years. The night her family was forced to flee, her father had physically assaulted her mother and police were called. Her father was charged.

For many years, Jessica and Michael had seen their father intimidate, threaten and physically assault her mother. He often put her and her brother down and called her mother abusive names. Sometimes her father would threaten her mother that he would take them away from her. While he abused her mother, she and her brother were sent to their rooms, but they still heard and felt the violence. Afterwards, her father would promise never to repeat the violence and buy gifts for her mother. But it always happened again, until the day her mother fled.

Witnessing abuse has had an impact on Jessica in many ways. When she arrived at Nellie's shelter, Jessica exhibited many behavioral and emotional problems. She was very anxious and often wet her bed. She was often angry and had poor self-esteem. She was extremely introverted, fearful and depressed. Her brother was often involved in fights, and could be hostile and aggressive. If Jessica upset him, he would threaten her and sometimes hit her. Jessica was very angry with her father for the abuse and the loss of her friends and school, but she was also confused because she missed him. She was afraid to talk to anyone about her feelings.

At Nellie's shelter, Jessica and Michael met with the Child Advocate who welcomed them. After a short time, they learned to trust the worker and began to share their feelings about the abuse they had witnessed. The children's advocate provided counseling and support to the children. She helped the family to find additional counselling and programs where they could start to address the emotional and behavioral impact of the violence that they experienced.

This is the beginning of a long process of healing for Jessica and Michael, but early intervention and support will enable them to understand, unlearn and address the violence they have seen and experienced. When we talk about breaking the cycle of violence, this is about ensuring that children who grow up in violence do not become future victims or abusers. The health of our children and our communities depends on ending violence against women.

## Eva's Story\*

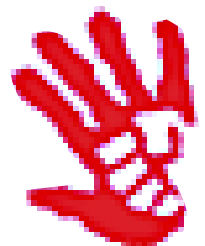
Someone asked me today how being abused affected me both emotionally and physically, and how it also affected my health. I can begin by telling you that it's not a place I wish any woman to be. Emotionally, I found myself unstable, always blaming myself for the abuse. There were some high days, but there were many days that my self-esteem was so low, I couldn't even lift my head because of the shame I felt.

How do you tell someone you're being abused, without feeling like you'll be criticized? You ask yourself: do they really believe me? Physically, I couldn't sleep. I tossed and turned a lot. Sometimes I would eat to fill that feeling of emptiness. There were many nights that I cried myself to sleep, and days spent daydreaming about the way I wish things were. Many times I would find myself taking sleeping pills to sleep; Tylenol to calm the headaches; and painkillers to take away the pain caused by the physical abuse. Sometimes I even turned to alcohol. At times my health was at risk because of the stress.

What hurts most is what my children had seen and had to go through, and what it has done to them and how it will affect them. It's so easy to blame yourself when it's not your fault. But at times, it's much harder to leave because you're scared you can't make it on your own. You're afraid of what will become of you and your children.

I feel that not enough is being done to protect women and children from violence. Once you are violated, how do you really move on and be able to trust? When can you hold your head high without feeling the shame?

There are so many questions and so few answers, but I'm thankful for shelters that take us in, and try to protect us and help us as much as they can. My advice to women is to talk to someone, try to get out before it's too late. And don't blame yourself.



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



United Way Fans, from left Maureen, Rishika and Kathleen

*It just never slows down at Nellie's. The shelter was hopping with activity and the summer flew by. We were thrilled to receive tickets for a day of fun at Paramount Canada's Wonderland. Many, many thanks to our friends there for their generous donation of 50 tickets! A date was chosen, the bus was booked, backpacks were filled. It was going to be such fun. I hear that new roller coaster is awesome! And what about the funnel cake? Have you ever tried the funnel cake? It's amazing! Then the day arrived. What's that? Rain is in the forecast? That simply cannot be true. Alas, it was. Our outing to Wonderland had to be put on hold. But, not to be defeated, we all went out for hamburgers and fries and ice cream (and discussed how to make funnel cake at home!) and planned for the fall.*

Later in September, women from the Shelter and CSO marched together at Take Back the Night, demanding that Toronto's streets be safe for all women. We rallied through the streets of South Etobicoke with our sisters from across the city, and were invigorated by the night. Come join us next year!



We are eagerly anticipating the fall season for its celebrations. We look forward to a harvest dinner, and the spookiness of Halloween. We'll be carving pumpkins and toasting pumpkin seeds like never before! December 6th will see Nellie's commemorating the women who were killed in Montreal in 1989, and we will support efforts to end violence against women by selling December 6th buttons at Broadview subway. We welcome three new volunteers to our shelter and CSO programs, and look forward to having them part of Nellie's.

With our volunteers we will be implementing a Newcomers Orientation Program, which will help newcomers to Canada or Toronto navigate the particulars of the city. And of course, the holiday season is soon upon us. Soon, our shelter will be swelling with toys and gifts and goodies. We'll be sure to keep you posted!

## Shelly Murphy, 1955-2004 - By Maria Cordeiro



*With deep regret, I inform you of the death of Michelle (Shelly) Murphy, a patron of Nellie's outreach programs. She died on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2004. As a close friend, I have fond memories of her lively spirit. Despite barriers due to her disability, she was very active in the community, volunteering at the Ralph Thorton Centre, and participating in programs.*

*Shelly was a great aunt to my daughter Celtin, who will always cherish her love and devotion. Her strength of spirit enabled her to freely give to others in times of joy, and in need.*

*She confronted challenges in her life with immense bravery and skillful management. I was charmed by her zest for life and the affirmative vision that guided her life's journey. We were mutually intimate as kindred spirits: two hearts care, two minds share, and two pairs of feet meet two spirits. Good-bye Shelly. Embrace the peace and divine love forever.*



## *Program Updates - CSO, by Sandy Greer-Wootten, CSO worker*

The Community Support and Outreach Program has been very busy and we have lots of exciting news and plans. First off, we would like to thank Sears Canada for their generous donation of both fall and winter clothing for our Back to School Program, which was distributed to our families in the community.

*As Fall is a time of change and new beginnings, we proudly introduce a new program called the Homework Club. Amidst a flurry of paper, pencils, rulers and books, children from 7-12 years of age come out and get homework help for the school year.*

The Supper Surprise program, which provides both prepared and non-perishable food for women and children in the community, will expand over the winter months in order to address the issue of hunger.

Our Community Kitchen Program, Lavender Stew brings together women from culturally diverse communities to prepare a meal and socialize. Upcoming plans include an outing to Kensington Market in November 2004 and some of our menu plans will include First Nation's and Greek cuisine.

Our highly successful weekly evening family drop-in program continues with growing numbers of new women and children. We will be having our Festival of Lights party in December where over 180 women and children will mark the diversity of cultural and religious celebrations.

The HerShare women's drop-in held a workshop on relaxation. Upcoming workshops include Women's Health in November and in December Sexual Health, Self Esteem and Assertiveness.



*Pumpkin painting for Halloween*



*"Mom, do you like my picture?"*



*"I'm a butterfly!"*



*The Children's After School Program, ArtZone has featured baking, games, computer activities, music and sports. We held a festive party in October that included autumn and Halloween activities including pumpkin carving, art & storytelling, cupcake decorating and pumpkin seed*

*roasting! Some of the special upcoming plans include trips to the library and bowling and the making of volcanos.*



*"Can I get a turn?"*

## Messages from the Board

### Nellie's AGM

Nellie's Annual General Meeting was on September 29 at 519 Church St. Community Centre and 65 of people attended. Thank you to immigration, employment and human rights lawyer Amina Sherazee, who was our keynote speaker on women's rights. We were also honoured to have the Anishnawbe-Kwe Community Singers, from Anishnawbe Health Toronto, perform for all our guests.

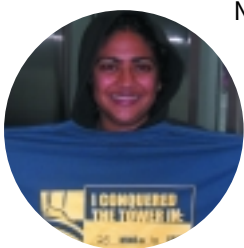


Amina Sherazee

### United Way 4-K Walkathon – Sept 12

Women and children from both the shelter and CSO joined hundreds of others for the United Way Walk-a-thon at Nathan Phillips Square. Proudly wearing our Nellie's T-shirts, we carried our banner, delighted to be a United Way member agency. We're grateful to everyone who contributes to the United Way. Your support helps children living in poverty, isolated seniors, abused women, the homeless, and many other people in real need in our community. Nellie's is proud to be a United Way member agency!

### United Way CN Tower Stair Climb – Oct. 24



Board member  
Renu's record

was 25 minutes

Nellie's had a great team for the United Way CN Tower Stair Climb. Thank you to our seven climbers – Staff Kathleen, Thi-Phuong, Cindy, Janna; Board member Renu; Maureen's son Joshua, Kathleen's daughter Tamara, who for spent their Sunday morning raising money for United Way. And thank you to our Cheering Team members – staff Maureen, Angela, Madeleine, Irene; Kathleen's daughters Kamilah & Sayola, and Thi-Phuong's partner Karly. Without you, there would be no way!

Congratulations to Joshua Comrie and Renu, they broke Cindy's record of 28 minutes to climb the 1,776 steps of the CN Tower, which was set last year. This year's record is 20 minutes.

## Mary Pritchard, 1960-2003

by Nadine Sookermany, Board Co-Chair

Mary will be dearly missed at Nellie's, by the women and children whose lives she has touched, the staff, volunteers and particularly the Board. Mary has made a tremendous contribution to Nellie's and was a leader in our organization, serving as Board Co-Chair for the last 2 years. Over the years at Nellie's, Mary has been an integral part of the Social Justice and Anti-Oppression Committee, where her true colours shone through as she developed policies and statements that reflected the issues of equity and diversity that she always stood strong for. Mary was also a member of our Personnel committee, bringing with her the experience and skills she acquired over her many years working the field. She has truly made a difference in all of our lives.



In honour of Mary's life work, the Board of Directors and staff has decided to name our emergency fund, one that provides financial assistance to women who are marginalized by poverty, homelessness, violence and oppression and require assistance in areas such as housing, health and immigration after Mary. This fund is available to the women and children who use Nellie's services. All donations made in Mary's memory will be placed in The Mary Pritchard Fund for Women and used to assist the women who come to Nellie's and were loved by Mary.

I would like to share Mary's words with you, taken from her Board Co-Chair report in September 2002: "In closing, there has been much political upheaval in the past few years, and that has created new fears for women and children experiencing violence in their lives. It is the Board of Directors' promise to them that we will take a stand against the violence, oppression and barriers that continue to threaten their well being."

## Nellie's Calendar of Events

November	Wife Assault Prevention Month
Nov. 18	Native Earth's Performance – "The Unnatural and Accidental Woman"
Nov. 20	Universal Children's Day (UN)
Nov. 25	Int'l Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN)
Dec. 2	Int'l Day for the Abolition of Slavery (UN)
Dec. 3	Int'l Day for Disabled Persons (UN)
Dec. 6	National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women – Dec 6 Fund
Dec. 7-15	Hanukkah – Jewish
Dec. 10	Human Rights Day (UN)
Dec. 21	Winter Solstice
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Dec. 26 – Jan 1	Kwanzaa
Jan. 1	New Year's Day
February	Black History Month
Feb. 9	Chinese New Year – Year of the Rooster

## Voices of Children

Painting from Yasmine, age 9



Painting from Iman, age 5

## Nellie's Invitations

### National Day of Remembrance and Action

December 6th marks the anniversary of the tragic murder of fourteen young women in 1989. Please join us to sell Dec 6th buttons at Broadview subway station to commemorate the Montreal Massacre. Call 416-461-8903 for more information.



### Shelter Wish List

Season's greetings to all of you! The holiday season is coming soon, if you know any of your family members, friends, or companies are planning to make an in-kind donation to the community, please feel free to check on our Wish List below or call Irene Jaakson at 416-461-0739.

### Shelter Wish List

Clothes for women, children and babies, Shoes for women and kids, Bath gifts, Bras and underwear, Blankets and bed sheets, Pillows and pillowcases, Towels, bed covers, Tooth brushes and tooth paste, Socks, Kitchenware (forks, knives, spoons, pots and pans), Long distance phone cards, Gift certificates, Cosmetics (new & unopened), Skin care lotion, shampoos and conditioners, Children's toys (from infant to 16 years old), Toys for Teenagers, i.e. CD players, games, videotapes etc.

*Please note that because of the season and lack of storage space, we only accept NEW donations from the 1st week of November to the end of December.*

### We need to hear from you

Our newsletter is our way of keeping you up to date on Nellie's, but due to rising postage and administrative costs, starting in 2005 Nellie's will only be able to continue mailing our newsletter to supporters and donors that we have had contact with since July 2002.

Please let Janna know if you want to receive our newsletter by email instead and help us conserve costs. You can contact her by e-mail at [janna@nellies.org](mailto:janna@nellies.org) or by phone at (416) 461-8903.





LCBO Summerhill for hosting its Second Annual Boat Cruise for Nellie's. Several hundred guests enjoyed an elegant evening cruise aboard Mariposa Cruise Line's Captain Matthew Flinders to benefit Nellie's and raised \$10,000. Board member Sherece receiving a cheque from John, General Manager and Bruce.



The "Bottles and Bottoms" campaign, lead by Ruth Ginman (left), raised over \$4,200 along with in-kind donations of blankets, bottles and diapers for the women and children at Nellie's. Thank you. Picture from left, Ruth, Lucille Dent and Jen Weldon from the campaign receiving an award at Nellie's AGM.



Thank you to Zeller's/Hudson's Bay Company for their generous donation of \$6,000. Congratulations on their newly renovated store at East York Town Centre.

## Special Thanks...

Many thanks to the Greater Toronto Apartment Association for their generous donation of \$5,000 for food and transportation assistance for the women and children in Nellie's community support & outreach program.

Susan Rosen for her art show and sale at Fusilli Restaurant, with proceeds dedicated to Nellie's.



Nellie's Kids would like to say thank you to Sears Canada for their generous new clothes donation to Nellie's "Back to School Program"

## In memory...

The Morrison-Cohen Fund has made a gift to Nellie's in loving memory of Sally Douglas Bowen. She was a vivacious and giving spirit, a woman who lived life to the fullest and a friend who is dearly missed.

## 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

### 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

