



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.

Feb 2008 , Issue #24

Message from the Executive Director

Happy, healthy and safe 2008!

On behalf of the children and women attending our programs, the Board, volunteers and staff, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the many supporters and donors that through their generous donations of time, money and/or goods made our year end celebrations very special.

Our participants at both, shelter and community outreach programs actively took part in the celebration of Hanukah, Kwanza, Eid-Fitrah, Eid Adha, Christmas and Diwali. Thanks to the efforts of donors, volunteers and staff we had delicious and abundant meals for our celebrations. Toys and clothing were distributed among all the women and children served during 2007.



Thank you for giving me this teddy bear!

At the same time the women and children staying at the shelter and those attending the outreach programs participated in the community events to raise awareness on issues affecting women's safety like Women Abuse Awareness month and Transgender Day of Remembrance in November. On December 6th we

participated in the vigil to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

During the year 2008 we will continue to work on the implementation of the Strategic Priorities set in our 2007-2009 Strategic Plan. To secure and increase the Core funding for the organization is a priority that will take a significant amount of time and energy from the Fund Development Committee during the coming year. Developing Nellie's Key message has been another task identified in the Strategic Plan. After some internal and external consultation our final draft is ready to be

presented for approval at the February Board meeting. Thanks to the support from our Volunteers Doug Crowe, Laura deCarufel and Wendy Sung-Aad, Manager of Development, we were able to complete this task.

In February we celebrate Black History Month. This newsletter theme article is dedicated to celebrate and honor black women contributions to Canadian society. On her article "Honoring the Achievements of Black Women", Delores Mullings raises our awareness of the significance of this event in the Canadian culture and highlights the achievements of Sherona Hall a pioneer on women and social justice issues. We also celebrate Dr. Roberta Timothy's achievements in overcoming her barrier.

During the month of March, we will celebrate International Women's Day with activities aimed at emphasizing the relevance of this event and we will participate in community events organized to mark this day.

Jazz it Up with Nellies! Our annual signature fundraising event is scheduled for Friday May 30 at the Imperial Room, Fairmont Royal York Hotel. Jackie Richardson will be our performance attraction. We hope to see you all at this event.

The Board has scheduled our Annual General Meeting on June 11, from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. at the Ralph Thornton Community Center. We will send your invitations closer to the date.

This year we said good bye to Gellien Lai, Manager of Finance for many years. On behalf of the Board, staff, shelter residents and program participants, I want to express our sincere appreciation to Gellien for her contributions to Nellie's. Best wishes!

Justice and equity,

Honoring the Achievements of Black Women

By Delores Mullings*, Assistant Professor at Ryerson University



Sherona Hall

Relevance of Black History Month and Beyond

Black History Month became a reality in Toronto in 1978 through the advocacy of the Ontario Black History Society, who petitioned the City of Toronto and initiated

Canada's national observation.

Black History or African Heritage Month is important in the lives of African Canadians. To celebrate Black History Month is to recognize the contributions of African Canadians in building the Canadian nation; provide African Canadian children with positive role models; fill the historical gaps and set the Canadian sociopolitical landscape to include Blacks in all aspect of Canadian life.

When African Canadians are no longer depicted in stereotypical, one-dimensional forms in the media, theatre/cinema and literature; **when African Canadians' contributions are acknowledged and celebrated; and when African Canadians' children have equitable access to all levels of education, then we can say goodbye to Black History Month.** We continue to thank the Canadian Negro Women's Association, who brought the celebration to Toronto in the 1950s, and Black women like Sherona Hall who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of disadvantaged people.

African Canadian Women – Life and Legacy

Sherona Hall's life epitomized many aspects of African Canadian women's existence. Their lives are governed by challenges, successes, perseverance, losses and pioneering work. Sherona died on January 30, 2006. In life, Sherona was a force to be reckoned with: protective,

passionate, strong-willed, and kind. She fought tirelessly for women, Blacks, Aboriginals and youth. At age 15, Sherona joined the People's National Party in Jamaica and founded the party's national youth wing. As an adult, she was involved with community organizations including "the International Women's Day Committee, feminist organizations, HIV and AIDS groups or lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans groups" (Silvera, 2007). She helped at-risk youth, supported freedom struggles in Africa and worked with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the Toronto Board of Education. She founded The Committee Against the Deportation of Immigrant Women and co-founded the Black Action Defence Committee. She was a dedicated mother and friend to many. A young woman recalls: "when Sherona spoke of her young son, all I could see was pride. Little did I know that when I chose to co-parent as an out Lesbian mom, Sherona would have been one of the few models that I knew".

Moving the Social Justice Agenda Forward

Sherona gave willingly of her time and money to support community organizations and participate in social justice endeavours. She didn't allow challenges to minimize her community activism and involvement. Sherona was larger than life; we can't all be a Sherona, but we can adopt pieces of her commitment and move her social justice agenda forward so that her personal sacrifices will not have been in vain. What will you do to continue Sherona Hall's legacy?

Work cited

Silvera, M. (2007). *Proud Life: Sherona Hall REMEMBERING A SISTER* /Apr 25, 1948 - Dec 30, 2006. Xtra online at http://www.xtra.ca/public/viewstory.aspx?AFF_TYPE=3&STORY_ID=2644&PUB_TEMPLATE_ID=2

* Delores Mullings raised her two children with the help of her network of family and friends. She worked in the hostel and shelter environment for over 17 years and returned to school in 1998. She expects to complete her PhD early this year. Delores' activism is currently focused in the Foster Parent Association of Halton and in the university classroom where she works to transform social work education to better influence social work practice.

... Becoming... *Poem by Dr. Roberta Timothy*

*Coming back...
Memories,
Stories of Resistance,
Stories of Momma Africa's Richness,
Soulful fruits of lands of Plenty,
Peoples of diverse Ancestry,
Dancing Realities.
Pluralities set in Gold and Silver.
Not Overcoming ...
The impossibility set before the Horizon
Bend on Bloody, Bruised, Tired Backs
On African/Black women's Bodies,
Herstories of pain, brutality, Immorality.
Christened by foreign words, in many Lands.
Politicized, actualized, intellectualized Trauma,
Unperceivable racist, sexist, classist,
heterosexist Drama.
Thorns disperse through Other's Madness,
Branches touch the Caribbean Sun,
Leaves darken the trees of the America's with*

*midnight Beauty.
Dancing Atrocities.
Morality stolen set in Silver and Gold.
Becoming...
African Women breathing Revolution.
Navigating Challenges, Changes.
Doing not what we are Told.
Guided by Indigenous African Ways.
Vulnerable strength, courage, Rage.
Constructing Communities.
Actualized, intellectualized, Womanist Immunity.
Dancing musical beats of Resistance.
Telling our stories, new and Old,
Remembering our spirits, our Ancestors. Our
beauty, our Goals.
Shining. Being. Existing,
Continuously Resisting.
GOLD, BOLD
SILVER, LOUD,
ON BECOMING,
AFRICAN, BLACK AND PROUD!*



Dr. Roberta Timothy receiving her doctorate degree in 2007

I wrote the above poetic piece as a spontaneous response when asked to write about my experiences of “success” after “overcoming” challenges and struggles. I chose purposely to use the word “becoming,” as the woman I am today is in a process of continuous change and growth. I am an African woman living with a visual (dis)ability who is actively involved in resisting against all forms of intersectional violence based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, age, immigration, individual, cultural and community trauma, and various other aspects.

I have worked in the woman abuse community for over 17 years as a counsellor/therapist, group facilitator, project coordinator and researcher. I have recently written a doctoral thesis on African/Black women's experiences working in shelters and how they resist intersectional violence using a methodology I developed entitled “Resistance Education.”

My research revealed creative strategies that some African/Black women used to resist against violence in their lives and work experiences. These strategies blended with indigenous African knowledge and spiritualities, and were infused with feminist values and praxis, creating heterogeneous African/Black women's identities and resistance. Finishing this research project was difficult, as the violence I experienced in the university setting, and by other daily systemic impacts, intensified as my vision worsened. However, utilizing creative strategies of resistance supported me through these and other hurdles and is an important catalyst for my continued passion for change, and anti-oppression/colonial, emancipatory, art-based, feminist action.

Currently, I am awaiting my first corneal transplant surgery. I'm still writing, publishing, teaching, learning, and continuously trying to walk in the paths of my Ancestors before me; looking back for strength and insight, and looking forward with courage and determination, and always demanding change. Resistance is inevitable!

Shelter Update

By Hawa Bogor and Cecelia Paul, Counsellors

At Nellies we celebrate diversity and respect all religious events such as Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, Eid- Fitrah, Eid Adha, Diwali and others. Over the past three months, we have provided a range of programming celebrating cultural events for the women and children at the shelter.

October 26 - Happy Eid! Eid Fitrah is a Muslim holiday that marks the end of the Ramadan, the month of fasting. Staff, women and children celebrated together by preparing traditional Somali food and dessert while enjoying cultural music. In addition, staff members Hawa and Khadija offered education on the origin of Eid and how it's being celebrated around the world. The women participated in the decoration of the shelter and dressed in different costumes.



Volunteers Elena & Chantel sang carols celebrating the holidays

October 31- A Halloween party was held and children, women and staff were dressed in the costumes of their choice. The house was decorated and everyone enjoyed the music, the Halloween movies, the socializing and of course, candies and cakes.



Delicious Christmas dinner

Nov 9 - Diwali celebration. It is known as a “the festival of lights,” and is celebrated all over India with great enthusiasm and joy. Diwali is regarded as a religious holiday by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. At Nellies we lit candles and enjoyed South Asian desserts and treats. We also played Diwali music and entertained each other. Educational flyers were posted around the shelter to inform people about Diwali and its origin.

November 15 - November is Woman Abuse Awareness Month. The women at Nellies participated in Abuse Awareness workshops facilitated by volunteer Valerie and staff member Khadija.



Halloween party

November 20 - Transgender Day of Remembrance. Staffer Shan and student Monica escorted the women and children to a community event at 519 Church Street.

November 23 - Staff created awareness and posted flyers regarding Aboriginal Day

November 27 - Staff at Nellie's offered information and posted flyers for AIDS Awareness Day.

December 6 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. Women, children and staff attended the vigil.

December 19 – A dinner was hosted and we celebrated various holidays, spanning Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukah, and Eid Adha. Everyone enjoyed the variety of food, dessert, and music. Gifts were given to women and children. Volunteers Elena and Chantel sang carols and other songs celebrating the holidays.

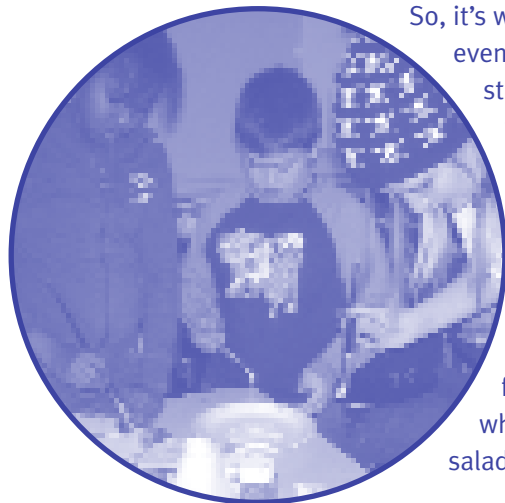
December 31 - New Year's Eve. Staff prepared a light dinner, dessert and organized a New Year's Eve party for the women, who enjoyed a night of great food, music and movies.



Staff Hawa providing information session on Eid Celebration

CSO Update

By Sarah Hull, Student Placement, and Adriana Pelayo, Outreach Worker



*Kids making
snow flakes*

So, it's winter again, but that doesn't slow down our events! Instead of outdoor activities, the programs stay indoors. Women from our Her Share program spent time cooking Mexican food in the Ralph Thornton Community Centre Kitchen. Our women also went to a workshop at the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre and shared life stories with the Toronto Play Back Theatre. We were also able to organize an extremely successful fundraising event for United Way Campaign, where staff and women prepared samosas, salads, tandoori chicken, tacos, burritos and more.



*Volunteers from CIBC helping
out at the CSO holiday party*

The month of December was extremely busy for CSO staff, students, and volunteers, all working in preparation of our Holiday Party and Wish List. We held our annual Holiday Party on December 5, 2007. Our women and children enjoyed an amazing catered dinner, as well as arts, crafts and music for the little ones. More than 100 women and children participated. Thank you to the CIBC volunteer team for coming to help out serving the dinner.

With the help of corporate and private donors, Nellie's CSO was able to provide holiday gifts and warm clothing to over 130 families through our Wish List! Special thanks go out to Siobhan Dempsey for helping coordinate and

deliver so many holiday wishes to our kids. Thanks to all of our donors who contributed gifts and/or volunteered time during this busy month! It

was wonderful to see how your generosity contributed to so many families having a wonderful holiday.



*Younster playing
Djembe with our musician
Eryn Vogn*

For February, we are celebrating the year of the Rat, as we welcome Chinese New Year on February 7, and we're also marking Black History Month by having Brazil as a guest country.

On March 8, we celebrate International Women's Day with a march, and have many more activities planned for our women in the coming months. Call 416-461-2052 for details. We look forward to seeing you!

Special thanks to our major donors 2007

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Winners donations for the women



Zellers donation

Invitation from Nellie's Fundraising Committee

Jazz it Up with Nellie's

Dear Supporter,



Jackie Richardson

Jackie Richardson, the Queen of Gospel, Blues and Jazz, back again on the stage in the legendary Imperial Room.

The evening will be filled with delicious hors d'oeuvres, a Death by Chocolate Dessert Buffet, a silent auction offering something for everyone and over 400 of our closest friends from the community coming together to make a difference in the lives of the women and children we serve.

It is our intention that Jazz it Up with Nellie's 2008 will be our greatest success. This will be possible, in large part, through the assistance and generosity of sponsors and supporters of the event who will participate, celebrate and honor women whose voices have been silenced.

Please contact Nellie's today for a sponsorship package, to donate a silent auction gift, or to order tickets before they're sold out. If you are unable to join us, please consider purchasing "A Night Out in Style" package that will sponsor a woman from Nellie's services to attend the evening "in style".

Thank you for your advanced support.

Nellie's Fundraising Committee

Nellie's fundraising committee is proud to present our 6th annual signature fundraising event—Jazz it Up with Nellie's 2008 to raise funds to support our programs.

Jazz it Up with Nellie's 2008 will feature a performance by Canada's one and only

You're invited:



Friday May 30, 2008 7:00pm
The Imperial Room
Fairmont Royal York Hotel
100 Front Street Toronto Ontario

Notice of Nellie's 2008 AGM



Our Annual and General Meeting is coming up soon!

When? Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at 6 p.m.

Where? Ralph Thornton Centre, 765 Queen St. East

Who? All of us who care about Nellie's and all of us who want to have a say.

What? A look at Nellie's over the past year
An opportunity to look at Nellie's future
A terrific dinner together with friends

All members will be asked to vote on a number of by-law changes at this AGM.

Are you a member?

You can apply for membership at the AGM, or by contacting Janna at janna@nellies.org

What am I voting about?

Please come to a pre-AGM information session on Thursday June 5, 2008, 11:30-12:30 at the Community Support & Outreach Office, 754 Queen St. East. We will talk about the voting process and the proposed by-law changes in an informal setting where you can ask questions.

Know what you are voting about at the AGM!
Please join us!

Thank you for your support over the holiday season!

To all our friends who so willingly donated their money, time and effort to ensure that every woman or child at Nellie's had a wonderful holiday season filled with peace, joy and cheer. Happy New Year!



Treats from Time/People Magazine Team



Richard Nurse heads Chubb Insurance Toy Drive for our kids



Donation from Bank of Montreal

Nellie's Calendar of Events

March 8	International Women's Day
March 21	International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination – UN
April 7	World Health Day – UN
April 20-27	Pesach (Passover) – Jewish
April 25-27	Gathering of Nations Pow Wow
April 27	Easter
May 30	Jazz it up with Nellies
June 5	World Environment Day – UN
June 9-10	Shavuot - Jewish
June 11	Nellies AGM
June 20-29	Gay & Lesbian Pride Week
June 21	National Aboriginal Day
June 23	African Liberation Day
June 27	Multiculturalism Day

Note: Please visit our website at www.nellies.org for all community and cultural celebrations for 2008

Nellie's Contact Information

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Community Support

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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

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

