



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 the Executive Director

June 2012 , Issue #33

At Nellie's this is a time to celebrate the achievements from our past fiscal year, and a time of planning and renewal for the next year.

Achievements in the past year were made possible by the ongoing support of our many community supporters, staff and volunteers who are always ready to walk the extra mile. Thanks to Peggy Chan and her volunteer group for painting the shelter!



Volunteers and staff celebrating International Women's Day

Our year-end Holiday celebrations had an abundance of food and gifts, thanks to the donations we received. And our staff and volunteers gave their time and effort to distribute those donations according to the needs and composition of each one of the families we served.

Special mention needs to be made of the incredible response to our urgent appeal to replace one of our boilers. The boiler broke down in December during the time of our many religious celebrations. Our request went viral, and in less than 24 hours, over 150 people generously responded to not only donate what was needed, but surpassing our goals!

Sadly, due to external factors (recession, high unemployment, increased part-time and no-benefits employment opportunities that more and more are replacing more stable jobs), our food support programs have seen a significant increase of users. We're now exploring new delivery approaches to ensure our limited resources are stretched to serve as many families as possible.

On a more positive note regarding our programs, last year we initiated a pilot project to provide support to women with disabilities experiencing violence in their lives. For this pilot program we worked in partnership with Springtide Resources Inc.

We have a new lease agreement with our landlords to increase our Community Support and Outreach site space, which will improve quality of services delivery through increasing privacy and accessibility. We are working to secure funding to complete renovations for the new space.

We have completed training for staff and board members regarding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and we are in the process to complete our position paper regarding women and accessibility.

Our work to build a new shelter is ongoing. We have completed our business plan and we are entering into its implementation phase. As part of the new stage in this project, we have now hired architects, and we are intensively looking for a site to build the new shelter.

We are also engaged in a very exciting project: developing a video to raise awareness of the universality of woman abuse and the critical role that accessing proper supports plays in helping women to regain control of their lives.

The theme article of this issue, Stop the Violence: An Analysis on Colonialism, is in alignment with Nellie's commitment to raising awareness of issues of oppression and discrimination affecting women and children. As the article appropriately highlights, we need to challenge the structural and systemic beliefs that continues to blame Aboriginal communities for the outcomes of centuries of oppression.

Justice & Equity,

Margarita Méndez

Stop the Violence: An Analysis on Colonialism

By Jennifer-Ann Joseph *

The link between colonialism and racism is seldom discussed in Canada even though the history of this country is one of colonization. In popular discourse, Canada comes into existence with the arrival of French and British settlers, flagrantly ignoring the rich history of Aboriginal peoples. However, diversity is at the forefront of every Canadian dialogue, and Canadians take great pride in celebrating it. **Much of our history is based on the relationship between three ethnicities: French, English and Aboriginal.** The problem with this is that it oversimplifies the cultures of all Aboriginal peoples and merges them into one, when, in reality, Canada's First Nations communities include 50 different tribes with over 50 different languages. This disregard for differences between Aboriginal communities reinforces the violent relationship between the settlers and the colonized, as it fails to acknowledge the particular challenges that each community is faced with.

Colonization can be described as the control of land and resources of a territory occupied by the original inhabitants.

Colonization continues to affect Canada's Aboriginal communities today not by mass genocide and displacement, but by the continuation of policies and laws put in place by the first colonists. Those who wish to see Aboriginal communities assimilate into mainstream Canadian culture often accuse Aboriginal peoples of "playing the race card". They speak of "reverse racism" arguing that Aboriginal people are themselves racist when they try to frighten and intimidate the general population. At Nellie's, we view Aboriginal people's claims as constitutional rights and we fight against policies that continue patterns of racism.

Aboriginal women and children are particularly at risk in this settler-colonized relationship, but their hardships are mostly ignored by Canadian media and politicians. Colonialism has shaped the lives of

Aboriginal women in a way that places violence at the centre of every aspect of their lives. Research has shown that Canadian Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44 are five times more likely than all other Canadian women in the same age group to die as a result of violence. Furthermore, Aboriginal women are approximately 3.5 times more likely to experience some form of spousal violence than non-Aboriginal women. We need to challenge the view that this problem is individual rather than structural, as well as the notion that Aboriginal peoples are inherently more prone to violence. Rather, colonialism places Aboriginal peoples in a situation that enables and encourages violence.

Children are also vulnerable because of the violence they often face at home. Recent studies have shown that Aboriginal children are eight times more likely to suffer neglect, and 4.7 times more likely to be exposed to violence. The Canadian government is reluctant to address this issue and has no comprehensive national plan for stopping violence against Aboriginal women and girls. Instead, in July 2011, Federal Minister for Status of Women, Rona Ambrose, said: "I believe that the call for action on this that has happened in the last few years truly has been answered by the federal and provincial orders of government."



According to the Native Women's Association of Canada, more than **580 Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing** or have been murdered in Canada, most of them in the past two decades, and nearly half of these murder cases remain unsolved. October 4th has been declared the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. Nellie's participates in this campaign annually. Acknowledging a problem is the first step to healing and Nellie's is committed to bringing awareness to this issue, as well as supporting Aboriginal women and children to receive equitable service and challenge systems of oppression that continue impact their lives. Nellie's organizes programming for women and children to attend First Nations festivals and Pow Wows in the community. We facilitate ongoing training for both staff

and clients in anti-racism including colonialism and we participate in community coalitions and partnerships with First Nations communities. Nellie's continues to work in solidarity with Aboriginal women to raise awareness and understanding on colonialism in Canada and actively work towards eliminating violence and discrimination against Aboriginal people.

*Jennifer-Ann Joseph has been part of Nellie's Social Justice Committee for almost a year. She is currently pursuing a career in social work and has studied sociology, social justice and women's studies at York University.

Voices of Women – Janet's Story

By Nicole Breen, Nellie's Student Placement and Joanna Shawana, Nellie's Counsellor

*Janet is an Aboriginal woman who has experienced ongoing violence from her ex-husband and his immediate family. Janet has tried to leave the abusive situation many times but continued to experience many barriers and further abuse from the various systems of support which she tried to access.

A mother of six, Janet had three children removed from her care, over allegations of child abuse. These allegations of abuse were against her ex-husband; however the children were still removed from her care. With the support of a Native family agency on a reserve, Janet requested a meeting with the entire family to discuss a plan of care to decide what would be best for the children. Janet was willing to take whatever steps necessary to facilitate the return of her children into her care. Native family agencies recognize the need for Aboriginal children to maintain a relationship with their communities, in an effort to combat the generational effects of colonialism, and to provide children with a sense of connection and self-identity within their culture and community.

Janet disclosed her ex-husband had been abusive to her children, and that he was also abusive to her. Having experienced verbal abuse, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse and social isolation, Janet was courageous and decided that she didn't want her children to grow up in an abusive home. She wanted to break the cycle of violence so she left the relationship and started the journey of healing from her own experiences of violence. Janet became more involved in her community and started counseling, setting up plans for furthering her education for herself, securing childcare, and looking for employment in order to demonstrate that she was ready to have her children returned to her.

Sadly, this was not an easy process, nor system, for Janet to navigate. She had to go through Family Court in order to have her children returned to her home. Canada's laws are written from a perspective of white-male-privilege; Aboriginal history and the effects it has had on Aboriginal peoples today are not recognized. Colonialism has affected the ways in which Aboriginal people are treated by the system and mainstream society, reflecting racism, sexism, oppression, and discrimination. The very limited number of lawyers of Aboriginal descent also means that an important voice to attest to the history of Aboriginal people is missing. Janet continues to fight for her children.

The cycle of violence has affected Janet's oldest children, one of whom is caught in a cycle of criminalization and incarceration, and another who has been institutionalized.

Nellie's has supported Janet through crisis counseling in order to help her cope with the trauma she had experienced. She is not only an advocate for herself as she continues to fight the legal system, but for other women who are going through similar situations. She often discloses to staff the pain of losing her three older children and continues to work towards their return to her care. Staff at Nellie's supported her in developing a safety plan which she uses to help other women on the reserve develop their own safety plans. Janet stated that Nellie's continues to be a source of strength for her as she fights for herself and her children. She is seen as a leader in her own community and a source of wisdom, knowledge and strength for other women who have experienced violence.

*name has been changed



Program Update – Shelter

By Meghan Hogg, Counsellor

Nellie's has sprung over a busy spring. Over the Easter weekend, our women enjoyed a Good Friday lunch and an Easter brunch, while the children spent the morning hunting for eggs. In honour of Earth Day, April 21, we got our hands dirty planting medicinal herbs, edible flowers and some veggies. Women learned valuable urban gardening skills and gathered knowledge about making teas and tinctures from home to help with stress, sleep patterns and boosting immunity. As part of the ongoing gardening program, we talked about food security and screened films like Food Matters.

Rayne Spa donated a day of pampering including massage, facials and much needed rejuvenation, at the end of April. This lead up to the Spring Renewal Photo Shoot, scheduled for Mother's Day weekend, when women will receive hair and make- up services and take part in a professional photo shoot to commemorate their fresh start. Women celebrated Mother's Day with gift baskets from Body shop and Jewelry from donors.



Staff at the Steven and Chris show on IWD



Staff cooking for women and children during the holiday

We'll be participating in many social justice events coming up in May and June. May Day & No One is Illegal rally addressed the increasing attacks on poor and newcomer communities. A protest against violence in the psychiatric system was attended in May, and staff at Nellie's all wore purple for No One Asks for it in recognition of May Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The Women Experienced Abuse & Violence (WEAV) Goup continues to run until the end of June. We have 12 women registered for this program and it runs at full capacity. Recently, with the help of a trained facilitator, women had the opportunity to get creative and speak out against systemic violence. This culminated with a recording of a collaborative spoken word piece titled Poverty.



Arts and crafts at the holiday party

Our weekly house meeting attendance has increased by 45 per cent over the past few months. Every woman has the opportunity to share their feelings for the week. Sometimes, there are guest speakers on topics which range from affordable housing to racism to transphobia. Other times, we will either start or end with a one-minute meditation. And, almost every week, the meeting ends with a raffle for prizes. The House Meetings bring women together, encourage discussion, processing and problem-solving. Most importantly, they create a sense of community.

Nellie's will be participating in Pride again with year. Come and visit our booth on June 30 and July 1.

A sampling of the activities for the summer include: Caribana; Afrofest; Taste of the Danforth; the Salsa Festival on St. Clair; and the CHIN Picnic.



Jewelry making

CSO Update

By Adriana Pelayo, Community Support & Outreach Worker



Nellie's partnered with Sangha of Hope to start a yoga group for woman facing violence and abuse, and who are in the healing process. This group has been such a great experience. Women have cultivated a sense of empowerment and awareness of themselves and their bodies through their practice.

In February, Nellie's celebrated Black History Month with our guest country, Mexico. There are four big African-Mexican communities in Guerrero, Tabasco, Oaxaca and Veracruz. They keep themselves in closed communities with strong culture, costumes, foods, dance and music.

Yoga relaxation class

International Women's Day was full of positive energy. The wind and cold weather didn't stop the women and kids going out singing and chanting to promote the women's rights. As well, our women enjoyed an amazing lunch with music, dance, games and presents at the Moss Park Community Centre.

The kids had an exciting March Break, enjoying different activities and two outings. We went to the movies to watch *The Lorax*, sharing our experiences and feelings after the movie. They realized how important it is to look after of the trees and environment. These are some of the kids' comments shared after the movie: "Trees are good for us because they provide us with clean air"; "Without the trees we would not be able to breathe"; "It's everyone's responsibility to look after our planet".

We celebrated Mother's Day with Drumming and exciting performances, thanks to Tony Roost and volunteers.

The upcoming summer will be fun. We are going to enjoy days full of sun, fresh air and different activities like visiting historical sites; the islands and beaches; gardens and picnics; arts and crafts and more. Call Adriana at 416-461-2052 for more information.



*March Break Program –
Mayan Exhibition at ROM*



Santa Anna!



March Break Program – on the way to watch a movie

Invitation to become an Individual Member/Agency Member

You're cordially invited to join Nellie's membership. As you may know, Nellie's has been serving the most vulnerable in our community for 39 years. Next year will be our 40th anniversary! All of our work is grounded in feminist, anti-racist, and social justice philosophies. Every month we provide safety and support to more than 400 women and children.

It's important to us that our work reflects the needs and priorities of our community. At Nellie's we continually enhance our programs and services. We'd like you to join us as an individual member or an agency member to support our work.

In becoming a member, you demonstrate your agreement with Nellie's mission and pay an annual membership fee of \$10 as individual member and \$25 as agency member.



When you choose to be a member at Nellie's, you are partnering with us to create a world free of violence against women and children. Your agency will partner with one of the most vibrant, politically-active, proudly-feminist, anti-racism/anti-oppression service providers in the City of Toronto.

Please fill in the attached Nellie's Membership Application Form. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Nellie's Membership Application Form 2012/13

I hereby apply for membership to Nellie's (Women's Hostels Inc.).

I agree with and support the mission of Nellie's as follows:

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.



Name/ Agency Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone No: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership Fees from April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013:

Individual membership: \$10_____ Agency: \$25.00_____
(Membership does not receive Tax Receipts.)

Please mail this form & payment to:




Nellie's
970 Queen Street East
PO Box 98118
Toronto, Ontario M4M 1J0

Join Team Nellie's!



On Sunday October 14th

We invite you to come out and show your strength, share your courage, prove your determination, and inspire hope in the belief that every woman and child has the right to live a life that is free from violence and oppression. Join us at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon to run, walk, or wheel to celebrate our champions, the women and children of Nellie's.

 facebook.com/nelliesshelter
 @nelliesshelter
 nelliesshelter.wordpress.com

Coming Up.....

LEGACY GIVING

Consider leaving a wonderful legacy of kindness and generosity to the women & kids of Nellie's!

SUMMER FUNDRAISING

Last summer, you helped to raise funds for our summer kids camp by donating the proceeds of rummage sales, car washes, pool parties, clothing swaps, lemonade stands, and backyard barbeques! We hope to count on you again this summer!

BACK TO SCHOOL

Help equip Nellie's kids for school this Fall!

HOLIDAY AUCTION

Please consider donating a gift for our 2nd Annual Online Holiday Auction.

CONTACT US

For more information on how you can help with any of these activities, please call 416-461-0769.

Nellie's Community Events



IWD March

The Scotiabank IWD Fair. From left, Patti, Michelle, Jenna & Wendy



IWD Information booth at Ryerson



Nellie's joined the community IWD lunch at Moss Park



Nellie's marched on May Day, supporting workers' rights, and social justice causes.

Acknowledgements



On March 8, Steven and Chris dedicated the show to Nellie's, Thank you!



Donations from WCS Grand River for the kids at Nellie's



Thank you to the Rogers family for their continuous support of holiday gifts to the shelter!



A big thank you to our volunteer team Peggy Chan and friends who helped throw a great holiday party

Nellie's Calendar of Events

June 30	Toronto DYKE March
Jul 1	Canada Day and Toronto Pride Parade
Jul 20	Ramadan begins (Islam)
Aug 19	Eid-ul-Fitr (Islam)
Sept 3	Labour Day
Sept 17-18	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
Oct 8	Thanksgiving
Oct 17	Int'l Day for Eradication of Poverty
November	Women Abuse Awareness Month
Nov 25	Int'l Day for Elimination of VAW
December	Universal Human Rights Month
Dec 6	National Day for Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women
Dec 9-16	Hanukkah (Jewish)
Dec 25	Christmas (Christian)
Dec 26-Jan 1	Kwanzaa (African-American)

Visit www.nellies.org for more community & cultural celebrations for 2012.

Nellie's Contact Information

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Shelter

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E-mail: programs@nellies.org

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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

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Fax: 416-461-0970

E-mail: community@nellies.org

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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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