



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

December 2016 , Issue #42

As I write this article we are less than 24 hours from the dark news of Donald Trump being elected as the next President of the United States. I can't help but think just how far we are from women being judged on the depth of their knowledge and experience. Throughout the election season Hilary Clinton has had to defend her health, while Donald Trump has not. People have chalked up his vulgar characterization of women as locker room talk, while finding it inexcusable when Clinton calls Trump supporters 'undesirables'. We have witnessed the bullying and silencing of women, immigrants, and all those who dared to stand up to Trump's abuse and harassment.

Many people today believe the feminist movement is not necessary that "we've come a long way baby". But today as I watch a man who consistently degrades and dehumanizes women, exhibits bigoted and racist behavior, and mocks the disabled, be elected to what arguably is the most powerful job in the world, I realize just how much work is still to be done to ensure equality for all women (even the most qualified, educated women) and the disabled. I have heard many Canadians say that what took place in the U.S. could not happen here. But it could and will if we are not attentive and continue to identify discrimination and oppression and work to stop this unacceptable behaviour and create safe spaces for equity seeking groups to thrive.

But the news is not all bad. 2016 saw many successes at Nellie's. We laid the ground work for moving Nellie's into the future of providing services that are truly inclusive to all women. With the support of donors and under the direction of members of the Accessibility Committee, Nellie's is moving quickly towards providing accessible programs to women with disability and the Deaf. In this issue you will read about our in depth focus on becoming a more accessible agency ensuring greater inclusion across all aspects of the organisation.

I am looking forward to the exciting changes happening at Nellie's in 2017. Through the generous donation from La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso Nellie's will launch its first childcare program aimed at children and youth living at the



shelter who may be suffering from the effects of abuse and trauma.

The New Year also brings change that may be met

with mixed feelings. As many of you may have read over the last few months, more and more print publications are moving online. After much consideration and listening to the concerns expressed by many of our donors over the cost of mailing the newsletter and the environmental impact of printing the newsletter we have decided to move Nellie's Newsletter online. It is my hope that moving the newsletter to an online publication will allow us to provide you more current content and link you to stories of relevance to our cause. It will also save us much needed funds that will be directed towards programs and services that benefit women and children.

This was not an easy decision but one that I hope you will support. If you wish to continue to receive a printed issue of Nellie's Newsletter, please let us know by calling 416-461-8903.

We accomplished a lot throughout the year because of the support and dedication of our staff, donors, funders and volunteers. Our sincere appreciation for your commitment to Nellie's work.

Happy Holidays!

Justice and equity,

Margarita Méndez

Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women, & Accessibility at Nellie's

By Bethany Johnson, Nellie's Board Member & the Chair of Social Justice Committee

Today, one in five women lives with a disability in Canada. By all measures, women with disabilities and Deaf women face higher rates of poverty and sexual violence, and experience lower employment rates. In fact,

- 33% of women with disabilities live in poverty
- 51% of women with disabilities experienced a violent crime within the last year, compared to 36% of women without disabilities
- The employment rate for women with disabilities is 47%, compared to 70% for women without a disability

These statistics demonstrate the complexity of multiple forms of oppression that work together to create differential impacts and diverse needs and issues for women with disabilities and Deaf women.

At Nellie's, we operate from an integrated Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Framework, which includes operating from an anti-ableist and anti-audist perspective. This means, we recognize that the positioning of particular bodies and ways of functioning as the norm is discriminatory to women with disabilities and Deaf women. As a community, we remain committed to taking action to address this discrimination. In the last few years, Nellie's has taken some foundational steps:

- In 2011, Nellie's Social Justice Committee developed a position paper to explore the issues of accessibility and ableism. Our Position Paper on Accessibility: Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women explores the issues impacting women with Disabilities and Deaf women, identifies challenges, and develops strategies for working with women and ensuring our services are accessible to all.
- To help support the development of the position paper, and in recognition of the need for a specific focus on women with disabilities and Deaf women, an Accessibility Committee was established as a standing sub-committee of Nellie's Social Justice Committee.
- In 2013, Nellie's finalized our Accessibility for Ontario's with Disabilities (AODA) policy. Nellie's continues to support staff in implementing the position paper and policy through ongoing training.
- The Women on the Move: A Psycho/Educational Support Group for Women with Disabilities* at Nellie's Community Support and Outreach office provides opportunities for women with disabilities and Deaf women to get together to address their own issues related to abuse.
- Nellie's Community Support and Outreach office and shelter have also recently undergone an accessibility audit. The audit will be a valuable reference to guide the work of the Accessibility Committee in the coming year and continue Nellie's work towards a fully accessible shelter.



This December 3rd as we celebrated the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, we were reminded of these important first steps and our ongoing commitment to social justice for all women and children. We know, however, that more needs to be done.

We know, for example, that women with disabilities and Deaf women continue to have greater difficulty accessing shelter services. Addressing violence against women requires that women with disabilities and Deaf women have equitable access to programs and services and are seen as partners in creating more accessible and inclusive environments. While Nellie's provides a partially accessible shelter, we remain committed to finding and building a fully accessible shelter in Toronto.



Over the next year, Nellie's will continue to deliver appropriate and relevant programs and services to women with disabilities and Deaf women. As we continue to build on our progress to date, we hope you will join us in creating and maintaining inclusive spaces for all women and children.

** This program has been supported with a grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation and its partners.*

Voices of Women - Jenny's* Story

By Anna Morgan, Transitional Housing Support Housing Worker

Jenny came to Nellie's Shelter 5 years ago with a developmental disability and experiencing emotional, verbal, financial and physical abuse from her father. Her father would belittle her and call her names such as "stupid", undermine her ability to make decisions about herself and blame her for her disability. With the support of a family member, Jenny was able to escape the abuse and find safety and shelter at Nellie's.

At Nellie's Jenny was able to explore her options and make decisions for herself. She attended our Violence against Women support group sharing her experiences of abuse, reducing her social isolation and connecting her experiences to the different forms of abuse, including emotional, verbal and financial.

In addition to the isolation caused by her experiences of abuse Jenny faced multiple barriers to receiving services because she does not speak English and there is a gap for services for people with developmental disabilities that don't speak English. All adding to her further feelings of isolation. Working with Nellie's staff Jenny has been linked to programs in her language and a support worker to help her access further assistance and arrange interpretation for accessing services.

Through Nellie's Transitional Housing and Support program Jenny was able to find housing. Today, Jenny lives independently and volunteers in her community.

Ongoing donor support facilitates women like Jenny receive essential and specialized services, and have equitable access to the programs and services offered at Nellie's. Together with your support we can impact the lives of all women who come to Nellie's for shelter, safety and support.

** not real name*

You can Help Provide a Brighter Future for Women and Children



The holiday season can be a challenging time for our residents. Caught in violent relationships, things get especially challenging for moms with young children as the holidays approach. Heartfelt messages of "good will to all" are all too often not heard. When the person who was once the love of your life now is harming you, you are trying to break free of the entanglement and escape.

Women come to Nellie's at the most difficult time in their lives. And when they arrive they're often accompanied with their children who are every bit as traumatized. Once safety has been taken, there is no peace, no joy. And no hope.

The kindness and support of our donors and volunteers especially during the holidays reaffirms in women the belief that they matter – that they're special and valued. Your donation to Nellie's will make real and meaningful change to the women and children who come to us for shelter and support. Your gift will help provide hope.

Your gift doesn't just help our residents and those in our community outreach programs, it brightens our day, too. Your gift strengthens us, it assists us and it inspires us to work harder, listen more carefully and speak ever more wisely.

We want to thank those donors who have already made a positive difference so far this year, and thank those who will.

Please donate generously at www.nellies.org

Acknowledgements



Guadalupe Velazco from the Mexican Folk Ballet leading the dance at Nellie's AGM



Nellie's Volunteers Orientation 2016-17



Thank you to Chantel Elloway & Jennifer Cramer from Meticulous Smile delivering a workshop on dental care



Nellie's Kids' Camp program

Nellie's Calendar of Events

Jan 1	New Years Day
Jan 28	Chinese New Year – The Year of the Rooster
February	Black History Month
Feb 27	Losar - Tibetan New Year
Mar 8	International Women's Day
Mar 21	International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination – UN
Apr 11-18	Pesach (Passover) – Jewish
Apr 14	Good Friday (Christian)
Apr 16	Easter (Christian)
May 14	Mother's Day
Jun 21	National Aboriginal Day
Jun 27	Multiculturalism Day

Note: Please visit our website at www.nellies.org for more community & cultural celebrations for 2017.

Nellie's Contact Information

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Administration

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Financial Donations: 416-461-0769
In Kind Donations: 416-461-0521
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