

Ending Violence Through Education, Action And Prevention!

Envisioning a future in which western Ottawa is comprised of vibrant, safe and healthy communities, the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) is a strong advocate in building awareness and lobbying against violence through education, action and prevention. Services such as the Violence Against Women (VAW) program, Chrysalis House (CH), a shelter for women and children experiencing violence in the home, and the Bully Prevention program provide the tools that can transform lives and end violence in the lives of people of all ages.

Violence Against Women Counselling, Support, Empowerment!

"I feel comfortable coming here and talking about my issues with the counsellor. I feel safe and I trust who I meet with. It's a really great feeling. Thank you." Client

Since 1989, the VAW program has continued to take action to end violence by offering free and confidential support and counselling services for women and their children. The need for violence against women programs is great, and each year the number of clients seeking help at the WOCRC has increased; for example, in 2009-10 VAW provided counselling to approximately 500 women. Violence against women is a serious issue in

Canada. In Canada during 2007, 162 women were murdered representing 27.3% or 1 in 4 homicides. Violence against women occurs across all ethnic, racial, religious, age, social and economic groups. In a Statistics Canada report entitled 'Measuring Violence Against Women', it was noted that women are more likely than men to be victims of the most severe forms of violence. They experience higher rates of sexual assault, stalking, serious spousal assaults and spousal homicide. The VAW program offers women the support and encouragement to become empowered and make healthy decisions in their lives.



WOCRC Peer Support December 6 Vigil with guest speaker Cathleen Lavoie, who was shot by her boyfriend in 2008. Ms. Lavoie spoke about the importance of ending violence towards women.

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www.communityresourcecentre.ca
info@communityresourcecentre.ca

"If Chrysalis House had not taken me in, I would have been a complete mess, and couldn't even tell you were I'd be. Thanks Staff. Thanks Chrysalis House. You gals all helped me a lot and I appreciate everything." Client

Children playing with toys in a rainbow-coloured room, mothers sitting with a cup of tea in a warm and inviting living room, a mother engaged in one-on-one counselling in a peaceful and calm Zen-like setting ...those are just some of the scenes to describe Chrysalis House, one of a small number of shelters for women and their families in Ottawa. Chrysalis House provides counselling and support so that women can gain awareness about the myths of violence, learn how to prevent the cycle from continuing, and become empowered to move forward with confidence into a new life. The need for women's shelters is high. Statistics Canada reported that in 2006 over 380,000 incidents of spousal violence were reported to police across Canada. And, violence against women affects their children. According to Statistics Canada's Family Violence in Canada report, for children who are exposed to violence the consequences can include emotional trauma, depression, injury and permanent disability, as well as other physical psychological and behavioural problems that can extend into adolescence and adulthood.

BULLY PREVENTION PROGRAM

"WOCRC'S support was great. I would not know where to go without you." Client

The WOCRC Bully Prevention program is designed to educate and build awareness of the issue of bullying within the communities in western Ottawa. The ultimate goal of the program is to stop bullying before it starts. This is done by engaging schools, parents, children and community members in educational workshops, and the use of public awareness campaigns. Bullying is a systemic issue and requires a comprehensive approach including education, assessment, intervention, policy principles and strategies.

According to PREVNet (www.prevnet.ca), a national network of Canadian researchers, non-governmental organizations and governments committed to stopping bullying, one Canadian study showed that approximately 12% of girls and 18% of boys reported bullying others at least twice in previous months, whereas 15% of girls and 18% of boys reported being victimized at least twice over the same period. The success of the Bully Prevention program is measured by the number of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools that have participated throughout the years, and the expansion of the program which includes the development of a workplace bully prevention model, the Be A Buddy Not a Bully Program, and the Take A Stand – Stop Bullying Before it Starts – Bully Free Week educational campaign.

By teaching prevention and conflict resolution skills, the Bully Prevention Program is part of the solution to ending violence in the communities of western Ottawa.



All Saints Stands Up To Bullying – Amica Ferras with fellow students at All Saints Catholic High School signing the Take A Stand and Stop Bullying Before it Starts Pledge

CALL TO ACTION!

"Thank you very much for pairing me with a wonderful peer supporter." Client

Calls for action to end violence can take many forms such as WOCRC's Peer Support program, which provides one-to-one support, and matches a highly trained peer supporter with a woman who has experienced violence in the home. Peer supporters are also engaged in public education, and organizing special events such as the December 6 Vigil, which is a yearly event held in honour of abused and murdered women and the fourteen women killed in 1989 at École Polytechnique in Montréal.

Ending violence through education, action and prevention, the WOCRC is there for those who need help, and for those who want to learn how they can help.

In the Ottawa area there are a number of 24 hour-support/crisis lines. They are as follows:

- 613-238-3311 Distress Centre confidential helpline
- 613-591-5901 Chrysalis House
- 1-877-336-2433 FEMMAIDE ligne de soutien pour femmes Victimes de violence / assaulted women's help line
- 613-234-2266 Sexual Assault Support Centre
- 613-789-9117 CALACS francophone d'Ottawa
- 613-761-4366 Sexual Assault & Partner abuse care program / Programme de soins aux victimes d'agressions sexuelles & d'abus par partenaire (Campus CIVIC)
- 613-260-2360 Child, Youth & Family Crisis Line / Ligne de crise pour enfant, jeunes & famille

Message from the Executive Director

A New Year, New Challenges and New Opportunities to Serve!

2011 promises to be a another exciting year for the staff, board of directors, clients, partners and stakeholders, as the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) prepares for the launch of a new website, the completion of the 4th floor expansion, development of a key partnership and the Centre's 25th anniversary.

With the completion of the new website on the horizon, and the introduction of a new URL wocrc.ca, it is important to make note of the advantages with the development of the new site. The new wocrc.ca site will provide a clear map from which to navigate to selected program information relevant to the needs of the Centre's target audiences. The site will also highlight the various partnerships that are instrumental in the funding, development and implementation of programs. And, finally, a new feature has been incorporated entitled the 'Success Stories Series', which will be a testament to the quality of service provided to our clients in western Ottawa.

Although there has been a certain amount of disruption for our clients throughout the construction phase of the WOCRC 4th floor expansion, we are confident that upon completion in the spring there will be a great deal of gratitude for the extra space that the programs will have to provide their services. We, at the WOCRC, are indeed grateful and fortunate to have received infrastructure stimulus funding from the federal

and provincial governments that will benefit the catchment areas of West Carleton, Kanata, Goulbourn and Nepean.

This year, we will also be celebrating a new partnership with the Centretown Community Health Centre, which will operate a satellite diabetes clinic out of WOCRC. The first of its kind in the west end of Ottawa, we are indeed proud of this partnership and grateful that our west end clients, who require services related to diabetes, will now have a shorter distance to travel to receive support.

And finally, the WOCRC will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in September 2011. In honour of a quarter century in operation, the WOCRC will be hosting a celebration. More details will be provided on our new website.

Empowerment, equity, partnership and innovation form the cornerstones of the WOCRC, always keeping at the forefront dedication and service to our clients within the communities of West Carleton, Kanata, Goulbourn and Nepean.



Photographs of Chrysalis House, a shelter for women and their families experiencing violence in the home.

WINTER 2011



De-Bunking the Myths on Violence

Myth: An abusive person is someone who loses his or her temper too often.

Fact: Although someone who abuses may have a “bad temper,” intimate partner violence is more than a passing mood. It is a pattern of behaviors that abusers use to have power and control over their partners or family members. Many people who abuse will do so even when they are not angry.

Myth: People who abuse tend to always act abusively toward their partner.

Fact: Some people who abuse may become apologetic and more loving after the abuse. It is often a form of manipulation. This cycle of increasing tension and violence, followed by what is sometimes called a “honeymoon period,” can make it harder for people who are abused to end the relationship.

Myth: Drinking or using drugs makes someone become an abuser.

Fact: Although many abusers are intoxicated when they become violent, alcohol and drugs themselves are not thought to cause the abuse. And, research shows that abusers who are recovering alcoholics and addicts still tend to be abusive after becoming sober.

Myth: People hit their partners because the partner won't stop talking, yelling, or telling them what to do.

Fact: Abusers hit people because they feel the need to dominate the relationship. The abused person can act demanding or passive and may still be hit. And, it is common for people who abuse to tend to blame their partner for the abuse.

Myth: Violence in dating relationships with young women is not common.

Fact: Dating violence is the leading cause of injury to young women. Of the women between the ages of 15-19 murdered each year, 30% are killed by their male partner. (University of Calgary 2009)

Myth: The person being abused can make the abuse stop.

Fact: The only person who can stop the abuse is the person being abusive. The person being abused can take steps to protect herself or increase their safety, but she cannot stop the other person from engaging in abusive behavior.

Myth: Violence against women is not a big problem in affluent cities such as Ottawa and Kanata.

Fact: It is estimated that in a single year, Ottawa's 7 shelters collectively receive over 18,600 phone calls for service, averaging just over 50 calls per day in Ottawa.

Myth: Violence against women and children only happens in low-income homes.

Fact: Violence against women occurs in all income level homes, in all cultures and religions, in all neighbourhoods, rural and urban centers, and in heterosexual & homosexual relationships.

Myth: We do not need shelters for women who are abused in Ottawa.

Fact: In 2007, Ottawa women's shelters provided safe housing for 544 women and 444 children. However, due to the overwhelming demand, the shelters had to turn away 3,281 women, as there was simply no space available.

WOCRC Success Story

I Pledge To Take A Stand To Stop Bullying Before It Starts!

In November 2010, the Bully Prevention Program launched its 'Take a stand and Stop Bullying Before it Starts' initiative in honour of Bully Free Week, which was held from November 15 to 19th, 2010. The following testimonial was written by Taylor Hewitt, a student at All Saints Catholic High School, who is a participant in the Bully Prevention Program.

Bully Prevention Program by Taylor Hewitt

In mid-November, students and staff at All Saints Catholic High School lit the halls with the glow of pink. Everyone wore pink and carried neon pencils to mark Bullying Awareness Week. The idea came from two teenage students in the Maritimes who took a stand against bullies in their school. In the fall of 2007, it was reported that David Shepherd and Travis Price, after hearing that a student was called gay and threatened for wearing pink, went to a nearby store and bought 50 pink shirts including tank tops, and were seen wearing them at school the next day. They were able to spread the word about wearing pink in support of the student, and to take a stand against bullying. All Saints is also spreading the message. For one week in November, All Saints, in conjunction with St. Isidore, École Élémentaire Publique Kanata, Sacred Heart, Huntley Centennial, St. Anne, St. James, Guardian Angels and Holy Spirit participated in Bully Free Week. These schools also have been involved in the Bully Prevention program at the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC). Bullying is a destructive behaviour which is characterized by three elements: it is intentional, it is repeated over time and there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. Bullying occurs between children of all ages from preschool to high school. There are many forms of bullying, which include physical, verbal, social, electronic or cyber, racial, religious, sexual and disability. The National Crime Prevention Centre suggests that roughly 6% of students ages 12 to 19 report bullying others on a weekly basis, 8% report that they are victims of bullying weekly, and 1% report that they are both the victim and bullies to others on a weekly basis. For Bullying Awareness Week, Mrs. Angela Lorusso, who works with the Bully Prevention Program at the WOCRC, partnered up with All Saints to promote bullying awareness. The All Saints peer pals visited grade 7 and 8 classrooms, and students signed petitions to stand up for bullying. As they departed, each student received a pink pencil to remind them of their commitment to anti-bullying.

What Our Clients Are Saying...

“You are providing a wonderful service for our community and I am most grateful to all of you. Thank you so very much and God bless you all.”

“[My wife] enjoys everyone and the activities. The staff are wonderful and [she] remarks how friendly and helpful everyone is.”

“This centre allows my family to stay aware of programs in our community. This program [Ontario Early Years Centre] also has made a huge impact on my daughter’s social skills. I, as well, have met friends who I interact with outside of the program. The people are extremely friendly and make me feel confident as a parent.”

“Being new to the community allowed me to meet people with children. I received helpful information with issues such as toilet training, allergies and sleep patterns behaviour. The Ontario Early Years Centre is a very fun stimulating environment for my 2 year old.”

“I am very happy that my daughter got the opportunity to interact in the School Readiness Interactive Playgroup with other kindergarten-age kids in a school-like atmosphere.”

Keeping You Connected

Let's Connect is published a minimum of four times a year – spring, summer, fall & winter – to keep you informed of news and activities at the WOCRC. If you would like to read more about a specific topic or have a story idea, please email info@communityresourcecentre.ca and we'll try to cover it in an upcoming issue!



2 MacNeil Court, Kanata, Ontario K2L 4H7
 Tel.: 613-591-3686; Fax: 613-591-2501
 TTY: 613-591-0484
www.communityresourcecentre.ca
info@communityresourcecentre.ca
 B.N. 12821 9201 RR 0001