

Members' Bulletin

2006



Safer for Women ... Safer for Everyone



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Still challenging violence ...

Welcome to METRAC's third quarterly bulletin for members! Although it's summertime, we are still working hard towards special events and programs in the fall. This bulletin details some of our upcoming initiatives. It includes special events, violence prevention projects, and fundraisers. We welcome you to get involved.

METRAC would like to thank you once again for being a member of METRAC and showing your commitment to building communities that are *safer for women, safer for everyone*.

Games for Change

METRAC recently attended a special conference in New York City, named **Games for Change**. We attended to learn more about what's happening in the world of video games as a tool for social change and to inform our special RePlay Project. As you may know, RePlay is a violence prevention initiative that will produce video games for Ontario children and youth aged 8 to 14 to promote healthy, equal relationships. For more information about RePlay, please visit www.metrac.org/programs/info/replay.htm.



GAMES FOR CHANGE

The conference was inspiring and fascinating, enlightening the ways that technology can be harnessed to promote positive messages and challenge widespread social problems, including violence against women, youth, and children. Video games are a medium ripe for this sort of thing – after all, don't most people enjoy games because they get to break the rules? In the same way, we believe games can create opportunities to challenge mainstream thinking about gendered violence.

Project spotlight: METRAC's Community Safety Night



Since 2000, METRAC has held its **Annual Community Safety Night** throughout the city of Toronto. This event brings community members together to evaluate their neighbourhoods using **METRAC's Safety Audit**, which focuses on safety issues women and other marginalized communities face. Afterwards, community members come up with their own recommendations and ideas about how their neighbourhoods can be *safer for women, youth, and children, and for everyone*.

This year, METRAC has partnered with the City of Toronto's Community Safety Secretariat to coordinate safety audits in Toronto's thirteen identified priority neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods need strengthened support systems to address the safety needs of community residents. Safety Audits will be conducted in several locations throughout each neighbourhood, with the results gathered to inform common safety needs, recommendations, and strategic actions at the neighbourhood level.

A new feature of 2006 Safety Audits is the publication of special **Neighbourhood Report Cards**. Report Cards will highlight what community members feel are pressing safety issues and detail how safe women and other marginalized community members feel in their neighbourhoods. This innovative initiative will bring strong public, political, and media attention to unique safety needs of traditionally silenced community members. If you would like to get involved in METRAC's Safety Audits in Priority Neighbourhoods, please contact Narina Nagra, Safety Director, at 416-392-3137 or safety@metrac.org.

Stay tuned ...

Annual General Meeting (October 11, 6:30 to 8:30 PM, 519 Church Street Community Centre). Join METRAC's Board and staff in paying tribute to Pamela Cross, METRAC's former Legal Program Director and YWCA Woman of Distinction 2006. The AGM panel will feature Women's Stories about their work on Religious Arbitration Law Reform, which led to recent changes in a number of laws ensuring women's rights in Ontario.

Annual Community Safety Night Public Launch & Safety Audit in Kingston-Galloway (August 3, 5:00 to 8:00 PM, East Scarborough Storefront, Morningside Mall, Room 305).

Members-only Fall Forum on *What's New in the Law*. Date and location to be announced.

A Night Out With a Difference



On Monday, September 18, METRAC is hosting its third annual **A Night Out With a Difference** fundraiser. It will be held at The Drake Hotel (1150 Queen Street West) in Toronto.

At last year's event, we raised \$20,000 to support our violence prevention programs. This year, our goal is to raise \$30,000! Festivities of *A Night Out With a Difference* will include delightful hors d'oeuvres and drinks, live entertainment, an exciting Silent Auction, and fun Gift Bags for all of our 200 guests. Plus, you'll get to meet us in person and learn more about the innovative violence prevention work we're doing.

Tickets are \$75 (a tax receipt will be provided for \$35 of the ticket price). Come out yourself and make sure to invite a friend! Contact Andrea Gunraj, Outreach Manager, at 416-392-4760 or outreach@metrac.org to order your tickets today. Or, you may visit www.metrac.org/about/nite_out.htm to download the ticket form and get more information about the event. We hope to see you there!

Ongoing wish list

As a small community-based organization, METRAC has a lean operating budget and many pressing needs, including the need for accessible program and office space and equipment to run our programs well. Here are some of the things we need:

- ✓ An accessible office/programming space (approx. 2000 sq. feet)
- ✓ An LCD projector (recent make)
- ✓ Portable CD/Cassette Tape player (CD-R compatible)
- ✓ 17+ inch television (recent make)
- ✓ VCR and DVD player (recent make)

If you are interested in donating any such items to METRAC, please contact us directly.

What's new at METRAC

METRAC is never a dull place – there's always something new happening here! Take a look at what's in store for the near future:

Service provider legal trainings: METRAC's Community Justice Program is launching new trainings for service providers that focus on Immigration Law and its impact on women experiencing violence.

Safety and equity in schools: METRAC's Community Outreach and Education Program has received funding to create a special resource for parents about their children's safety and equity in Toronto schools.

Revision and reprint of important resources: METRAC has also received funding to revise and reprint some of its widely-distributed informational materials. This includes making our popular information bookmark available in languages other than English, such as French, Ojibway, Chinese, Farsi, Tamil, and Spanish.

Awareness Training for Neighbours, Friends & Families: METRAC recently joined the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, a violence prevention initiative aimed at providing awareness training in local communities to recognize the warning signs of abuse early and to develop better community supports for women and children.

New Legal Program Director: Welcome to Clara Ho, METRAC's new Legal Director. She brings several years experience as a staff lawyer with Metro Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic. She has a background working with low-income communities on issues of family and criminal law, immigration, landlord/tenant, employment, disability benefits, and human rights. Clara is currently active in advocating in the area of trafficking of women and girls and has worked for the United Nations.

METRAC in the media

METRAC's Executive Director, Wendy Komiotis, was quoted in *The Toronto Star*. The article, "Drop in Spousal Killings – But Not in Toronto" (July 14, Section A18), focused on the Report on Family Violence released by Statistics Canada. Her comments called attention to the fact that poverty, housing, language, and childcare are barriers for many women living with abuse. To view the full text of the article, visit www.torontostar.ca.
