

2005

Annual Report



Safer for Women, Youth, & Children ... Safer for Everyone



Board President's Report

METRAC's Board of Directors formed the Planning and Evaluation Committee to continue implementing strategic directions established in 2004 and engaging staff, volunteers, and board members in longer-term planning activities. The strategic directions we have been responding to are: continue to guide METRAC towards greater cultural competency, expand our funding base, develop a higher profile and feedback mechanisms, work with partners to be part of an integrated support system for women experiencing violence, and develop an adequate staffing structure.

METRAC received feedback about the effectiveness of our work and how it can be improved through a Community Planning Meeting in 2005. We also revised our mission statement to better reflect our work (see page 12). We reorganized and redefined our Board Committees, and in an effort to become more proactive about board membership, we widened the mandate of the Human Resources Committee to include the work of board nominations.

The newly formed Social Action Committee will work to develop strategies to raise awareness about violence against women within a community-based framework through education campaigns. Finally, we turned the Strategic Planning Committee into the Planning and Evaluation Committee to reflect our ongoing organizational goal of fulfilling our strategic directions.

One strategic challenge facing METRAC continues to be funding stability. Pressure continues for us to do more with less, and the project-specific dollars we receive do not adequately cover the operational, administrative, and capital costs required to support all of our projects and programs. We also need to enhance the safety, efficiency, and quality of our programming through the relocation of our offices to a physically accessible community space. In 2005, fundraising and other activities to expand and diversify

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*Board President
Stephanie Dutrizac*

our funding base was a major focus. We established an annual signature fundraiser, *A Night Out With a Difference*. This event was successful and we raised \$20,000. We thank our event sponsors, RBC Financial Group and Bogoroch & Associates, and we give heartfelt appreciations to the many METRAC friends who donated to the silent auction, purchased tickets, or came out in support of our work to end violence against women and children.

METRAC is fortunate and grateful for the continued support we receive from the City of Toronto. Our vital work would not survive without City resources. We also wish to thank the Law Foundation of Ontario, Ontario Women's Directorate, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Community Foundation, Canadian Women's Foundation, and RBC Financial Group. We thank all other donors, including individuals, foundations, corporations, and unions. Without your ongoing support, our work would not be possible.

METRAC said goodbye and thank you to departing staff members Rosetta Springer, Hongli Wang, and departing ReAct Peer Facilitators. We also welcomed Susannah Dainow, Stephanie Ehret, Alana Lowe, Ginny Santos, Izabela Stec, Puja Suri, Shahnaz Uddin, and our Summer Students, Elizabeth Chen, David Lewis, and Christine Luza. The committed, diligent, and talented staff of METRAC continues to keep programming dynamic, relevant, and effective in ending violence against women, youth, and children. Thanks also to our dedicated volunteers and students who work many hours to support the work of the agency.

I also want to thank our departing Board Members who have contributed their time, skills, and energy to METRAC in countless ways: Karima Esmail, Peggy Nash, Deborah Niles, Marilyn Oladimeji, Tanya Principe, Mazeena Rafi, Janice Shaw, and Shahnaz Uddin. In 2005, METRAC was pleased to welcome volunteers Sandra Noe and Donna Hepkin to the Board.

My final word of thanks are to my colleagues on the Board, a superb group of women whose leadership and commitment have kept METRAC true to the vision of a society that is *Safer for women, youth, and children, Safer for everyone.*

Executive Director's Report

The year 2005 has been one of progress and challenge for METRAC. We continued to build the capacity of individuals, groups, and institutions to prevent and end violence towards women and children through public education, safety initiatives, trainings, research, community partnerships, and public policy. This year, METRAC's strategic directions, set by the Board for 2004-2007, have been integral in guiding our programs forward. To further the goal of becoming a culturally competent organization, the Community Safety Program responded to the need for appropriate safety resources for diverse youth and multilingual communities, and the Community Justice Program developed new legal resources to support multilingual women experiencing violence. Since cultural competency is not only about language and ethnicity, METRAC has also been involved in partnership projects aimed at increasing access to services and safety supports for Trans women and women with disabilities experiencing violence.

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We have also made progress in other areas. METRAC responded to feedback from community members identifying a gap in resources for children and youth. We bolstered our violence prevention work to support young mothers and newcomer youth, and we launched RePlay, a project that aims to promote healthy, equal youth relationships through video games.

Following METRAC's strategic direction to develop a clear identity and a strong and higher profile, we were pleased to introduce a striking new logo and name for our youth violence prevention program, Respect in Action: Youth Preventing Violence (ReAct). Many thanks go to community members for sharing their unique ideas for renaming the program, and a special thank you goes to volunteer Tomislava Franicevic for designing the new logo. On an organizational level, METRAC is proactively seeking resources to enable us to create a new 'brand' for the work we do.



Continuing our long-time tradition of law reform, METRAC is proud to have been involved in the work leading to the passage of Bill 27 and the Ontario government's decision to eliminate use of religious arbitration in family law disputes – promising news for women and children experiencing violence, as it has and will prompt changes in a number of important laws. Other areas of METRAC's policy work included active participation on the City of Toronto's Violence Against Women and Policing Working Group and participation in consultations with the Toronto Police Services Board to make violence against women a strategic priority for the Toronto Police Services.

Funding stability continued to be a pressing challenge for METRAC in 2005. We established our annual A Night Out *With a Difference* fundraiser, and a major priority for 2006 will be to continue strengthening our funding base. Another related challenge METRAC faced was a high demand for our programs and services and low staffing resources. For instance, requests for ReAct workshops exceeded our capacity to deliver them, and in response to the demand in Toronto, we expanded our legal information trainings but still had a long waiting list.

In closing, 2005 has been a progressive year for METRAC and this reflects the work and contributions of many. I appreciate the support of our funders, donors, and numerous community partners and I look forward to your continued involvement in METRAC. I thank the Board of Directors for its leadership and support, as well as volunteers and students who bolster our work in many ways. My deepest thanks go to the exceptional staff of METRAC. We have much to be proud of.

Safety Program

Community Safety Program Report

The Community Safety Program continued to build safer communities for women, youth, and children in 2005 by developing community capacity to respond to personal and community safety needs. The program implemented key aspects of METRAC's strategic directions and fostered an understanding of violence and its link to discrimination and harassment. Its work focused on diverse Toronto communities, with a particular focus on marginalized youth in underserved neighbourhoods. Community capacity building models were utilized to ensure the integral involvement of these communities in developing strategies and action for change.



*Safety Director
Narina Nagra*

With funding from the Toronto Community Foundation (TCF), we began creating a culturally relevant Safety Audit Process in consultation with community groups that speak Cantonese, French, Punjabi, Spanish, and Tamil. We also held our 6th Annual Community Safety Night (CSN), a successful event that brings together community organizations, women and youth groups, residents, and City of Toronto staff and Councillors to create safer communities for all. To diversify event participation and in conjunction TCF funding, 2005's CSN was renamed *Youth Safe Nite* and it centred on youth concerns. Focus groups were conducted with diverse young people from priority neighbourhoods (Rexdale, Parkdale, Malvern, Kingston-Galloway, Jane-Finch, and Keele-Eglinton) to create a youth audit METRAC's *Youth Safe Kit*. The event provided a unique opportunity for 150 youth between ages 13 to 21 to talk about their sense of neighbourhood safety,

make their own recommendations, and address their specific safety needs. It was especially timely, considering recent sexual violence and tragic deaths of many young people in the city over the summer of 2005.

Ongoing safety consultations, collaborations, and violence-prevention trainings were conducted with community residents, women's and youth organizations, community agencies, schools, and workplaces. The Safety Program also continued to bring institutions, government, and agencies involved in community safety together to enhance broader social strategies for addressing violence against women, children, youth, and communities in general. In particular, METRAC continued as a member of CityWatch, an affiliate of the City of Toronto Community Safety Secretariat. METRAC also worked in partnership with Centennial College to implement broad-based training for employees and staff to facilitate understanding of the causes of workplace violence and develop strategies to prevent workplace violence.

Finally, we continued to convene THRIVE, the Multicultural Women's Coalition against Violence and Oppression, which underwent structural enhancements to ensure its effectiveness in supporting multicultural women and their service providers. Notably, the coalition conducted an Appreciative Inquiry Process to review the work it had done in past years and identify needs and goals for 2006. Additionally, THRIVE established a skill-building component in its monthly general meeting structure so member agencies could learn how to better support multicultural women in their work. The coalition also supported policy reform efforts to assist people living without status and joined a working group with several women's agencies to launch educational initiatives to assist women without status experiencing violence.

Contact METRAC's Community Safety Program at safety@metrac.org or 416-392-3137.

Justice Program

Community Justice Program Report

2005 was a very busy year for METRAC's Community Justice Program. With funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, we were able to continue our *Increasing Access to Justice for Women* project and directly respond to METRAC's strategic directions. We:

- Delivered ongoing trainings across Ontario using our materials for women with disabilities and Deaf women and for immigrant, refugee and non-status women
- Researched the legal information needs of young and older women experiencing violence and developed materials to meet those needs
- Created a CD of our training materials for efficient distribution
- Worked with advisory committees to increase access to justice for multilingual women experiencing violence and developed and translated legal information into 7 different languages
- Conducted an assessment of the Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN) website (over 350,000 hits in 2005 alone)

Our Toronto community legal information training was expanded, but interest in it far exceeded our capacity. Participants from a wide diversity of community agencies and court-related services gave the training excellent evaluations. We are planning to offer an additional training in 2006 and will monitor further requests for trainings to determine a necessary response. We also provided a large number of trainings on a fee-for-service basis, largely in the GTA.

METRAC's Justice Program was involved in a number of educational and law reform initiatives in 2005. In particular, we were one of the leaders in the provincial No Religious Arbitration Coalition, a group that successfully lobbied the provincial government to end use of religious arbitration in resolution of family law disputes in Ontario. As a result of the work of the Coalition, Attorney General Michael Bryant introduced Bill 27 in the fall of 2005.



*Legal Director
Pamela Cross*

In addition to ensuring that only Canadian and Ontario law can be used in the arbitration of family law matters, Bill 27 contained amendments to the Children's Law Reform Act to make consideration of family violence mandatory in custody and access determinations. This marked another major victory for METRAC's Community Justice Program, which has been advocating for this change since the late 1990s. Unfortunately, federal custody legislation does not yet contain this provision, so the need for further law reform remains important.

The provincial government's Domestic Violence Action Plan states a commitment to various other legal initiatives, including improvements to the enforcement of family court restraining orders, increased communication between family and criminal court, and addressing the problem of dual charging. METRAC's Justice Program has been involved in consultations on all these matters, and we are looking forward to outcomes next year that will increase access to justice for all women experiencing violence.

The Justice Program established a new pilot project, the Sexual Assault Court Watch. With support from Pro Bono Law Canada and the Donner Foundation, law student Lee-Ann Siu worked to set up this pilot. Protocols were developed with the courts and volunteers were trained on how to observe criminal sexual

Continued from page 5...

assault trials and record information about trial outcomes. This pilot will form the basis for ongoing work to monitor and analyze sexual assault trials and make recommendations to improve the system for women.

We feel very positive about METRAC's contributions to law reform in Ontario and our community legal information materials and training. We forged many exciting new partnerships with other community-based agencies, and we look forward to continuing on in 2006.

Contact METRAC's Community Justice Program at legaldirector@metrac.org or 416-392-3148.

Photo Credit for Pamela Cross: YWCA Toronto 2004-2006.

Outreach Program

Community Outreach & Education Report

METRAC's Community Outreach and Education Program responded to a need for community-based violence prevention initiatives in the face of ongoing gender-based violence and barriers women experience in accessing appropriate help. Accordingly, the program made strides to follow METRAC's strategic directions and worked to empower diverse communities by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and resources to prevent violence.

This year, we continued to act as a key source of information about violence against women, youth, and children for organizations, institutions, and community members. Over 14,100 written materials were distributed in variety of formats (e.g. tuck cards, bookmarks, handbooks, youth zines, brochures) to over 220 individuals and organizations in Toronto and beyond. They covered many essential topics such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, and same-sex partner abuse. Some of these resources were offered in 8 different languages to suit the varied needs of Toronto's linguistic communities – English, French, Spanish, Tamil, Russian, Chinese, Punjabi, and Farsi. Additionally, we responded to approximately 2950 phone calls, letters, and email requests from women and service providers looking for crisis referrals and information about violence. Through our bi-annual newsletter, packed with informative articles about violence, the program communicated to our many partners, members, and funders about the issues.



*Outreach Manager
Andrea Gunraj*

The Outreach Program worked with the media many times to promote community participation in our work and raise awareness about violence issues. Interviews were conducted with several Canadian media outlets, including Global News, City TV, Mercury News (Guelph-based paper), Kitchener Radio, CJME Radio (Regina), AM 640 Radio, The Toronto Sun, Much Music, CHFI Radio 98 FM, and The Discovery Channel. We also promoted our work to the community through our Open House, A Night Out *With a Difference* fundraiser, Community Planning Meeting, and Annual General Meeting. More than 300 community members attended these events.

We enhanced our website, www.metrac.org, which has downloadable resources and provides mechanisms for people to be directly involved in METRAC's work. We were thrilled to learn that this website's usage jumped to over one million hits this year. We also began RePlay, our exciting positive video gaming project,

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funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate (and delivered in partnership with Springtide Resources, White Ribbon Campaign, and Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children), to promote healthy and equal relationships. RePlay's goal is to create violence prevention video games for Ontario youth 8 to 14 years of age and accompanying resources for educators, parents, and youth. In addition, we conducted research, summarized in our *Examining Best Practices for Children's Video Games* report, for those interested in successful design elements of successful non-violent video games.

Respect in Action (ReAct), METRAC's peer-to-peer youth project (formerly known as the Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau), continued to support its team of diverse Youth Peer Facilitators to deliver over 80 violence prevention workshops, speaks, and trainings with 6436 youth and 1964 educators/youth workers throughout the Greater Toronto Area. We developed new trainings, workshops, and a zine on violence at home, aimed at supporting at-risk young mothers and newcomer youth.

Through ReAct, we ran a pilot initiative in fall of 2005, entitled the *Rise* Project. It connected young women aged 14 to 18 living in marginalized Toronto neighbourhoods with ReAct Facilitators and partnering local urban women artists. They all participated in workshops about violence against young women and collaborated to create their own anti-violent urban art forms. These pieces were showcased in high school assemblies during the week of the December 6 Memorial Day.

Finally, METRAC's Outreach Program collaborated with several other community organizations and coalitions to enhance public awareness about violence. Within these partnerships, we participated in planning and enhancing communication to address service issues between sectors, assisted new initiatives to reach out to underserved communities, and engaged in public policy reform within the anti-violence sector.

Contact METRAC's Community Outreach and Education Program at outreach@metrac.org or 416-392-4760.

Volunteer Program Report

2005 was a busy year for METRAC's Volunteer Program – over 50 volunteers gave 3114 invaluable hours to advance our mission and cause. They helped with research, programming, and administration. To celebrate our volunteers, we held a Volunteer Appreciation Tea event in 2005.

METRAC piloted the first Sexual Assault Court Watch project in Toronto through volunteer support. Our committees were propelled by volunteers who helped plan special events and initiatives. They also did community outreach at events and through our newsletters. Board members took time from their hectic schedules to chair Committees, interview prospective staff, solicit donations and sell tickets, and contribute to the organization's plans and policies.

METRAC benefited from the involvement of student interns – thank you to interns Patricia Dumkwu, Stephanie Marshall, Beth Palmer, Rahbel Rahman, Lee-Ann Siu, Tanya Veinot, and Ivona Vujica.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks to all who volunteered in 2005:

Doaa Abbas, Claudette Agustin, Helen Anderson, Luz Elena Arias, Clarissa Awogbade Karen Bogach, Jasmine Bogdawalla, Bianca Borzellino, Stephanie Brown, Farzana Chowdhury, Natalie Clements, Karen Cliche, Anita Corsini, Philip Forbes Dawe, Emily Essig, Jennifer Fawcette, Jeff Gilley, Christine Fitzgerald, Tomislava Franicevic, Jeff Gilley, Kelly Graff, Kenney Garib, Jennifer Hall, Sandra Harb, Mary Higgins, Mandy Hopkins, Chris Komiotis, Kirsten Knott, Theodora Koutsostavros, Zohar Levy, Dionne LoForte, Julie Margulis, Jennifer Matyas, Anne Morais, Khanh Nguyen, Kim Noronha, Amy Nuno-Amarteifio, Joanna Pawelkiewicz, Sabrina Pingitore, Erica Rapa, Ashleigh Simonton, Candice Skelton, Andrea Sobko, Izabela Stec, Tricia Stunden, Dora Diana Talamantes, Erinn Treff, Diane Van Dyke, Helen Vincze, Nicole Williams, Laura Willis, Marziya Yasmin, Brandi Young, and Nelly Xavier.

On a final note, 2005 marked the final year of a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and we wish to thank them for funding our Volunteer Program.

Resource Development Report

METRAC greatly appreciates the involvement of our donors, funders, and supporters. It is your commitment to the eradication of violence against women, youth, and children that inspires us to continue the critical and necessary work ahead. In 2005 we continued fundraising efforts through direct mail, special events, foundations, corporations, and unions. While METRAC received significant funds from the City of Toronto and other government agencies we rely heavily on donations from individuals. This year we experienced a decline in returns from our Direct Mail Campaign. This affirms the critical role individuals play in the success of our fundraising efforts with their generous giving and in helping us remain viable and able to meet the needs of our community.

A highlight of 2005 fundraising was A Night Out with a Difference, held at the Drake Hotel in September. Those who attended the event not only supported us by buying tickets, but by avidly participating in our Silent Auction. The evening was fantastic with musical entertainment by Shelley Hamilton, and we raised over \$20,000. METRAC would like to thank **Gold Sponsor RBC Financial Group** and **Silver Sponsor Bogoroch & Associates** for their support in helping to make this special event such a success. We also want to thank all Board members, staff, friends and our supporters for selling and purchasing tickets.

We acknowledge the ongoing and essential support of **The City of Toronto**. For supporting our programs and organization, METRAC's board, staff, and volunteers gives sincere thanks to:

The **Law Foundation of Ontario** for enhancing METRAC's Community Justice Program.

The **Ontario Women's Directorate** for supporting METRAC's Community Outreach and Education Program through funding of the *RePlay Video Game Project*.

The **Ontario Trillium Foundation** for contributing to the improvement of METRAC's organizational and equity capacity through funding of its Volunteer Program, Resource Development, Strategic Plan and Equity Training.

The **Toronto Community Foundation** for funding our work to make our Community Safety Program more inclusive to youth and ethno-lingual communities in Toronto.

The **Canadian Women's Foundation** for helping to build the capacity of our youth workshops, expand our youth resources and tools, and prepare young women to facilitate workshops on violence at home.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) for enabling METRAC to hire 4 students over the summer through funding from the Summer Career Placement Program.

RBC Financial Group for providing essential support to our ReAct Youth Program.

Hydro One for enabling us to expand and share our ReAct Youth Program and Safety Program work in London and Burlington.

The **Canadian Auto Workers (CAW/TCA)** for their continued support over the years.

Community Partners

METRAC's Community Partnerships

METRAC extends its thanks to the many community organizations, networks, schools, services, and groups we partnered with during 2005. Partnerships were established to deliver trainings and workshops, provide resources, conduct safety work, participate in policy reform, and strengthen our programs and organization. Our community partners included:

Community Outreach and Education Program – Queen West Community Health Centre, Family Service Association of Metro Toronto, For Youth Initiative (FYI), George Brown College, Hospital for Sick Children, Immigrant Women's Health Centre, Labour Community Services of Toronto, Women Abuse Council of Toronto, Assaulted Women's Helpline, Parkdale Community Health Centre, Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre, Scadding Court Community Centre, Scarborough West Social Services, Springtide Resources, White Ribbon Campaign, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Program (Kingston), Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association (Sault Ste. Marie), Victim Services of Bruce-Grey and Owen Sound (Owen Sound), Renfrew Victoria Hospital, Regional Owen Sound Assault Program (Renfrew), Health Canada (Ottawa), Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (Ottawa), Family Transition Place (Orangeville), Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre (Peterborough), Sexual Assault Centre for Quinte and District (Bellville), Chatham Kent Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (Chatham), Lake of the Woods District Hospital (Kenora)

Community Justice Program – Catholic Cross-Cultural Services, Central Neighbourhood House, Community Living Toronto, December 6th Fund of Toronto, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, Family Transition Place, 519 Church TransAccess Project, Flemingdon Neighbourhood Services, Herizon House, Interval House, Korean Canadian Women's Association, Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, Mujer, New Experiences for Women, Ontario Association for the Deaf, Red Door Family Shelter, Silent Voice, Street Haven, Tamil Women's Association, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, The Women's Centre, The Women's Centre of York Region, Women's Habitat, York Women's Centre, Yorktown Centre for Women, YWCA Canada, YWCA Toronto, YWCA Women's Shelter

Community Safety Program – St. Stephen's Community House, Dixon Neighbourhood Youth Centre, East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club, Dufferin Mall Youth Services, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Malvern Family Resource Centre, Albion Boys & Girls Club, Arising Women Place, Youth Program, Empowered Student Partnership at York Memorial Collegiate, East Mall Youth Group, Rexdale Community Health Centre, HEYY (Hearing Every Youth through Youth), Parkdale Community Health Centre, Braeburn Boys & Girls Club, JVS Toronto Youth Services, Toronto Youth Cabinet, LGBT Youthline, Supporting Our Youth, University of Toronto Women's Centre, Planned Parenthood of Toronto, London Abused Women's Centre, Working Women's Community Centre, Rexdale Women's Centre, Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Care Centre at Women's College, CultureLink, Regent Park Community Health Centre, 519 Anti-Violence Programme, 519 Trans Programme, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, Hydroblock Housing Unit, Atkinson Housing Cooperative, Leslieville neighbourhood, Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School, Centennial College, University of Prince Edward Island, Ontario College of Art & Design, Queen's University Human Rights Office, Ryerson University's Students' Union, Evergreen, Sex Professionals of Canada

Staff and Board

METRAC's 2005 Staff & Board

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Elizabeth Chen, Summer Outreach Assistant

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Stephanie Ehret, Volunteer Coordinator & Resource Developer

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METRAC is a not-for-profit, community-based organization that works to ensure women, youth, and children live free from all forms of violence and the threat or fear of violence. We address the distinct realities of women within and among diverse communities. METRAC's programs seek to prevent and end all individual, institutional and systemic forms of violence. We work collaboratively with a broad range of partners to develop strategies to end violence against women and to build safer communities for everyone.