



Women and children murdered in Ontario since 1990 are honoured by women from shelters at Canada's Parliament buildings (OAITH AGM, October 2012).

## Women demand a national action plan to end violence against women

In 1990, Canada declared December 6<sup>th</sup> the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

Over 20 years later, Canada still has no National Action Plan to End Violence against Women! Women demand one.

### International direction ignored

The United Nations has recommended that every country in the world develop a National Action Plan to end Violence against Women by 2015. But Canada, which often boasts to the world about its progress in the area has done nothing to begin the process of creating a plan for women in Canada.

On October 25th, OAITH members and supporters gathered to take our demand for federal action on a plan to the steps of Parliament Hill.

### A National Action Plan

Because violence against women is an equality and human rights issue, any National Plan must begin from this

foundation and understanding and must include:

- A respectful, inclusive public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and the resources to implement its recommendations.
- Collaboration with all provinces, territories and Aboriginal governments.
- Mechanisms for full participation by, and consultation with, survivors and community-based women's groups.
- A clear and broad definition of gender based violence.
- Strategies to address the specific experience of different constituencies (such as women with disabilities, racialized women, immigrant women, Deaf women, and young women).
- Initiatives to address socio-economic factors contributing to violence against women with specific goals, timelines and outcomes for measuring progress.

- Human and financial resources specifically marked to carry out the actions set out by the plan.

### Why now?

Every six days in Canada, a woman is murdered by an intimate partner. We know that Indigenous women experience violence at twice the rate and homicide at almost seven times that of non-Indigenous women.

On any given day, over 8200 women and their children are living in emergency shelters and transition houses to escape violence in Canada. Violence against women costs Canada an estimated \$6.9 billion per year in terms of social services, healthcare, and legal aid among others.

A comprehensive, national response is essential to address the root causes of gender based violence.

Join our call for a National Action Plan to end violence against all women in Canada! ■

# Survivor Voices Project in final stage

As we head into spring, the Survivor Voices Inclusion Project is entering its final stages. Since we began in summer 2011, SVIP has travelled to 20 different communities and held 22 workshops with over 300 women.

We have travelled across Ontario from Sioux Lookout to Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie to Corbyville. We've met with women from diverse backgrounds with just as diverse experiences with abuse and violence. The common thread between them all was their desire to be a part of the movement to end violence against women and to support other women and children transitioning to violence free lives.

## Women want to make social change

As we travelled, we met incredible women who shared their stories, dreams and hopes to be engaged in social change.

Women told us they want to be involved in education about abuse to pretty much everyone. They said they want to work with children and youth to stop the cycle of abuse through the generations and with mandatory services (police and children's aid) to show them how to use empathy when working with families.

Alongside education women said they want to be involved in policy changes, decision making, public awareness and mentoring just to name a few.

## Funds and resources a barrier

We also talked to participants about barriers to being engaged. As most of you can imagine a lack of funds and resources is the largest barrier women and agencies face.

Women, as we all know, are very resourceful and came up with many creative ways of sharing resources and raising funds in their communities.

Other barriers include not knowing how to be engaged, fear and stigmas about being identified as survivors publically and a feeling that their lived experience is not valued. At each workshop we are amazed at how much passion women show in overcoming these barriers.

## National exposure

We have been lucky to promote our work nationally at different levels.

OATH, SVIP and OSAC were chosen to present at the first annual National Leadership Forum facilitated by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses in Montreal. As the only survivor based presentation we were proud to be the voice of survivors on this national stage.

More recently at the end of February we presented on the national stage at the third annual Domestic Violence Conference in Toronto. The day went great; we were able to share what we have heard with representatives from all services working with women and children affected by abuse.

We had such success that both the University of Guelph and the Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children have asked SVIP staff to participate in different events.

## Model will create steps to change

As we finish workshops and begin designing the model, SVIP is looking forward to sharing the incredible ideas we have heard with each of you.



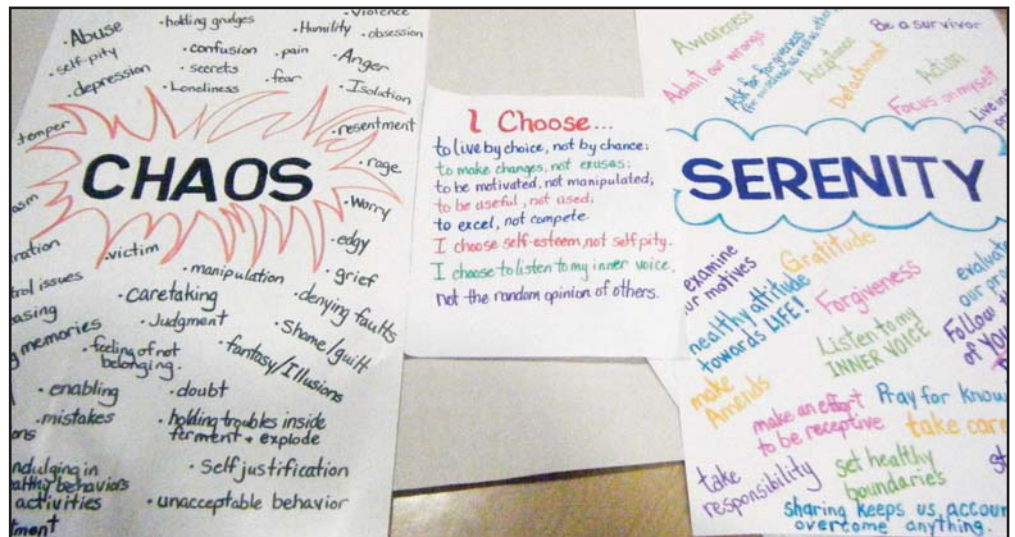
Survivors work together with shelters to discuss survivor engagement strategies and develop direction for creating a model of survivor involvement and leadership.

Our model of survivor inclusion will be available in late spring. As part of our next steps, our vision is to have survivor groups such as OSAC be the ambassadors of survivor engagement.

In April we are planning a two day event with members of OSAC to find ways of making these next steps a reality. We cannot think of a better way to reach our goal of engaging women survivors in increasing quality and access of services for women and children affected by abuse and violence.

Thank you to everyone who met with us and shared their thought and stories along the way. Each of you are amazing, inspiring women and we know that your input will have an impact on women and children across Ontario.

—Dawn and Sue  
Project Coordinators



Women in Windsor came together to share their experiences and ideas for making change.



## Survivor voices getting stronger within OAITH

How does one begin to describe what being a member of the OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee is like?

It is a little like "Survivor" meets "The Amazing Race". All of the member's torches burn brightly and as a team we are constantly on the move in our various communities with new endeavours, projects and missions, each time surprising ourselves at just the level of accomplishment we are capable of.

### Picture this

Collectively we have been working diligently on 'Breaking Barriers' a photovoice project which addresses the question: "What are the barriers women who are effected by violence face when accessing services?"

With over 100+ submissions this project has taken on a life of its own, and an incredible number of hours of work by the entire committee. The results will be worth it all.

### Shining our lights

In November, for Woman Abuse Prevention and Awareness month, OSAC survivors (with no budget) approached the London Abused Women's Centre to ask about adopting its 'Shine the Light' campaign in their own communities. LAWC was immensely excited and supportive of the survivors and even invited members to speak at their kick-off.

Seven new communities had survivor led awareness campaigns, some incredible things happened:

- A town kick-off occurred in Woodstock complete with the police chief and mayor in attendance with a tree lighting ceremony.
- In Windsor, the Windsor Regional Hospital turned purple on November 15<sup>th</sup> as all staff were encouraged to wear purple that day.
- In Toronto on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, the CN Tower lit up purple just, to name a few...Survivors made it happen!

OSAC Co-Chairs presented at the 1st National Shelter Conference in Montreal in September and then at the 3rd Canadian Domestic Violence Conference just this past month (February 2013) on Survivor Inclusion. The response was exceptional.

### Survivors motivate for change

One of the most exciting aspects of the group is how each member brings current ideas to the bi-weekly teleconferences on what they are involved in where they live, each member motivating others and effecting change.

Individually, we've participated in numerous activities, including Girl's Action Day, 1 Billion Rising, International Women's Day, National Day of Remembrance, Take Back the Night, various workshops, and the formation of new survivors' groups, among others.

OSAC members and Co-Chairs participated in social justice actions, such as a march to Queen's Park to protest cuts to the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) and a march to Parliament Hill to advocate for a Na-



*Eva speaks at OAITH AGM. Her and Nisha (here by her side) are Co-Chairs of the OSAC.*

tional Action Plan on Violence Against Women. We also had the opportunity to sit at the table with John Milloy, then Minister of Community and Social Services, to discuss impacts of the CSUMB cuts on survivors.

### One year old

May will mark our 1st anniversary of coming together as a group. We are so fiercely proud of each and every committee member and feel privileged to be the co-chairs of OSAC. Thank you OAITH!

—Eva, Co-Chair of OSAC

## OSAC success story

I met Sue Jay through my counsellor in early 2011. Sue Jay is one of the co-founders of Survivor Voices Oxford (SVO).

I had been separated from my ex-husband for seven years at that point and was ready to start speaking in public about my experience in my 23 years of abusive marriage. I wanted to make a difference in the world. It is my passion now.

I called Sue and got involved in the local survivor's group, SVO, and I became one of the Co-Chairs of our group. I also joined the very first workshop of the OAITH Survivor Voices Inclusion Project on September 8, 2011 in Woodstock, Ontario. After that, there was no stopping.

Sue, I and other survivors through our several discussions showed interest in forming a survivors group at OAITH. Sue and Dawn through SVIP travelled through Ontario, held workshops in different regions and met more sur-



*Nisha, Co-Chair OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee: a strong voice for women.*

vivors who showed interest in joining the OAITH survivors group. That is how OSAC was born.

Eleven members joined the OSAC and from these 11 members we have two Co-Chairs. I am one of them. Sue along with other survivors convinced OAITH to change its Constitution to allow two Co-Chairs to sit at the Board level at OAITH. We all are very thankful to Sue and other survivors for convincing OAITH and also to OAITH for allowing us to sit with them and have our voice valued and heard.

—Go to page 8

# Building OAITH capacity to deliver online training to shelter workers

OAITH continues to build its capacity to deliver efficient and informative training to VAW workers across the province.

In 2009, I was hired as the OWD Project Coordinator to find a way to make this happen. In consultation with the Board of Directors (BOD), I recommended that OAITH focus on building capacity for providing quality distance education opportunities through the use of web technologies. They agreed and so I began the OWD project work with a focus on a vision for the future.

To that end, it seemed like investing in the ways of the future—while we had the financial resources to build our infrastructure—was the correct course of action. I understood there would be a long period of building and development ahead of us; three years later, I think we are beginning to get the hang of this ☺

## Website support

We started the work on the website redevelopment with Technicalities, our designer who has worked with us ever since. Donna, the manager/owner of Technicalities, is a former VAW worker who had an understanding of our terms and concepts and most importantly, our funding challenges.

She continues to work with us within our budget, and I am incredibly appreciative to her and her team for their willingness to assist us no matter how often I bug them.

## Our successes—so far

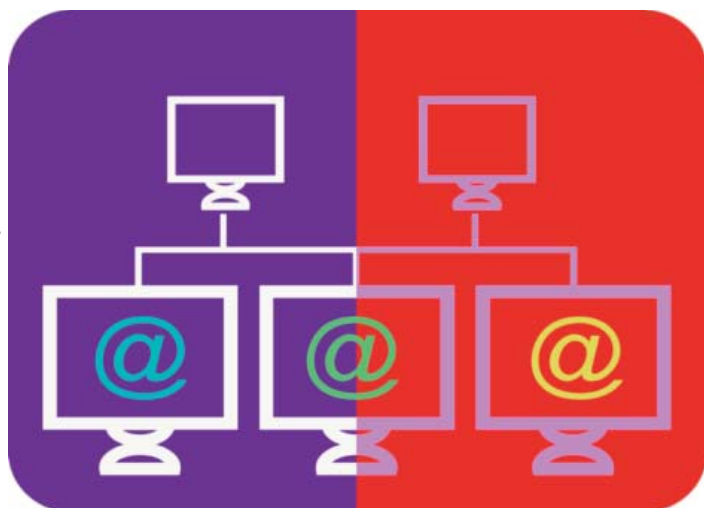
In three short years we have accomplished a huge amount: a dynamic website with a digital library that continues to grow, 8 training films—5 of which were available in DVD format, online risk assessment training, online tech and women's safety training, a dozen or so webinars on a variety of topics, several discussion guides and information manuals, a day-long in-person tech and women's safety workshop and tech training materials for Board and OAITH committee members.

## Feminist thinking

We have used an online conference site to initiate a few provincial networking meetings—I call it them the “feminist think tank”. Although our attendance numbers have been low, we have a number of folks interested in seeing this become a regular meeting. The idea behind it is to allow workers from across the province to discuss issues that are presenting in their region and influences on their work overall.

## New training portal

This past year my main focus was on working in with Technicalities to develop our new Training Portal. The training portal is an online learning management system that contributes a great deal to OAITH's capacity building as a source of training for VAW workers.



A learning management system allows us to deliver our training using a variety of methods. We have transferred all of our training videos, e-presentations and webinars to the portal so that anyone can access them just by clicking on the training link and registering as a user. Once you are a user you can navigate to any of the available online training. If you haven't done it yet, take a look soon.

## Capacity to offer facilitated courses

Even more exciting, the learning management system allows us to offer facilitated courses where participants can work together as a group with assessment and feedback.

To that end, we are currently exploring

a partnership with George Brown College and the Assaulted Women and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program to develop some post diploma courses for workers who are currently in the field. These types of courses would focus on building and deepening specific practice based skills, such as: feminist counseling training, legal and medical advocacy training, working with male survivors, working with dual diagnosis, etc.

## Harm reduction

Another primary focus has been working on a document that can contribute to the development of a “conceptual framework for harm reduction in VAW shelters”. This work is coming out of anecdotal and survey information from shelter workers and people in the community. The information I have gathered suggests that while shelters are interested in the idea of harm reduction (a number of shelters are engaged with harm reduction practice at some level), there are concerns and unanswered questions about what harm reduction looks like in our organizations. We hope this written report can contribute to our understanding of how to improve our work with women.

## New online training in the spring

New online training will be launched this spring is a 3-part series on working with women who identify mental health as an issue, as well as the final piece of our online training series on harm reduction. This last component is focused on health promotion for people who use substances. Look for both of these to be added into the training portal around the end of March 2013.

Coming in the next year are two major training deliverables.

## Training for new staff

The first is a training package for hiring frontline staff in VAW services. We haven't yet worked out all the details but rough strokes look like we may create a 5 to 7 week facilitated course offered a couple times per year, portfolio development that works over a 3-month probation tied to performance/probationary review, a component about supervision and sup-



port for mentor/ trainers, and a 'train the trainer' component for members to develop a pool of trainers.

### Extended risk assessment training

The second deliverable involves building on our existing risk assessment training, adding at least one module that focuses on lethal violence from partner. We hope a deeper exploration and assessment of available tools will help us develop a tool that incorporates a feminist anti-oppression approach of advocacy to our assessment.

### Appreciations

I want to extend a sincere thank you to Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) and the Province of Ontario for funding our work and to Vicky Gibson specifically for her invaluable support and encouragement to me and OAITH in general as we continue to learn and grow in our process. Thanks also to Lee-Anne Lee, Chair of the Board and a great boss.

### Find out more

If you are interested in finding out more information about any of the training OAITH has to offer or have any questions about the training portal I invite you to contact me at oaithtraining@web.ca, I would love to hear from you and chat about what we have going on.

—Margaret Alexander  
OWD Project Coordinator

## OAITH membership all depends on science

Why pay for a Full membership? Why not just have an Associate membership? What is the value besides voting privileges? I am often asked these questions and want to thank you for being so direct.

### Physics

You see it's all about PHYSICS. Yes, that's right Physics. Alas, my dear Physics teacher Mr. Hill would cringe to think that I am espousing that considering he had the dubious honour of teaching me Grade 11 Physics not once, but twice.

The definition of 'inertia' is:

*The tendency of a body to resist acceleration; the tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest; Inertia comes from the Latin word, iners, meaning idle, or lazy, especially with regard to effort, motion, action, and the like; inactivity; sluggishness.*

The definition of 'movement' is:

*The act or an instance of moving; a change in place or position; a particular manner of moving; the act or process of moving; especially: change of place or position or posture; a particular instance or manner of moving; toward or at a place, point, or time in advance; onward; ahead to move forward; from this day forward; to look forward.*

### Sociology

The definition of 'progression' is:



*Dale Kenney gets an 'A+' in the science of being an OAITH Membership Chair.*

*A movement or development toward a destination or a more advanced state, especially gradually or in stages; a succession; a series; a passing successively from one member of a series to the next; succession; sequence.*

### Economics

It is really quite simple. We derive our operating funds from membership fees. When we do not submit membership fees adequate to fund: the office, the Director, the website, the telephones, the paperwork, etc.

We cannot have movement or progression in the areas of: lobbying for better funding for shelters; lobbying for rights of immigrant women and children; lobbying for more humane allowances for Ontario Works, ODSP, safe, affordable housing, changes to a fairer and more just legal system.

We are a non-profit agency; we cannot achieve charitable status as we are a lobby group. We can from time to time receive grants for specific projects not for general operating.

### The essence

In essence, if we do not all purchase full memberships to OAITH, we will have inertia. We will not have movement or progression in the areas we seek to sustain and/or change.

The future is up to you. What price are you willing to accept to secure the continued movement and progression of our work so that women and children will be able to live a life free of violence and oppression? My price? At least my FULL membership fee every year!

—Dale Kenney, Membership Chair



*A number of OAITH photos were featured in the Ryerson University exhibit, "Still Moving: Feminist Remembrance in Vigils, Protests and Monument Making," December 6, 2012.*

## New Association director welcomed at OAITH

OAITH members and Board have welcomed me with warmth and support as the new Director.

As I have just begun to understand the complexity of the work here at OAITH, I have been astonished at the amount and the quality of work that Eileen has produced over her 18 years here while continuing to manage the details of the office. She has been a graceful and steadying influence over the last 10 months.

As I have begun to peel away the layers of what is involved, I have started to grasp the essence of the most important elements.

### Values

My personal and professional values are reflected in the work by using systemic, feminist beliefs with a powerful gender analysis to partner with others in coalitions. Our goal is to work together toward eradicating the root causes of violence against women and children. These values are foundational to drive potent political advocacy and action, along with the value of critical reflection and working in coalitions.

### Community Start-Up

OAITH participated in a coalition to fight the cuts to the Community Start Up Maintenance Benefits (CSUMB) and demand that the Ontario Works rates be raised. We marched with George Brown College, OCAP, Sistering, ETFO, and others to the Ministry of Community and Social Services' office.

Board members Eva Kratchovil, Debbie Zweep, Clare Freeman and I followed up the march by meeting with the Minister of Community and Social Services (The Honourable John Milloy at the time) and, several weeks later, with the Minister for Women's Issues, the Honourable Laurel Broten. We shared our concerns about the CSUMB cuts and the impact on women experiencing violence.

### Ministry action

Several weeks later the Ministry of Community and Social Services delayed the initial cuts of 50% (from \$110M to \$55M) to CSUMB for a year by "re-instating" \$42M. But the process of

downloading to the municipalities is continuing. Bravo to those of you wrote letters to your MPP and to the Minister.

### Networking

When we met with Minister Broten, we asked about the possibility of OAITH meeting as a Network to assess system changes, exchange information and identify innovative ways of improving support for women with complex needs. We used the Ontario Shelter Research Project (2011) as a base, which documents the shelters' role in system navigation and advocacy. We applied for and received year end funding from Ontario Women's Directorate to gather March 21 & 22, 2013.

### Intersectionality

Although some material was sent out in advance, the Social Justice Action Anti-Racism Anti Oppression (SJAC AR/AO) Committee framed the Forum with a brief discussion of intersectionality of oppressions, reminding all of us that we are at different locations at different times. We talked about how to support and challenge each other around our internalized and externalized oppression.

### Rebick speaks

Judy Rebick spoke potently about Compassionate Activism with a raw personal and political honesty. The huge wave of feminism over the last 40 years has profoundly changed every-

thing, but now a new wave is building and she suggests that we can't quite see what's going to happen next.

Judy encouraged a transformational paradigm shift in perspective on notions of solidarity and how to focus on similarities rather than differences while also connecting to and protect-



*Judy Rebick, a leading Canadian feminist (left with Susan), brought wisdom and support to OAITH forum.*

ing the earth and each other. If we are using oppressive, violent dishonest ways of achieving something, no matter how valuable, harm is caused. She offered powerful feminist views, shared her shifting approach to activism, and provided her humour and tears along with her support for OAITH.

### Challenges

The afternoon was challenging as we wrestled through some key strengths and vulnerabilities of OAITH as an association. People identified needing new ways to engage diverse communities such as women of colour, trans and



*Members and Directors of OAITH gathered in Toronto to discuss and assess plans for the Association with funding from OWD Minister Laurel Broten (standing centre).*



queer women, disabled women, and others.

A wide range of ideas were brought forward such as possible structural change within OAITH, increasing membership response, impact of neo-liberal austerity measures, the de-politicization of the work and a number of others. (The full report will include all of them.)

### Strengths and barriers of our work

On the second morning we worked in small groups to identify strengths and barriers in the province in Child Welfare, Family Court, Accessibility Issues, Criminal Court, Service Co-ordination and other sectors. In the afternoon we worked through what we wanted to do from here, and who we wanted to share the results with.

### Words from the Minister

Minister for Women's Issues, Laurel Broten, joined us for closing thoughts and spoke passionately about her work with hundreds of women experiencing abuse as a young lawyer and how she is committed to working with OAITH in our struggles to increase freedom and support for women and their children experiencing violence.

## In solidarity, Eileen

In 1987, I first attended an OAITH AGM as a member and representative of my shelter. Later, I became a Regional Rep on the Board and still later, what was then known as the OAITH Vice-President of Lobby.

I loved both the concept of OAITH and the privilege of being a part of those earlier days. So when in 1994, I was offered the job of OAITH Lobby Coordinator, I was thrilled. In short order, as Mike Harris rampaged through Ontario, however, I became the only Coordinator, losing my co-workers to the Harris machine.

### Dream job

In most ways, it was my dream job. At times of course, it also became my nightmare. (Can't lie.)

Always, it was an honour to work on behalf of women and to be part of a political movement—the women's lib-

### Continuing OAITH work

OAITH continues to be involved with a wide range of projects, both internally and externally.

- OAITH is on the advisory committee of the Migrant Mother's Project, a coalition engaged in community based research about navigating immigration policy for migrant women experiencing violence.
- A coalition with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. We are reviewing the immigration policy and developing links with communities.
- The provincial Learning Network Advisory Committee for the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children collaboration with other significant stakeholders in the province. We meet via teleconference monthly and meet face to face twice a year. They provided a Human Trafficking Forum and we will be engaging with how shelters intersect with women who are being human trafficked.
- Board member of Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses; consists of Canada's 14

provincial/territorial, regional and aboriginal sheltering organizations, with a collective membership of over 350 emergency and second stage shelters for abused women and their children in Canada. Susan represents Ontario as a member of the Board of Directors and is taking leadership in the Legislation subcommittee.

- Family Court Support Workers Advisory Group about the MAG funded training. Quarterly meetings that involved connection and discussion.
- Common Front: gathering of labour and other allies who work toward the common political goal of challenging cuts to jobs and services
- SJAC AR/AO: working together to implement specific social justice actions such as the support letter for Idle No More and other actions.
- OAITH Strategic Planning Process: a funding proposal has been put in to Ontario Trillium Foundation for a provincial Strategic Visioning Planning Process for all shelters for early November, 2013. Thanks to the planning subcommittee for all the hard work.

—Susan H. Young, OAITH Director

eration movement—that has transformed, and continues to change, the world. How totally amazing is that?

The voices of women who experience violence have guided the work of radical feminist activists. I hope that I've tried to remain true to that voice despite all distractions, both shiny and mean.

### Thank you

In the 25 years that I've worked with and for OAITH, I've met a lot of wonderful activist women with whom I've learned, enjoyed support and shared our victories and losses. My thanks to the activists that I met from the many OAITH Boards and committees, the general membership, survivors themselves of course, external allies and even women within the 'halls of power'. It was a privilege to know you.

I'm content to move on to new adventures, and I take with me friendships, knowledge and the memories of great experiences during my time

at OAITH that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Keep fighting for women's freedom and remember the famous quote from Gandhi, very appropriate in these conservative times: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

—Eileen Morrow, speaking for myself



## From the Board Chair

Greetings. It's hard to believe that a whole year has gone by since our last newsletter.

Here at OAITH we are on the move, in transition, and continuing to fight the good fight on behalf of the women and children of this province, whose lives are impacted by violence.

### Welcomes

I would like to take a moment and welcome all the new Board members, some returning members after a period of absence, and some brand new members. While this is very exciting to have more women at the table to do the work, we can sometimes be a bit overwhelmed with the strong voices at the table now that we have 18 Board members.

It is personally rewarding for me to have this many women from around the province who want to make a positive contribution to the work of OAITH.

I hardly know where to begin to tell you all of the activities OAITH has accomplished over the last year.

### Continuing projects

We are beginning the final year of our 3 year grant from Ontario's Women's Directorate and are as always excited about what Margaret and the Member Education and Training Committee (MET) are working on. Thanks to those of you who completed the MET survey, as this assists us to develop materials that will support you in your work with women and children. I am sure the Co-Chairs of the MET, Marlene Ham and Sharon Floyd, will have much more to say about their committee work. Much thanks to the folks at OWD who have and continue to support the great work of OAITH.

### Social justice a critical mandate

We have 2 new faces at the Social Justice and Action Anti Racist Anti Oppression (SJAC\ARAO) Committee, Clare Freeman and Margaret Haynes, and they to have been busy meeting and planning their work for the coming year. I am sure their newsletter submissions will bring you up to date on their work including our annual meeting with the Ministers.

### Goodbye, Eileen

One of the most difficult things for me at this time is to say goodbye to Ms. Eileen Morrow. As you are aware at the AGM in Ottawa we were able to host a celebration of her work on behalf of OAITH and the women and children of Ontario.

Eileen has remained with OAITH for the past six months on a contract to provide support to the organization during this period of transition. Only because of our very limited resources will we now be saying a real 'goodbye' to Ms. Morrow—the Legend, the Leadership and the Legacy—and thank her for her time, efforts, contribution and passion she brought to the work of OAITH.

For me personally, this will be such a loss; I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to sit at a table where I can learn and watch from the best there is. Thank you, Eileen, for being my mentor, my teacher and my friend.

### Transition

I am very excited to participate in OAITH at this time of transition and hope that you have all had a chance to meet or chat with, or the very least receive an email, from Susan, our new Director. Susan has brought to OAITH a calm, cool and collected approach to her new position. She will continue to provide that approach as we move forward and embark on this new journey.

We are all very hopeful that an application we have made to Trillium will be received positively. If so, we hope to use that momentum to further explore this movement, what it means to be a feminist anti-violence worker in Ontario, and we want the future to take us.

### And more...

As I enter the second year of my first 2-year term, I hope that I have instilled in you, as the members, a sense of leadership, a steady course through this transition and hopefulness for the future, as I seek your continued support for my next term. Thanks.

Please feel free to contact me anytime at [housing@harmonyhousews.com](mailto:housing@harmonyhousews.com) or 613-233-3386.

—Lee-Anne Lee, Board Chair



Board Chair Lee-Anne Lee chairs the Annual General Meeting in October 2012.

### Success

—From page 3

Since then, I and the other Co-Chair, Eva, have been part of the SVIP presentations. First time, we attended the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses' 1<sup>st</sup> National Leadership Forum in Montreal. It was my very first presentation and I was so nervous that while I was talking, I didn't see anybody in the room. I spoke slow and clear, but it gave me a little boost that made me convince myself that I can speak in public. It was a good experience.

After that, we attended the AGM in Ottawa and did the presentation. That was another great experience. In February, we attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Domestic Violence Research conference in Toronto and did our presentation again. It turned out to be great. It was good to hear that researchers and frontline workers were very happy to see survivors involved in making changes because who knows better than us (survivors)? We are the experts because of our experience.

Slowly I am getting more confident which makes me proud of myself. I never thought I can speak to more than two people in a room let alone bunch of strangers and experts.

—Nisha, Co-Chair of OSAC