

Annual Report

2003



Safer for Women ... Safer for Everyone

METRAC



**Metropolitan Action Committee on
Violence Against Women and Children**

President's Report

Kimberly Morris

The conclusion of another year at METRAC is a time of reflection and a time to recognize those who have helped us to respond successfully to new challenges.

In a single year, METRAC has worked through several changes in its management structure. We said a reluctant goodbye to our Interim Executive Director Pamela Cross, who continues to work as METRAC's Legal Director. We welcomed Mary Pritchard as our Executive Director. Unfortunately, her time at METRAC was short-lived and sadly, we mourn Mary's passing in 2003. Wendy Komiotis joined METRAC as the Interim Executive Director, and has been providing stable leadership since August 2003.

This year, METRAC completed the first phase of its organizational capacity-building project through multi-year funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. To date, we have implemented a volunteer program, and our board and staff have participated in several equity trainings. We have also initiated a Strategic Planning Process. An external "environmental scan" and focus groups with stakeholders – funders, volunteers, staff, and community members – will help move METRAC in the most effective direction over the next three years. Trillium funding has also enabled the Board to work on diversifying its funding sources to ensure the financial viability of METRAC. We wish to thank Ontario Trillium Foundation for its generous support.

In 2003, we continued to streamline our structure so that as many dollars as possible would be directed to programs. Partnerships with other organizations extended to fundraising and boosted the financial contributions we received. This year, also METRAC increased the diversity of our Board of Directors. Welcome to new board members, whose enthusiasm and belief in the work has already made them invaluable. We bid goodbye to outgoing directors – Leea Litzgus, Alison Maloney, Avril Phillip, and Sona Ruparelia. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

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*Board President
Kimberly Morris*

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the City of Toronto for its continued funding – METRAC would not exist without its support. We also wish to thank the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Ontario Women's Directorate, the Ontario Women's Health Council, and the United Way of Greater Toronto for providing us with project funding in 2003. We express appreciation to Hydro One and the Canadian Autoworkers Union for their support, as well as to the Royal Bank of Canada for its ongoing support. In particular, we thank Charles S. Coffey, Executive Vice-President of Government and Community Affairs, for hosting an annual luncheon where METRAC showcases our work to friends and supporters. We thank all other donors, including individuals, foundations, corporations, and unions. Without your ongoing support, our work would not be possible.

METRAC would not be successful without the continued dedication of its staff and volunteers. With the deepest appreciation I acknowledge the work of volunteers and staff, and in particular, the leadership of Pam Cross. Her demonstrated commitment and contribution to METRAC are nothing short of exemplary. I would also like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "thank you" to my colleagues on the board.

Interim Executive Director's Report

Wendy Komiotis

After only five months at METRAC, I am honoured to work with the staff, board, and volunteers, whose dedication to building a safer society for women and children is clearly evident in this report. There is no doubt: 2003 has been a busy and challenging year for the organization. We experienced numerous changes at the level of programs and staffing, while maintaining and even expanding our services to the community.

A key factor in the successes achieved this year is the tireless, devoted work of METRAC staff. They expanded their workloads throughout a period of change as we set new supports in place. Together, we sustained this organization through numerous changes while still delivering responsive and effective services to the community. I applaud and thank you for your courage, skills, and hard work. I particularly wish to recognize the contributions of METRAC's previous Interim Executive Director, Pamela Cross. We express profound thanks for her work in guiding and supporting the agency through a tumultuous time of change. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Pam Thompson, our newly hired Safety Director.

METRAC said goodbye and thank you to leaving staff members Ruth Chun, Dreeni Geer, Deborah Singh, Megan Rogers, and Paula Wansbrough. Your work is deeply appreciated. In late 2003, we expressed sadness at the passing of Mary Pritchard, METRAC's former Executive Director. Mary was a cherished community member. We honour her courage and commitment to ending violence against women and children, and we will be inspired by memories of her life.

We would like to thank 2003 community partners who collaborated with us to address violence: YWCA Family Support Centre; St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club; St. Stephen's Community House; Asian Community AIDS Services; Planned Parenthood of Toronto; Leave Out Violence Everywhere; Massey Centre; Toronto Women Abuse Council; Youth Action Network; Elizabeth Fry Society; Heyy Line; Leaside Collegiate; Marc Garneau Collegiate; Loretta College; Central Commerce Collegiate; Jarvis Collegiate; Inglenook Alternative School; Greenwood Collegiate; Seneca College; York University Women's Centre; Oasis Alternative School; Loretto Abbey Collegiate; David and Marie Thompson Collegiate; Parkdale

Continued from page 2...

Collegiate; Scadding Court Collegiate; St. Joseph's College School; West Toronto Collegiate; East York Collegiate; University of Toronto; Samuel Hearne Middle School; Support Program for Expelled Students; Fernie House Detention Centre; Operation Springboard; INTERCEDE; 519 Church Street Community Centre; Ontario Young People's Alliance; Nellie's Women's Shelter; St. Stephen's Youth Program; Peel Committee on Sexual Assault and Peel Committee Against Women's Abuse; Zonta Club; Ontario Association for the Deaf; Canadian Tamil Women's Community Office; The Vietnamese Women's Association; Microskills; Bloor Transformation and Life Skills Centre; Working Women's Community Centre; and Prisoners with HIV/AIDS Support Action Network. To our donors and funders, thank you for supporting METRAC and for your affirmation of the value of our services. Our vital work would not survive without your resources.

METRAC's dedicated volunteers worked many hours and helped us maintain high-quality programs. Thank you for your tremendous work in supporting us. It has also been a privilege working with a Board of Directors so ready to commit their time and energy and so dedicated to the cause. METRAC's board volunteered an incredible number of hours this year to provide support and direction to the organization. Thanks to all of our Directors for your great support and guidance during a challenging year.

As the next year approaches, I look forward to supporting the board and staff in their search for a new Executive Director to continue improving the efficiency with which METRAC operates, to amplify the long-term strategic plan, and to solidify and increase financial support so that the organization can continue to act on its vision of building a society that is *Safer for Women and Children, Safer for Everyone*.



*Interim ED
Wendy Komiotis*

Community Safety Program Report

Pam Thompson

In 2003, METRAC's Safety Program focused on building its capacity to address safety issues for women and diverse communities across Toronto and beyond. We continued to broaden our understanding of safety and violence and the unique ways that marginalized communities are targeted – for instance, through discriminatory attitudes, actions, and policies. We revised our Safety Audit Resource Kit to better reflect this understanding.

We kicked off our 4th Annual Community Safety Night with a Public Launch – a new and successful aspect of this event. It brought together community agencies, neighbourhood groups, residents, local government, and media to speak about safety in Toronto. City Councillors who contributed to safety in their wards during the previous year were recognized with "Safety Star Awards". Following the Launch, we held a training session about using METRAC's Safety Audit Kit. On September 16, 2003, diverse community groups went out to the streets in their neighbourhoods across Toronto, identifying safety concerns and developing ideas for positive action.

METRAC also continued as a member of the City of Toronto's Taskforce on Community Safety. Through a motion put forward by METRAC, it was announced that four new positions on the Taskforce would be reserved for organizations that serve People of Colour – this was a very positive change for community safety in Toronto. Additionally, we continued meeting with city staff about creating a comprehensive and responsive system to gather information from Safety Audits as part of our work on the Safety Audit Working Group.



*Safety Director
Pam Thompson*

Building on METRAC's campus safety work, we conducted large scale Campus Safety Audits for the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University. These Campus Audits used several strategies to identify safety concerns, including campus walkabouts, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and online surveys. Other Safety Audits were conducted in a variety of community places, including parks, workplaces, and schools.

The THRIVE coalition, convened in 2002 by METRAC, continued to bring together community agencies to raise awareness about violence in the lives of Women of Colour. The Coalition developed a racial profiling pilot project to explore the gendered aspect of this form of violence. In addition, the Coalition supported community efforts to promote women's rights and safety in Iraq. Contact Pam Thompson at safety@metrac.org or 416-392-3137.

Community Justice Program Report

Pamela Cross

My position as METRAC's Legal Director became full-time in 2003, which allowed the Justice Program to expand in new directions while maintaining its key legal work. We continued our "Access to Justice for Women" project through funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario. By collaborating with a Community Advisory Committee, we created new workshop kits for women with disabilities and Deaf women experiencing violence; one on family law and one on records and confidentiality. We provided well received, fully booked legal training to women's services in Barrie, Thunder Bay, Guelph, and North Bay.

With City of Toronto funding, we continued developing legal information training materials and resources for service providers to women experiencing violence. Trainings were held in a series of eight two-hour workshops in the fall, which were also fully booked and well received. This affirms that frontline workers need access to legal information to support women. Participants came from women's services, children's services, court-based services, services for the Deaf, immigrant services, and services for women in the legal system.

The Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN – www.owjn.org), our website about women and the law, has had a challenging year. Since there was virtually no funding, we maintained and added new materials on OWJN only until September 2003 – an unfortunate fact, because we know how much the site is used by women who have no other access to appropriate legal information. Nonetheless, OWJN was still heavily used and women kept contacting us seeking legal assistance – proof that OWJN is an important resource.

Since the federal government established a Special Joint Committee on Child Custody, and Access in 1998, METRAC has focused on needs of women with abusive partners. We prepared submissions and worked with other feminist organizations. In December 2002, Bill C-22 was introduced. It had amendments to the custody and access aspects of the *Divorce Act*, but these did not address vulnerabilities of abused women and children. We developed proposals for alternative amendments. However, Bill C-22 ended in November 2003 when Parliament was prorogued and the government shifted leadership.

For the future, the Justice Program is determined to find funding for OWJN, expand outreach to diverse women, continue a leadership role in custody and access law reform, and work with community partners to addresses the legal needs of women. Contact Pamela Cross at pcross@web.ca or 416-392-3148.



*Legal Director
Pamela Cross*

Information Services Report

Wendy Komoitis & Andrea Gunraj

Information is key to making decisions about whether to continue in a relationship, personal safety, accessing community services, and potentially about saving one's life. In 2003, METRAC continued to act as a key source for accessible information on the prevention of violence. We distributed approximately 25,000 brochures, posters, fact sheets, booklets, purse and wallet cards, zines, and bookmarks on subjects like healthy relationships, sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, and children's safety. Information was made available to women experiencing violence, their service providers, and the public.



*Outreach
Manager
Andrea Gunraj*

Information Services focused on reducing language barriers for immigrant and refugee women by producing print materials in nine languages, in addition to English and French. Thanks to funding received from the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD), our *Sexual Assault Fact Sheet* was available in Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Italian, and Vietnamese.

This year we responded to numerous requests for information. We hosted information tables at community events such as the Women's Health Matters Forum, International Women's Day Fair, Scarborough Women's Festival, and Mental Health Week at the Canadian Mental Health Association. METRAC's resource library continued to be open five days a week, where community members could make appointments or drop-in on Tuesdays. We continued to publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter to promote METRAC's programs and highlight issues of women's safety and violence against women, youth, and children.

METRAC also posted public education materials on our website (www.metrac.org)

in HTML and PDF to enhance accessibility and effective material distribution. We had approximately 70,000 visitors to our site in 2003. Through OWD funding, our website carried over 17 publications in downloadable format and was linked to other violence prevention websites. Both METRAC's site and resource centre provided anti-violence information to researchers, service providers, and the public.

Last year, METRAC continued its involvement in inter-agency networks such as the City of Toronto's Woman Abuse Working Group, the Cross Sectoral Committee on Violence Against Women, and the Ontario Women's Directorate Planning Group. These committees' members are from women's services and the legal, housing, health, education, income security, labour, and daycare sectors. They work with diverse women in Toronto and the province – for instance, Aboriginal women, Women of Colour, Newcomer women, low-income women, Francophone women, women with disabilities, and rural women. Through our membership on these committees, METRAC has developed a process of coordinated planning, communication, and advocacy to address service issues and public policy reform.

METRAC's Information Services Program is moving in new directions. Thanks to members, donors, funders, partners, and volunteers for your ongoing support and interest in our programs and publications – let us know how we are doing! Contact Andrea Gunraj at outreach@metrac.org or 416-392-4760.

Young Women's Anti-Violence Speakers Bureau Report

Farrah Bychalo-Khan

This was an exciting year for METRAC's Young Women's Anti Violence Speakers Bureau. Through interactive peer-led workshops and presentations, we reached approximately 1700 youth with our anti-violence message! Our dynamic Peer Facilitators validated youth's experiences, raised awareness, fostered discussion, introduced community resources, and motivated youth to work for change. We delivered anti-violence workshops at 12 community agencies, 20 schools, and 2 detention centres.

Continued from page 5...

The Young Women's Speakers Bureau developed in crucial ways in 2003 – our infrastructure was strengthened due to the work of Program Coordinators Deborah Singh and Andrea Gunraj. They created our first Orientation Training Course for Peer Facilitators. The Bureau was also strengthened through the recruiting and training of nine new Facilitators between the 16 to 20 years of age range. This reflects our goal of giving opportunities to and building the skills of younger youth in our peer-to-peer program. We also recruited Facilitators who mirror the ethno-racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds of diverse communities in the city.

Additionally, the Speakers Bureau received important funding from United Way to start a new project, *At Risk, At Opportunity: Youth Violence Prevention Project*. It focused on the needs of marginalized youth living in “at-risk” neighbourhoods in Toronto. By the end of 2003, the project enabled the Bureau to receive peer-based training on the following topics: bullying, popular theatre, youth and the legal system, youth poverty, barriers for immigrant youth, and gang violence. Facilitators then actualized their new skills and knowledge through creating two new three-part workshop series, one specifically designed for young women and the other specifically for young men on issues of masculinity and violence.



The Speakers Bureau provided “train-the-trainer” workshops for other agencies. They focused on topics such as how to address violence and understanding how women of different social identities experience violence differently. “Training-the-trainer” is our attempt to share skills and knowledge with agencies serving marginalized people, giving them tools to continue work within their communities.

I welcome Peer Facilitators who joined us this year and bid a sad farewell to those who moved to other things. I also say “thank you” to Program Coordinator Deborah Singh, who also moved on at the end December 2003 – your presence in the Bureau was valuable and is very appreciated. Finally, to our team of youth Peer Facilitators, thank you for all your steadfast work and for your innovation, determination, and energy. Contact Farrah Bykalo-Khan at speakersbureau@metrac.org or 416-397-0258.

Volunteer Program Report

METRAC launched its Volunteer Program in May 2003 as a result of Ontario Trillium Foundation funding. We have been thrilled that so many people from diverse communities in Toronto have joined our volunteer team. They have helped us by participating in METRAC’s administration, Board of Directors, and programs. We extend a heartfelt thanks to all of our 2003 volunteers: Aisha, Anna, Tahmena Bokhari, Truc Chau, Esmeralda de Chavez, Gebrela Ganao, Kenesha Garils, Nastaran Ghazanfari, Elizabeth John, Aishah Khalid, Jaqueline Kraizer, Myrna Marquez, Nahid Najnin, Millicent Owala, Beth Palmer, Rebecca Pardo, Kathy Parsons, Dora Perez, Lisa Price, Tania Principe, Mabel Rojas, Elizabeth Scott, Gemma Smyth, Marie Soumah, Heather Thomas, Hongli Wang, and Kathy Wang.

Resource Development Report

In the first year of a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we completed several resource development activities that will strengthen METRAC's financial capacity. We reviewed the resource development history of METRAC. Along with the Fundraising Committee, we drafted a Resource Development Plan that outlines activities for us reach our 2-year fundraising goal: a direct mail campaign,

Continued from page 6 ...

a corporate and foundation campaign, and a special events program. METRAC's board also passed a resolution to adopt the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's Code of Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability and a policy on Donors' Bill of Rights.

A noteworthy fundraising initiative was our Annual Royal Bank (RBC) Luncheon on December 8th, 2003, with Judy Rebeck as guest speaker and METRAC President Kimberly Morris and Executive Vice President of RBC Financial Group Charles Coffey as hosts. It was coordinated by board member Kerry Hughes and Kathryn Anderson and Rosie Savoury of RBC. 150 guests attended, and through their generosity we raised \$11,000 to support METRAC. We thank those who contributed to making the luncheon a success.

METRAC's 2003 Statement of Operations

Year ended December 31st

YEAR	2003 (in dollars)	2002 (in dollars)
PROGRAM REVENUES		
Grants		
◇ City of Toronto – Community Services	219,770	219,770
◇ Canadian Women's Foundation	2,400	11,497
◇ Human Resources Development Services		4,446
◇ Law Foundation of Ontario	61,492	17,806
◇ Ontario's Women Directorate	60,273	27,181
◇ Ontario Trillium Foundation	66,836	5,577
◇ United Way	2,280	
◇ Women's Health Council	26,184	23,816
◇ Other	15,000	24,610
Donations	49,418	39,837
Conference/ fee-for-service	53,349	
Publications and library	10,087	5,094
Fundraising	912	2,858
Interest	822	1,440
Miscellaneous	9,960	7,515
TOTALS	578,783	391,447

PROGRAM EXPENSES		
Administration (Schedule)	142,914	127,696
Fundraising	1,171	7,315
Information Services	159,462	152,439
Justice for Women and Children	120,821	87,256
Trillium	66,836	5,577
Women's Safety	98,473	78,810
TOTALS	589,677	459,093
Excess of revenues over operating expenses	(10,894)	(67,646)

METRAC's Friends, Supporters, & Donors

METRAC's sincere thanks goes to (in alphabetical order): AOL Canada; Betsy Atkinson Murray; Anne Butler Slaght Foundation; Bishop Strachan School; Blake Cassels & Graydon; Body Shop; Canada Catering Ltd.; Canadian Auto Workers Union; Canadian National Railway Canada; Canadian Women's Foundation; Chum Charitable Foundation; Citibank Canada; City of Toronto, Community and Neighbourhood Services; Elle Canada; Ericsson; Famous Players; Flare Magazine; Helen Graham; Graeme Harris; Robert Hough; Hydro One Inc.; Jo-Elle Spa; Law Foundation of Ontario; Linda Lundstrom; Loblaws Company East; Mac's Convenience; Ontario Trillium Foundation; Ontario Women's Directorate; Paramount Canada's Wonderland; Pizza Pizza; Royal Bank of Canada; Silver Tree Foundation; Stockwood Spies; TD Canada Trust; United Way of Greater Toronto; Mark Wellings; Yoga Sanctuary. Special thanks to donors who wish to remain anonymous and to all individuals who donated generously.

2003 METRAC Staff

Cristina Alcivar

Volunteer & Resource
Development Coordinator

Ruth Chun*

Legal Assistant

Pamela Cross

Interim Executive Director
& Legal Director

Dreeni Geer*

Safety Director

Keira Grant

Office Coordinator

Andrea Gunraj

YWAVSB Coordinator

Wendy Komiotis

Interim Executive Director
& Info Services Director

Megan Rogers*

Legal Assistant

Deborah Singh*

YWAVSB Coordinator

Pam Thompson

Safety Director

Paula Wansbrough*

METRAC & OWJN Web
Mistress

Afshan Ali*

Ash

Emma Beltran

Tamika Boyce

Farrah Byckalo-Khan

Ruth Chun*

Saroja Coelho

Lindsay Kretschmer*

Patricia Lee*

Ruthann Lee*

David Lewis

Natasha Lindsay

Alana Lowe

Ariella Meinhard

Beth O'Connor

Rowena Rivera*

MJ Rwigema

Jehangir Saleh

Adam Welch*

Melinda Zakye

YWAVSB Peer

Facilitators

**No longer on staff at
METRAC at the end of
2003*

2003 METRAC Board

Stephanie Dutrizac

Karima Esmail

Kerry Hughes

Pat Marshall

Kimberly Morris

President

Peggy Nash

Deborah Niles

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Kathy Parsons

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Shelanda Wilson

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Colleen Whelan, Computer

System Administrator

Irmina J. Ayuyao, Graphic

Designer

The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children works towards the goal of eliminating all forms of violence against women and children and is committed to the right of women and children to live free from violence. Our work is informed by anti-oppression principles that recognize that diverse communities experience violence in different ways and forms and that anti-violence measures must address the unique realities of diverse communities.



Metropolitan Action Committee on
Violence Against Women and Children

158 Spadina Rd., TO, M5R 2T8

416-392-3135 ■ 416-392-3136

info@metrac.org ■ www.metrac.org