



Images: Fabricating Change: Fabric of Violence gallery event (top); ReAct session, “Bouncing Back” safety event and “Don’t Need Saving” launch (left to right)

Annual Report 2011



158 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5R 2T8
Phone 416-392-3135 | 416-392-3021 (TTY)
Toll-free phone 1-877-558-5570
Fax 416-392-3136 | Email info@metrac.org
Web www.metrac.org | www.owjn.org
facebook.com/metracorg
twitter.com/metracorg
metrac.wordpress.com
youtube.com/user/metracorg

METRAC is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that prevents violence against diverse women and youth. Since 1984, this mandate has been undertaken through public education, training, safety initiatives, partnerships, research and policy in three program areas: justice, outreach and education and safety.

Image: art created during Fabric of Violence workshop



METRAC's Team

Staff members

- Keli Bellaire, Youth Engagement Coordinator
- Darcel Bullen, Justice Projects Coordinator
- Karen Darricades, Youth Alliance Project/Schooled Co-Coordinator
- Michelle Davis, Safety Director
- Zahra Dhanani, Legal Director*
- Andrea Gunraj, Communications Specialist
- Joanna Hayes, Legal Information Coordinator
- Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director
- Jessica Mustachi, Safety Coordinator
- Estella Muyinda, Interim Legal Director*
- Jannette Saberon, Administrative Assistant
- Talayeh Shomali, Sustainable Development Coordinator
- Shequita Thompson, Schooled Co-Coordinator
- Jae Thuo, Legal Outreach Coordinator*
- Tamar Witelson, Legal Director

Board of Directors

- Melanie J. Adams, Past Secretary
- Carole Dahan, Past Treasurer
- Shabnum Durrani
- Jennifer Fehr
- Tracy Ford, Secretary

- Sabine Hikel, Past Secretary*
- Min Kaur
- Sudabeh Mashkuri (on leave)
- Martha Ocampo, Treasurer
- Keisha Williams*
- Andrea Wobick, Past Co-President*
- Andrea Sanche
- Kripa Sekhar, Co-President
- Nadine Sookermany, Past Co-President

ReAct Youth Peer Facilitators

- Asam Ahmad
- Najla Edwards
- Angela Musceo
- Helen Yohannes
- Harold Phillips*

Placement students

- Merona Abbas*
- Ann De Shalit*
- Shaista Durani*
- Navneet Marawaha*
- Vino Shanmuganathan*

“” indicates departure from agency or office in 2011*

Mission, vision, values & directions

Based on strategic directions, METRAC worked hard to develop a refreshed mission and vision statement and articulate our values as an organization. Into the future, these statements will help us articulate our work and ultimate goals in a way that people can truly

understand and connect with. We also hope that it will lead to strengthening our organization's branding and public face to inspire community members join in on building a violence-free future for women, youth and everyone.

Mission

To advance justice, safety and equity for all women and youth through outreach and education, safety initiatives, community based research and social policy.

A world where inequity and oppression are actively challenged and dismantled in interpersonal relationships, communities and systems in our society so that women and youth can live free of violence and the threat of violence.

Vision

Values

Equity, Respect, Safety, Excellence, Innovation, Feminisms and Collaboration

Embed Anti-racism/anti-oppression into METRAC's systems and structures; strengthen the organization; expand the use of technology for greater reach and efficiency; rebrand and restructure the organization

Strategic directions

Co-Presidents & Executive Director Report

Kripa Sekhar, Co-President, and Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director



Sculpture at "Bouncing Back" safety event

We are pleased to present METRAC's 2011 Annual Report. The year marked a solid start in the implementation of our three-year strategic plan, developed with community members, board, volunteers and staff. It has been a truly dynamic year as we worked toward our vision of a society in which women and youth can live free from violence and the threat of violence.

*It has been a dynamic year
as we worked toward our
vision of a society in which
women and youth can live
free from violence
and the threat of violence*

Hard work of staff, board, volunteers and students enabled us to do things differently and better. The result has been a stronger organization and deeper impact for education, prevention and safety promotion. From small, important steps such as introducing a new data collection system to strengthen program evaluation and reporting, to larger steps, such as reorganizing Outreach and Safety Programs to achieve efficiencies while improving communication activities and enhancing youth programming, we have made significant strides.

In 2011, our programs continued to evolve. ReAct celebrated its tenth anniversary and has been recognized

by Status of Women Canada as a "blueprint" for youth peer-based violence prevention and empowerment programming. The Safety Program garnered the enthusiasm of communities and City officials and partner organizations impressed with the skills and capacities gained from our safety trainings and the resulting improvements generated from METRAC's audits of neighbourhoods and workplaces. Through the THRIVE Coalition and the Fabricating Change Project, we utilized expressive art activities to inspire hope, creativity, confidence and connection between survivors of violence, including older and younger women and trans people. Our Community Justice Program continued to provide mentorship opportunities for numerous law students. We distributed legal information in multiple formats and languages, including a new video resource to improve service access to justice for Aboriginal women. We held several legal information workshops with high satisfaction rates reported by attendees.

This year, Board Committees and Staff Working groups have been quite active. The Planning and Evaluation Committee worked collaboratively with staff to create a set of values to guide our work: equity, respect, safety, excellence, innovation, feminisms and collaboration. We'll develop accompanying value statements in the coming year. Staff and board have put tremendous effort into developing a comprehensive set of human resources (HR) policies to establish clear standards for fair, consistent HR management. The Finance Committee guided development of the annual operational budget and financial policies and procedures. This work is still in progress and will help to promote best practices in financial management. Also, we conducted a review and revision of our accounting systems to foster transparency and accountability. The Health and Wellness Committee is addressing legal requirements for ensuring workplace safety and conducted a survey with staff on stress and recognition.

We're committed to fostering learning opportunities for our team. For instance, we provided staff training initiatives focused on healthy team building, conflict management and prevention of discrimination, harassment and violence in the workplace. Our board

also participated in training on governors' roles and responsibilities. And we provided student volunteers with training on trauma and its impact on women affected by violence.

In this time of economic restraint, we've worked diligently to be fiscally responsible. Despite a significant decrease in social enterprise revenue, we've enhanced our income streams through multiple-source funding and donations from all levels of government, corporations, foundations, donors and fundraising initiatives. We secured a \$200,000 grant for two years from Status of Women Canada to help us deliver and evaluate SchoolED, a youth-driven peer mentorship and violence prevention program in schools. We also received a grant from the Ontario Government in the amount of \$80,000 annually for three years to coordinate the Family Law Education for Women campaign, an Ontario-wide project to increase women's access to family law information. We switched banks to save on fees and we ended the year with a balanced budget.

*In this time of economic restraint,
we've worked diligently
to be fiscally responsible*

With respect to new staffing, an expanded Community Justice Program team has facilitated access to accurate legal information reflecting changes to laws that impact women and youth. We welcomed Legal Director, Tamar Witelson, Legal Information Coordinator, Joanna Hayes, Justice Projects Coordinator, Darcel Bullen. We were pleased to add a new position, Coordinator of Sustainable Development, Talayeh Shomali. It will contribute to the viability of our mission by increasing fund growth and developing the agency's resources. We also welcomed Shequita Thompson as SchoolEd Project Co-Coordinator.

On the public policy front, we've helped to advance women's safety by participating in provincial government consultations to develop their Sexual Assault Action Plan. We welcomed the launch of this long-awaited plan in February. We also applauded the important step taken by the Ontario government toward defining the non-profit sector as an essential element of civil society and democracy and appointing a Minister responsible for the sector.

With support of several staff, we increased public visibility through social media, which helps us share our resources. As a result, METRAC joined an online community of agencies who address violence towards women and youth. Clearly, these kinds of partnerships are fundamental to building effective programs. We're pleased with our many successful partnerships with diverse communities and organizations – thank you to all our partners.

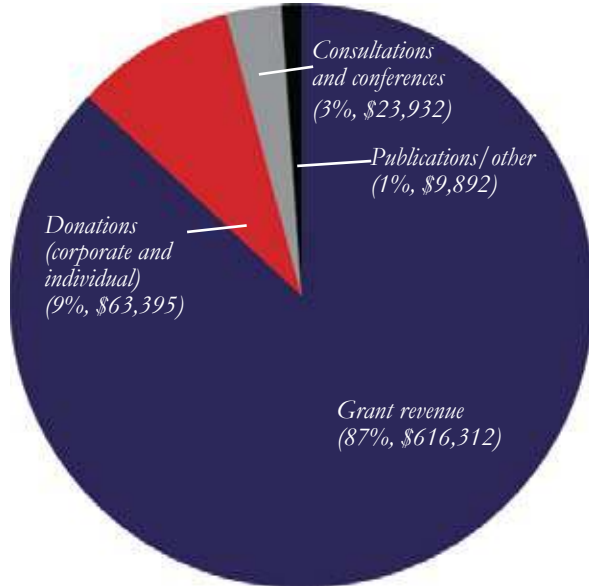
METRAC said goodbye and thank you to a number of staff, peer facilitators, students and volunteers members. We'll continue to build on the good work they've done. We thank all of our current staff for their passion, courage and wisdom and students, peer facilitators and volunteers who share time, talents and perspectives.

Our volunteer Board of Directors, whose considerable time and decision-making guide us, are core to our organization. We extend thanks to Andrea Wobick (Past Co-President), Nadine Sookermany (Past Co-President), Carole Dahan (Past Treasurer), Melanie Adams (Past Secretary), Sabine Hikel (Past Secretary) for their leadership this year and acknowledge all other board members: Kripa Sekhar (Co-President), Martha Ocampo (Treasurer), Tracy Ford (Secretary), Jennifer Fehr, Shabnum Durrani and Andrea Sanche. Our deep appreciations also go to board members who have departed this year: Andrea Wobick, Min Kaur, and Sabine Hikel. Your contributions will have lasting impact and will not be forgotten.

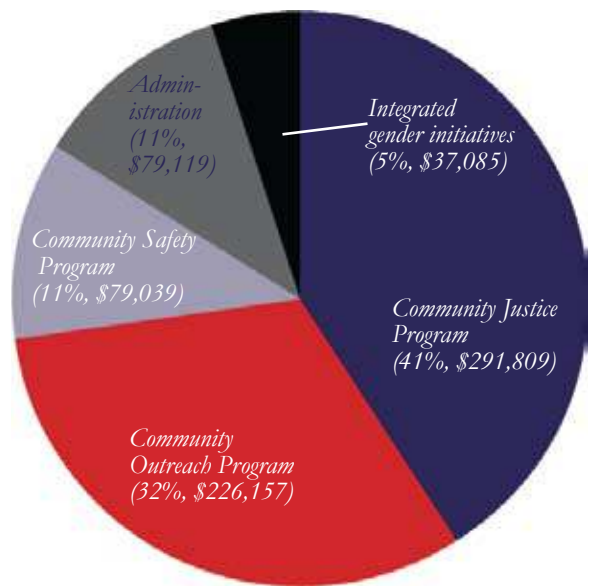
Finally, we would like to express heartfelt appreciation to our core funders, the City of Toronto and the Law Foundation of Ontario. We would like to thank our project donors and funders: TELUS, Laidlaw Foundation, the Government of Ontario, Department of Justice Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Status of Women Canada and Toronto Arts Council. We thank all METRAC donors, members and all who affirm our mission for advancing safety, equity and justice for women and youth. We are truly grateful for your partnership and investment in our agency and mission. We wouldn't be here without your support.

2011 Financial Overview

Program revenues (\$713,531 total)



Program expenses (\$713,209 total)



*Excess of program revenues over program expenses: \$322.00 (based on 2011 audited financial statement)

Community Justice Program Report



Family Law Education for Women project material

It has been a time of re-invigoration for the Community Justice Program (CJP). Our last report described findings of a formal evaluation by PSTG Consulting and focus areas for strengthening the program. While we moved forward on some of those goals, we also said goodbye to former staff and welcomed a new team that has jelled perfectly and worked with commitment and enthusiasm since September 2011.

The CJP now consists of three full-time staff, supported by METRAC's Communications Specialist

part-time. Some of the progress this year was seen in organizing and managing information about our stakeholder network. We created a database of all legal trainings between 2003 and 2010 with information about partners we worked with and their focus areas, legal information interests and contact information. We have also mapped where partners are located to identify, at a glance, the regions we have reached and where more contacts have to be developed.

We have improved communication with partners and stakeholders through social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as well as through more traditional means of communication such as e-blasts. We continued to distribute written legal information in many languages, ultimately delivering 3,813 of these resources to the community. We have also taken steps to further develop our performance management system. After every information and training session, we ask participants for feedback and suggestions and we collect data about who is accessing our materials. This information is a guide to make our work more relevant, effective and responsive to target communities. Our new Justice Program Coordinator took the lead on this communication and data collection.

The September launch of our first public legal education videos, *Don't Need Saving: Aboriginal Women and Access to Justice* and *A Message to You from the Hearts of Aboriginal Women*, were positively received. Their development was led by Audrey Huntley of Wolf Dog Productions. The launch at Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto drew over 40 policy makers, service providers and community members. The videos now have over 7,000 views on METRAC's YouTube channel.

All 34 service providers who completed our post-training survey identified that our trainings are "useful for their organization"

Spearheaded by our new Legal Information Coordinator, a review of CJP written materials was initiated. Outdated materials were removed from circulation and topics for new materials were identified. As part of this inventory, our Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN) website, www.owjn.org, was revitalized. We made changes to tidy up the site and improve accessibility. Old material was updated and new material has been added. Plans for a far-reaching overhaul of the site as the focal point of METRAC's legal information and education work were drawn up and will take prominence in the coming year.

Both the Legal Information Coordinator and Legal Director worked with volunteer law school students on a project with Pro Bono Students Canada. Twelve

students across Ontario contributed to posts on OWJN or preparation of legal information presentations for three Toronto shelters for women survivors of violence. Preparation for in-shelter presentations included orientation to principles of substantive equality and anti-oppression, discussions about shelter settings and a seminar on sensitivity to trauma and possible triggering. Through this work and outreach efforts at legal information sessions, we have built a healthy roster of volunteers to contribute to OWJN on a forward basis.

After an intense orientation, the new CJP team picked up the ball and completed three legal information training sessions for some 50 service providers on workplace violence, harassment and safety and access to justice. For these day-long sessions, we collaborated with colleagues from METRAC's Community Safety Program, four community-based organizations, five legal clinics across the Greater Toronto Area and a member of the private bar, which has fostered good working relationships to enhance our work. All 34 service providers who completed our post-training survey identified that our trainings are "useful for [their] organization". On a scale of one to five, one being "needs improvement" and five being "excellent", 92% of participants rated our trainings at four or higher.

Based on groundwork laid in 2011, a partnership with METRAC's ReAct Program will be developed to do legal education in public middle schools on gender roles and stereotypes and rights and responsibilities related to touching and personal images in social



"This is an overwhelmingly great video! Thank you for posting for the world to see!" (YouTube user comment about Don't Need Saving video)

Image: "Woman Warrior" image used in video by artist Angela Sterritt

media. A funding application is in the works.

One significant initiative that took off in 2011 is the multilingual Family Law Education for Women (FLEW) campaign, which we began managing this year and was funded by the Government of Ontario. Written FLEW materials were reviewed and those requiring revision were identified. Plans were put in place to update materials online, re-write a new looseleaf resource for domestic workers, produce a legal primer resource in American Sign Language and deliver legal education webinars. The webinar model was implemented in January of 2012 with great success and will serve as a model for regionally-adapted webinars in the future. On average, we distributed 1,063 FLEW materials per month in hard and electronic formats.

*On average, we distributed 1,063
Family Law Education for
Women materials per month*

We fostered our ongoing relationship with Canadian Crossroads International and Women in Law and Development in Africa by hosting visitors from Ghana,

who presented their legal literacy model to increase access to justice for women in remote areas. Following the visit, a member of our team travelled to Ghana for on-the-ground learning and brought back information to adapt to our efforts in providing legal information in rural and remote parts of Ontario.

With respect to policy work, we submitted a letter to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty about the importance of maintaining Canada's Long Gun Registry and its records, as there is a strong correlation between gun ownership and gun-related domestic violence, especially in rural areas. We will continue to address how policy changes in all areas of law can impact women and youth experiencing violence.

On behalf of CJP staff, I would like to thank the Law Foundation of Ontario, City of Toronto and Government of Ontario for funding that has made our work possible this year. We would also like to gratefully recognize the support of our Board of Directors, community agencies and lawyers who have collaborated with us, as well as volunteers who have generously contributed to our work.



Images: Community Justice Program training for service providers

“I liked all of the speakers and felt all of the information was very useful.” (Legal information training participant)

Community Safety Program Report

Michelle Davis, Safety Director



Photograph taken during a Community Safety Audit

METRAC's Safety Program supports residents across Toronto to lead audits of their neighbourhoods. Through a Community Safety Audit training, they learn to examine both physical and social safety within their communities and develop plans to make their neighbourhoods safer for all residents. We analyze their audit findings and prepare Neighbourhood Safety Report Cards that include recommendations on how to improve safety and information for whom residents can contact to help with changes like replacing lights and removing garbage and graffiti.

We use a community development model that acknowledges residents as experts on their personal safety and that of their neighbourhoods. Residents are encouraged to work with local decision-makers such as City Councillors and staff, local police and Business Improvement Associations, school board trustees, other community leaders and community groups to implement recommended changes.

In 2011, we met our goal of improving community safety by working with residents in a number of Toronto neighbourhoods: Crescent Town, Malvern, Mornelle Court and Scarborough Village in the east end; San Romanoway, Pelham Park, Lawrence Heights and Black Creek in the west end; and downtown in Davenport-Perth, Regent Park, St. Jamestown and Cabbagetown. We trained residents, including youth, on our Safety Audit process. Groups completed audits and received report cards that outlined findings and recommendations. We will follow up with them

in 2012 to find out successes and challenges they had implementing recommendations to make their neighbourhoods safer. Overall, more than 3,200 community members used our audit this year – we led 10 trainings and supported six audits.

*Overall, more than
3,200 community members
used our audit this year*

For our short-term objective of working effectively with our many partners, we supported City of Toronto departments and programs to assist residents in under-served communities. For example, as a result of an audit led by youth in the Malvern community, staff from the City and Toronto Community Housing partnered with Toronto Hydro and Toronto Police Service. Toronto Hydro donated energy efficient light bulbs and, along with police and youth, installed the lights and encouraged residents living in a townhouse complex to leave on their exterior lights overnight to “Light Up the Night” and discourage and prevent unsafe activities and crime.

We endeavoured to use technology more effectively, exploring Flickr to post pictures from audits and Google Maps to post report cards. We also worked toward building audit services for workplaces and campuses with plans to design new brochures and a mini-website. In 2012, we hope to find a design team to create these materials and better promote our audit services and the safety-enhancements they lead to.

The Safety Program continued our partnership with Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada. In 2009 we developed Safety Audit tools for girls between ages five and 17. Tools reflected the realities of girls in urban, suburban, rural and remote communities across Canada. This year, 2,875 girls along with adult allies led 253 Safety Audits across the country. Feedback from the audits were very positive. For example, one Girl Guide unit leader wrote:

“It was dark at 6:00 pm when the girls did it but they really

enjoyed feeling all official with their flashlights and clipboards. This is important information for girls to learn. It is not about scaring them but empowering them to make smart choices with regards to their personal safety. Moreover, that if there is something wrong that they can do something about it such as informing the owner of the building or a public official.”

Across Toronto, 126 youth between 11 and 24 years old were trained as safety leaders. In addition to improving our youth Safety Audit workshops and booklet, we worked on three larger youth safety initiatives. The first was a continuation of the Girls Safety Group at Sir Sandford Fleming Secondary School in Toronto. In this weekly after-school group, young women were engaged to address issues from dating violence to community safety issues. Young women audited their neighbourhood and identified a number of pressing safety issues – a copy of their audit report was sent to their local city councillor, Member of Provincial Parliament and school administrators. We also continued our partnership with the Young Achievers at Elia Middle School and provided a seven-week youth safety project for their after-school program. This was our second time working with 10 to 12 year-olds and it was a great learning experience. In the fall, we also collaborated with the University of Toronto

at Scarborough and Residents Rising to provide a unique six-week youth safety project in the Kingston-Galloway-Orton Park neighbourhood. University students and community members worked together to audit the area and delivered a comprehensive report of safety concerns to a representative from their local Member of Parliament’s office to celebrate the project’s success.

Staff presented on domestic violence, community safety and workplace violence. In May, we attended a community event where women unveiled a bench in remembrance of a neighbour and friend who was killed by her spouse. We then led a workshop on domestic violence and created a space for women to mourn and remember their friend.

From our audits of the Toronto Transit Commission and High Park in Toronto in 1989, METRAC has always centred our work on the needs of those most vulnerable to violence in public spaces. Using an anti-oppression framework, we challenge all forms of violence at the personal, community and systemic levels. We continue to work hard each day to advance justice, equity and safety for women and youth and create safer spaces for everyone.



Images: Safety Audit by Young Achievers at Elia Middle School

“I love this program and there is no better way you could have done it!” (Young Achiever youth participant involved in METRAC’s safety project)



ReAct's services
**were delivered to over
 2,093 youth, educators
 and service providers in
 Toronto and beyond in
 2011.**

Image: ReAct session in Toronto school

ReAct (Respect in Action) Program Report

Asam Ahmad, Interim Youth Program Co-Coordinator



"Many paths to healing" poster

This was a very full year for the Respect in Action (ReAct) program at METRAC. We facilitated workshops, trainings and assemblies with 2,093 youth and people who work with them. We also participated in a number of conferences and promoted the ReAct program all over the Greater Toronto Area (and beyond)! In addition to our local work, we travelled to Winnipeg to lead a week-long series of workshops and did work with youth in some Thunder Bay and Sudbury high schools.

In May, the ReAct team attended "Daring To Be Powerful" trainings in New York City conducted by the Audre Lorde Project (www.alp.org) for People of

Colour/racialized organizers. These trainings gave us an opportunity to build both individual and collective power to better challenge multiple oppressions faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (LGBTSTGNC) People of Color communities. It also gave our Program Coordinator at the time, Keli Bellaire, an opportunity to connect with youth groups in Brooklyn. As ReAct's first learning opportunity outside of Canada, it was a great success and a wonderful experience for all who attended.

In August, myself and other youth program members worked with the Safety Program team to lead Youth Safety Night. Titled "Bouncing Back: Celebrating Youth Resilience," the event was a chance to celebrate the brilliance and the resilience of the many youth we work with. With close to 100 participants, the event was a huge success and included inspiring spoken word, dance and performance art as well as delicious food. A spoken word sound piece was facilitated by Toronto-based band LAL and a mixed-media sculpture was curated by Karen Darricades, Schooled Project Co-Coordinator. A beautiful stop-animation short entitled "Battling Shadows" was created to promote Youth Safety Night (video credit: Hisayo Horie). It can be found on METRAC's YouTube Channel.

In October, the ReAct team participated in training

about youth and the law facilitated by Justice for Children and Youth (www.jfcy.org). We deepened our knowledge of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, youth rights and services youth can access if suspended or expelled from school or charged.

This year also saw the successful completion of our project on youth self-care after violence, funded by Department of Justice Canada for National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. We created and delivered a zine on self-care, “Youth Surviving and Thriving: Many Paths to Healing”, a poster in French and English

and a series of workshops for youth and their service providers. Both the zine and poster can be found on METRAC’s website. As people who work with youth, we are well aware of the impacts of vicarious trauma and the difficulties of staying engaged without getting burned out. The project allowed us to improve our own self-care practices at the same time it gave youth tools they need to thrive when faced with violence.

Overall, the ReAct Program flourished and expanded this year, and we will continue to build on our successes into 2012.

SchooLED Project Report

Karen Darricades and Shequita Thompson, SchooLED Project Co-Coordinator

Funded by Status of Women Canada, SchooLED is a youth-led, anti-violence mentorship and leadership project of the ReAct Youth Program. Through the project, ReAct Youth Peer Facilitators are engaging high school students in the Greater Toronto Area to learn about and take action on violence against women and youth.

ReAct Youth Peer Facilitators are working with 15 students – least 10 of whom identify as young women – in up to six high schools between 2011 and 2013. Through weekly after-school sessions, ReAct Facilitators:

- lead youth-friendly workshops about youth and gender-based, violence, anti-oppression, leadership, advocating for change and influencing decision-making.
- provide mentorship support to student participants.
- help student participants lead participatory research activities like surveys and focus groups with other students at their schools. This research will help identify the most pressing violence and safety issues for young people in their schools and neighbourhoods. Based on findings, participants will organize a school activity to address violence and safety such as a workshop, assembly, forum, performance or display.
- discuss what student participants, other students, the school and broader community members believe must be done to address and prevent

violence against women and youth.

Starting in July 2011, we solidified a partnership with the Toronto District School Board, engaged a community-based research group to evaluate the project, and partnered with a clinical social worker to provide support to ReAct facilitators. The team has embraced the unique opportunity presented by clinical support because working within a peer-based model can be difficult, triggering and emotionally-burdening for facilitators given they experience many of the same barriers as participants. But they are also in a position of power that requires them to prioritize needs and feelings of participants. Allowing peer facilitators to have space to find support is essential to creating a healthy model where professional boundaries are maintained for the benefit of all involved.

Through the SchooLED Project, we started delivering after-school programming in September 2011 in Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute in a Scarborough neighbourhood and John Polanyi Collegiate Institute in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood. Thus far, we have had consistent membership of 10 to 12 young women who attend on a weekly basis. The curriculum is being adapted to suit the needs of each group, but our first semester focussed on discussing representations of sexual and gender-based violence in media and popular games. We surfaced the issues and explored image/popular theatre methods to discuss what young people feel about and how they play out gender-based violence in their schools and communities.

THRIVE Coalition Report

Jessica Mustachi, Safety Coordinator



Art created during Fabric of Violence workshop

In 2011, THRIVE built on the success of our 2010 Women's Voices Rising Conference and our Fabric of Violence: Fabricating Change project, focusing on hosting community discussions, information-sharing and art outreach. This year also marked the move for THRIVE to become more engaged in social media. We began using social media such as Facebook to engage members and share information about various violence against women initiatives happening both locally and globally.

In June, THRIVE hosted an informative discussion about immigration enforcement in women's shelters in Toronto. The discussion, which included community members and service providers in the violence against women sector, created a space to share and gain knowledge about the impact of immigration enforcement officers going into women's shelters. It also provided an opportunity to learn about community actions by those who were seeking an end to this practice.

THRIVE also received funding from the Toronto Arts Council to build on the Fabric of Violence: Fabricating Change art project first piloted in 2010. We delivered 10 workshops to a diverse group of 116 women and transpeople living in the City of Toronto. They ranged in age from eight to 95. Feedback from participants was highly positive and many people noted that the workshops helped them learn more about their own artistic abilities and gain confidence, and it also gave an opportunity to express themselves. Project coordinators at organizations that provided us with

workshop space and support also commented on the successes of the art workshops and their positive impacts on participants. From a survey of workshop participants, 96% said they would want to participate in another art workshop and 94% would recommend it to other women. An overall rating of 9.2 out of 10 was given to our workshops. Here are some comments from participants:

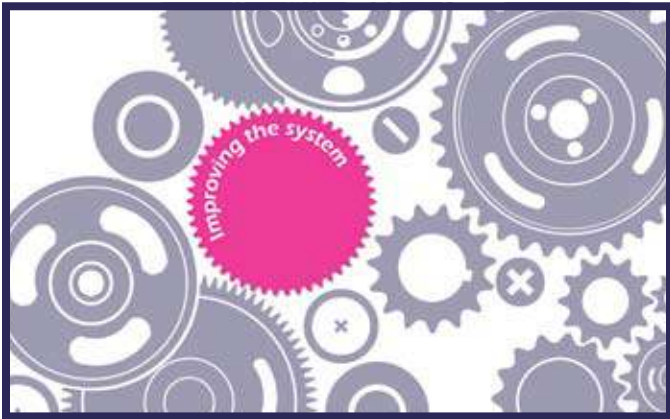
- *"I liked most about the workshop that I was able to express myself through art."*
- *"[I liked] the vibes, community feeling, artistic expression, therapeutic-ness."*
- *"This was amazing! I am not creative and I was able to create a piece of art that expresses my long journey to freedom."*

Fabric art pieces created during workshops were then displayed during the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence from November 25 to December 10 at Queen Gallery in downtown Toronto. The gallery exhibit was highly successful. One hundred and forty-six people came to the gallery to view the collection of fabric artwork. Comments of from attendees demonstrated their appreciation of the variety and intensity of the pieces. For example:

- *"Beautiful inspiring resilient angry hopeful frustrating joy love desire textured community diverse voices tension unity resistance [...] Amazing work, congrats and keep on the fight."*
- *"I'm so happy I came I am honoured and grateful that I got an opportunity to have my art displayed. Great event, great mission, keep it up!"*
- *"Amazing art! Very powerful and meaningful."*
- *"Very moving."*

Many thanks to the Toronto Arts Council; Karen Darricades and Meera Sethi, artists who supported this project; Queen Gallery; and the following partnering organizations: Redwood Shelter, Centre for Women and Trans People at York University, StepStones for Youth, Women Moving Forward, Sheppard Village, Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, Women's Place, and Newcomer Women's Services.

Youth Alliance Update



Back in 2007, the Youth Alliance was formed to bring youth leaders together to improve violence prevention strategies in the City of Toronto and better support young women. In 2010, the group reconvened with funding from Laidlaw Foundation and brought together five key members to address police policy and practice with respect to sexual assault against young women, as the group found these issues were heavy on the minds of youth. After leading participatory and research activities with 154 young women, youth supporters and police officers and doing a policy and literature review, the Youth Alliance released “Improving the System: Police Policy and Practice on Sexual Assault

against Young Women” in October 2011. This report detailed findings and ten recommendations to improve policing, including:

- incorporate a unique definition of “youth” into police policies and practices;
- develop strong mechanisms to incorporate annual youth input into police policies and practices with a focus on young women; and
- develop a youth-friendly interview protocol for sexual assaults against youth and young women.

The full report can be found on METRAC’s website. It has been delivered to the Toronto Police Service and will be reviewed by the Sex Crimes Unit’s Sexual Assault Advisory Committee, on which METRAC participates.

Along the way, the group noticed a need to help young women understand policing and reporting processes when it comes to sexual assault. Into the future, then, the group will explore youth-targetted initiatives to address these information gaps in addition to sharing report results and recommendations with the broader community.



Images: Youth Alliance retreat to explore youth recommendations for improving police policy and practice

“[Police should] make us feel more safe and do more to make the community aware that they are taking abuse seriously.” (Youth survey respondent)



“The interactive game is very informative and great for anyone wanting to know more information about sexual violence.” (Worker at sexual assault crisis centre)

Image: “What It Is.” (www.challengesexualviolence.org)

Violence Prevention Resources

Andrea Gunraj, Communications Specialist

This year, METRAC continued on our exciting journey to explore how technology can be harnessed to prevent violence against women and youth. In 2010, we first released “What It Is.”, a mobile and online digital quiz game in English and French on sexual violence against youth, funded by TELUS and Department of Justice Canada (www.challengesexualviolence.org). Uptake has been amazing – 19,613 people have already played. In 2011, we worked with development partners to begin smartphone versions of the game for Blackberry, Android and iPhone. We also worked with leadership development volunteers at TELUS to begin creating a Facebook adaptation of “What It Is.” We look forward to releasing these new versions of the game in 2012, as well as conducting an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the game in increasing youth awareness and knowledge of sexual violence.

RePlay: Finding Zoe/ReJouer: Où est Zoé?, our online game on healthy relationships for youth aged 8 to 14, continues to inspire. It was featured at Bronx Council of the Arts’ “Toys & Games with a Twist” exhibit at Longwood Art Gallery in New York City. We also featured RePlay/ReJouer as an example of anti-oppressive game development in an article co-written with Ashley York and Susana Ruiz of Take Action Games, partners who had originally helped us build the

game. Entitled “Power to the People: Anti-Oppressive Game Design”, the article was published in *Designing Games for Ethics: Models, Techniques and Frameworks* (IGI Global, 2011), a unique textbook. A copy of the chapter can be found on METRAC’s website.

19,613 people have already played our “What It Is.” game

We also explored use of technology to prevent and challenge violence in other arenas. We supported the United Nation’s Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign by developing content for its online quiz about global violence against women (www.saynotoviolence.org/quiz). We also launched a pilot project to create an iPhone app on sexual harassment, “Not Your Baby”, funded by the Gift of Gertrude Milrod Gotlib. With help from Hollaback!, a global anti-harassment movement, we gathered “what would you do?” and “what did you do?” stories from the public to include in a handy app that will generate possible responses to sexual harassment “in the moment”. It will also allow users to submit their own stories and ideas for responses and access information about harassment. “Not Your Baby” will be released in 2012.

METRAC Thanks Our 2011 Supporters

Funders and donors



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada



Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada

Ressources humaines et
Développement des compétences Canada



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada



Gift of Gertrude Milrod Gotlib



METRAC extends its deepest thanks to all donors and supporters, including those who generously gave funds, purchased tickets and attended events, and those who contributed volunteer hours and gave gifts in-kind.

METRAC Thanks Our Community Partners

A short list of partners we worked with in 2011 includes: Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada; Springtide Resources; Woman Abuse Council of Toronto; Toronto Community Housing Corporation; Sex Crimes Unit, Toronto Police Service; TELUS Toronto Community Board; Toronto Women's City Alliance; Action for Neighbourhood Change Malvern; Toronto Tower Renewal Project; Hollaback!; York University; Take Action Games; Sir Sandford Fleming Secondary School; Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute; John Polanyi Collegiate Institute; Toronto District School Board; San Romanoway Revitalization Association; Elia Middle School; Redwood Shelter; Centre for Women and Trans People at York University; StepStones for Youth; Women Moving Forward; Sheppard Village; Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project; Women's Place; Newcomer Women's Services; Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto; Pro Bono Students Canada; Community Legal Education Ontario; ZMQ Software Systems; Lawrence Heights Middle School; Bloor Collegiate Institute; Horizons for Youth; JVS Toronto; Regent Park Boys and Girls Club; YWCA Toronto; Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre; York Humber High School; Action Ontarienne Contre la violence faite aux femmes; Native Women's Association of Canada; Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses; Ontario Coalition of Rape

Crisis Centres; Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services; Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic; Canadian Federation of University Women; National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada; Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants; Steeles-L'Amoreaux Youth Empowerment; Youth Services of Peel; Heydon Park Secondary School; Coalition of Bullying Awareness and Prevention; Black Creek Community Health Centre; Forest Hill Collegiate Institute; Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office; Rexdale Women's Centre; George Brown College; Action for Neighbourhood Change Taylor Massey; Action for Neighbourhood Change Weston-Mt. Dennis; Armadale Residents' Association; Pathways to Education Scarborough Village; University of Toronto Scarborough; Unison Community Health Centre; Justice for Children and Youth; Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape; White Ribbon Campaign; Women's College Hospital Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre; Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions; Downtown Legal Services Toronto; Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto; South Asian Legal Clinic Ontario; Parkdale Community Legal Services; Metro Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic; Legal Aid Ontario; FCJ Refugee Centre; Human Rights Legal Support Centre