



Above: artist rendering of renovated space in Toronto, in fundraising event context

Vision for “The Station”

Fall/Winter 2013 Newsletter: Special Edition



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METRAC is a community organization
founded in 1984, dedicated to preventing violence and advancing
safety, justice and equity for women and youth.

The Station: Vision of a Violence Prevention Hub

Nadine Sookermany, Board Co-President and Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director

Looking forward to METRAC's landmark 30th Anniversary in 2014, we've published this special newsletter edition to share an exciting vision for the future of violence prevention. We are launching a capital campaign to establish "The Station", Ontario's first violence prevention multi-service hub for women and youth. We can't wait to share this vision with you.

Community hubs exist in many shapes and forms across Canada and around the world. In Toronto, hubs operate in some of our most underserved neighbourhoods. As explained in a 2011 Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development in Toronto report, hubs effectively bring services to communities, help organizations work beyond silos and improve program coordination. For organizations, co-locating in a hub can build the quality of programming they offer and lead to better cost-benefit outcomes through sharing "back office" resources. For the community, a hub can increase their access to essential services and strengthen social networks.

The idea of a flourishing community hub that acts both locally and provincially has long been an inspiration. We even explored moving into an existing community hub to fulfill our organizational goal to work out of a wheelchair accessible office space. But the question remained: where is the hub that focuses on preventing violence and promoting safety for women and youth? We know the need and demand are great and we have excellent partner agencies that aspire to grow their impact across Ontario communities, just as we do.

Why not work together to do it? Sometimes, the answer is that simple. A violence prevention multi-service hub is certainly an ambitious vision, but we know we're not forging ahead on our own. In partnership with

Springtide Resources and other like-minded agencies in health, settlement, housing, legal and social enterprise, we will establish The Station to help women and youth:

- build financial freedom from violence
- get holistic health support
- access justice and know their legal rights
- find housing, reduce risks of homelessness and settle safely into Canadian life
- build safety from violence and harassment where they live, work, study and play

Stay tuned for more about The Station and plans to make this vision a reality.

Shifting back to regular business at METRAC, we've continued to focus on strategic priorities and strengthening our organization. The Board of Directors held its Annual General Meeting on October 1 to share our impact over the 2012 year and provide an update on our ongoing organizational rebranding process. We also recently voted in and oriented a roster of new board members.

Mission-wise, we have been doing what we do best: effective programming and services to help women and youth access justice, make their communities safer and become leaders in violence prevention. Check out our latest updates on pages 3 and 4.

In closing, we would like to thank our funders and donors, hardworking staff and volunteer team and board members (page 4). As we move into our 30th Anniversary year with exciting new ambitions, it becomes clear how your support has enabled this good work in the past and opened up a brand new vision for the future.

The Station Hub: Early Specifications

We are planning many exciting features and specifications for The Station, implemented through renovation and envisioning of a large community space in Toronto.



- > Flexibility: shared meeting and event space, “hot desk” areas
- > Wheelchair accessibility
- > Gender-inclusive washrooms
- > Positive, friendly space: scent-free, LGBTTIQQ2S-positive, service animals and support workers welcome, breast feeding welcome
- > Greening: upgrades to energy, lighting and heating/cooling; exploration of green features such as a rooftop garden and living wall
- > Volunteer-run public violence prevention resource centre

Services to be offered for women and youth: settlement services for newcomers; mental health programs; housing support; sexual health education; legal information and access to justice programs; financial supports and information; social enterprise space to build entrepreneurship

Be a Foundational Supporter

Help us make The Station a reality. Donors receive:

- a tax receipt for donations over \$20
- a holiday card sent to the person you give on behalf of
- \$100+: your name (or that of the person you give on behalf of) on our online “giving wall”
- \$250+: your name (or that of the person you give on behalf of) on our online “giving wall” and free METRAC membership for 2014
- \$500+: your name (or that of the person you give on behalf of) on our online “giving wall”, a physical wall at the new hub and free METRAC membership for 2014 and 2015

Give online at <https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/9982>, call in to give by Visa or Mastercard on the phone, or mail your cheque to METRAC.

Fall program highlights

Access to justice: we led four webinars for women, youth and service providers on topics related to family law and children’s aid as part of the Family Law Education for Women campaign (www.onefamilylaw.ca). We led two major trainings for service providers on family law issues impacting women across Ontario as well as several other trainings in community settings. Throughout the year, we continued to train and support law students to lead legal information workshops for women in shelters and write articles for the Ontario Women’s Justice Network website (www.owjn.org).

Building safer communities: we worked with students and administration at six colleges and universities across Canada to assess campus safety for women and other groups at high risk of violence and harassment, create recommendations for improvement and begin implementation. Throughout the year, we continued to help neighbourhood and community groups use

METRAC's Safety Audit process to enhance safety in the places they work, play, live and learn.

Youth violence prevention: our Respect in Action (ReAct) Peer Facilitators delivered weekly after school programs for high school students in two underserved Toronto neighbourhoods. They helped students gain leadership skills to prevent violence in their own schools and neighbourhoods. In addition, facilitators led trainings and workshops about violence with youth and their services providers across the Toronto Area.

THRIVE Coalition: we are hosting three free events as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender

Violence on November 22, 25 and 30. Topics include public transit, local action and activism and affordable housing (www.metrac.org/upcoming/upcoming.htm).

May Be Me Campaign: we held our annual fundraising campaign, May 31 Celebration and several awareness webinars and dialogue events. We raised \$10,000 to support our violence prevention programs (www.maybemecampaign.ca).

New resource: Not Your Baby, our app to help you deal with sexual harassment, is now available for Android phones (www.metrac.org/programs/outreach/outreach.htm#not.your.baby).

METRAC's Team and Supporters

Our thanks to staff, board and volunteers:

We thank our team of staff, board and volunteers, including those departing the organization.

Board of Directors: Khadeeja A. Ahsan, Fathi Egal, Amina Farah, Leslie Gottlieb, Caitlin Maxwell, Martha Ocampo, Kripa Sekhar, Nadine Sookermany, Gisela Vanzaghi

Staff: Tricia Bennett, Coordinator of Sustainable Development | Michelle Davis, Safety Director | Andrea Gunraj, Communications Specialist, Joanna Hayes, Legal Information Coordinator | Wendy

Komiotis, Executive Director | Sony Matthew, Bookkeeper | Jessica Mustachi, Safety Coordinator, Jannette Saberon, Administrative Assistant | Rachael-Lea Rickards, Events | Talayeh Shomali, Justice Projects Coordinator | Shequita Thompson, ReAct Coordinator | Tamar Witelson, Legal Director

ReAct Peer Facilitators: Asam Ahmad, Kavita Bissoondial, Linda Frempong, Ray B. Garcia, Angela Musceo

Placement student: Risa Ali

Our thanks to funders and donors:



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