



# Activities Update

## PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women



### CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Once again, women in Canada are being called on to work to make the case for women's equality in Canada.

Autumn announcements by the federal government of spending cuts in a time of surplus -- cuts to Status of Women Canada, to housing, to literacy, to the Court Challenges program, and more -- have caused women's organizations in PEI and across Canada to protest. Of particular concern is the newly gutted mandate for Status of Women Canada's Women's Program, which no longer includes advancement of women's equality, and which bars women's organizations from lobbying government for positive change for women. Previously, these were the core activities funded by the Women's Program. It isn't clear what now will be eligible for funding.

The federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Bev Oda, has indicated the reason for this change is that "the new government of Canada fundamentally believes that women are equal."

That statement is staggeringly unbelievable. If Canadian women are equal, how is it that they made just 62% of men's incomes in 2003, even though they made up 47% of the workforce? If Canadian women are equal, why is it that 43% of all children living in poverty live with a single mother? If Canadian women are equal, why are

there over six times as many female victims of sexual assault as male victims? Why are female victims of spousal violence more than three times as likely than male victims to fear for their lives? And why do women make up 84% of all victims of spousal homicide?

PEI projects that have worked to address these equality issues are in jeopardy. (See inside for details.) The budget cut to Status of Women Canada and the changes to the Women's Program are being recognized across the country as a crisis for women's equality in Canada. In addition, decisions to cut funding in so many other areas where voices have not been traditionally heard affect some of the most vulnerable Canadians.

Canadian women are not equal and we still have a long way to go. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women joins other women's organizations and other grassroots groups across PEI and across Canada in calling for a reversal of the decision to cut the Status of Women Canada budget, a reinstatement of funding for women's equality work, and an increase in the budget for equality-seeking women's community organizations as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

This newsletter contains suggestions for your action in this time of crisis, at this time of year when the Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence again calls on us to remember the dire consequences of women's inequality.

Kirstin Lund

Fall 2006

### ARE YOU EQUAL? Take our Equality Quiz!!

You cash your pay cheque. How would you describe it?

- a) just what you deserve, based on your work, training, and experience
- b) not bad -- for a woman
- c) not bad for part-time work -- which is all you can find that's flexible enough
- d) about 62% what a man would earn for similar work
- e) pay cheque? what's a pay cheque??

### More Questions INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### INSIDE THE PEIACSW ACTIVITIES UPDATE

- Cuts to Funding for Women's Equality Work
- PEIACSW Quiz: Are You Equal?
- 2006 Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence

## LOCAL PROJECTS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

PEI projects that have received funding through the Women's Program over the last several years include Women's Network's maternity and parental benefits project; East Prince Women's Information Centre's work on family violence sentencing; family violence prevention work by the Justice Options Steering Committee, including recommendations for the Province to establish a domestic violence court; Women's Network/EP-WIC family law legal aid work; work by PEI Coalition for Women in Government to get more women elected in PEI; work by the PEI Aboriginal Women's Association to have Aboriginal women's voices heard on equality, governance, and leadership issues; and work by l'Association des femmes acadiennes et francophones de l'Î-P-É on improving the economic status of Acadian and francophone women.



### Standing up for equality!

Left to right: Marilyn Sark, Aboriginal Women's Association; Colette Arsenault, Association des femmes acadiennes et francophones; Kelly Robinson, Rape Crisis; Michelle Harris-Genge, Women's Network; Dianne Porter, Coalition for Women in Government; Lisa Murphy, LEAF-PEI; and Kirstin Lund, PEIACSW

Photo courtesy Jacinthe Laforest, *La Voix Acadienne*.

## MINISTER SHEA SHARES CONCERN

On October 17, 2006, PEI's Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Gail Shea, joined the chorus of voices expressing concern about changes to federal funding supports and project guidelines for women's organizations.

Her press release acknowledged "necessary funding supports to continue several projects which have been of value to Prince Edward Island."

As provincial minister, Shea stated she would contact federal Minister Bev Oda, "to register the Province's concerns over these changes and their implications for Prince Edward Island women and families."

Support Minister Shea's efforts by copying her office on correspondence to the federal government and making sure she is aware of protests and actions in your organization, family, or community.

## GROUND CAMPAIGN ON WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Starting November 13, an ad-hoc group of national and regional women's groups led by FAFIA (Canadian Feminist Alliance) began a month-long campaign for women's equality and human rights in Canada. It's not too late to join in this action!

The campaign centres on recent federal government decisions the coalition calls "an affront to women":

1. changes to funding criteria for women's groups,
2. cuts to the operating budget of Status of Women Canada,
3. cancellation of the Court Challenges Program,
4. refusal to adopt improved pay equity legislation, and
5. cancellation of a pan-Canadian child care program resulting in cuts of \$1.2 billion annually to provinces and territories for child care services

**THE GOAL:** This campaign challenges the federal government to immediately improve its record on women's equality and human rights and encourages all Members of Parliament to speak up on behalf of women.

## THE 4 COMPONENTS

1. Lobby your MP
2. Write to PM Stephen Harper
3. Mobilize locally before International Human Rights Day, December 10
4. Rally in Ottawa on December 10

Representatives of your PEIACSW, as part of the national Coalition of Advisory Councils on the Status of Women, will participate in the December 10 Rally in Ottawa. Prince Edward Island women will be heard!

Available in English and French are campaign details and tools including a model letter, one-page fact sheets, a lobby guide, and a model press release. Get in touch with the women's groups leading the campaign: [womenactionfemmes@gmail.com](mailto:womenactionfemmes@gmail.com)

StatusReport

Because we need Status of Women Canada, and it needs us

<http://www.statusreport.ca>

## STATUS REPORT SITE

A new website allows you to keep up to date with national protests against changes to Status of Women Canada: <http://www.statusreport.ca>  
This link and more local information are available at the PEIACSW website: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw>

## BROWN BAG SOUND OFF

Bring your lunch and a piece of your mind about women's equality cuts to a Brown Bag Sound Off Session, Friday, December 8, 12:00-1:00, Room 146, 40 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown. All are welcome -- media especially! RSVP or info: 368-5040 or 368-4510.

## WOMEN'S EQUALITY QUIZ

The federal Minister for the Status of Women says that women in Canada are already equal, so Status of Women Canada doesn't need women's equality goals in its mandate.

**Are you in that lucky group of Canadian women who have achieved equality? Take our quiz to find out!**

**You walk into your workplace.**

**What do people notice?**

- a) your authority and confidence
- b) your hair
- c) your makeup
- d) your shoes
- e) your exhaustion from being up all night with your teething baby

**You think you might be pregnant.**

**What do you do?**

- a) you celebrate your choices, knowing the community will support you no matter what you choose
- b) you wish for a midwife and home birth but know you're likely to end up at the hospital with an OB/GYN
- c) you leave PEI for an abortion, and pay all expenses yourself if you go to a clinic
- d) you keep it secret from your partner -- he'll be angry and things might get ugly
- e) you start saving your pennies -- EI will cover just 55% of your salary if you take maternity/parental leave

**You wake early and think about the day ahead. What do you plan?**

- a) to do your work, come home, meet your needs, care for others, and have some time to yourself
- b) to do your work and take your mother to a doctor's appointment
- c) to do your work and cover off child care for your child who is coughing in the next room and will have to miss school
- d) to do your work, come home, care for others, make supper, and get the laundry and dishes done
- e) a combination of b, c, and d

**You are born. People comment on your best qualities. What are they?**

- a) how healthy and strong you are
- b) how pretty you are in that perfect pink

dress with the frills

- c) how well-behaved you are
- d) how hard it will be to spell your two last names -- wouldn't it be easier just to use dad's name?

**You realize that you want intimate relationships with other women.**

**What's ahead for you?**

- a) a joyful and public celebration of your identity and relationships in your family and your society
- b) a challenge finding role models and examples of strong, healthy relationships in the news, in movies, on television, in print
- c) hurdles as you reach milestones -- marriage, divorce, childbirth or adoption, child-rearing, retirement, illness, death
- d) the possibility you'll be one of 75% of GLBT youth who consider suicide

**You're getting ready for that hot date. What do you pack?**

- a) a nifty purse, a positive attitude, a sexy swagger, and no cares or worries
- b) a sweater -- because how sexy is too sexy? how hot is too hot?
- c) baggage from past bad relationships, sexual abuse, or sexual assault
- d) three kinds of birth control -- it's your responsibility to be prepared
- e) pepper spray, a cell phone, a cover for your drink at the bar, emergency numbers

**You choose a place for your date.**

**What kind of place do you choose?**

- a) the best spot to suit the occasion
- b) somewhere bright and public so you'll feel safe until you get to know each other
- c) somewhere dark and private, where maybe no one will notice your date is another woman
- d) somewhere kid-friendly -- who can afford child care?

**You forget an appointment you had scheduled a month ago. Why?**

- a) you're having an off day like anyone else
- b) you're premenstrual
- c) you're menstrual
- d) you're pregnant
- e) you're postnatal
- f) you're perimenopausal
- g) you're menopausal

**You become a cabinet minister.**

**What do the media remark on?**

- a) your competent, collaborative savvy
- b) your girlfriend or boyfriend
- c) your looks and your fashion sense
- d) your over-emotional or overly personal response to issues
- e) the time you spend away from your family -- or away from your desk

## SCORE

*If you answered "b," "c," "d," or "e" to any of the above... Too bad! You still have a way to go to reach equality.*

**Have you come far enough, baby? Do you have enough equality for yourself? Your mother? Your children? Your partners? Your friends?**

*If you answered "a" to all of the above... Congratulations! You might be living in equality.*

Few, if any, women have achieved all "a" answers in Canada. When we do, it won't be by accident. Individual women will have worked their butts off to get the respect they deserve. Women's groups will have successfully striven to build on past generations and look to future ones. Women and men together will have recognized that women's equality has a positive impact for everyone.

**When women answer "a," equality will apply not only to the most privileged groups in society but also to poor women, lone parents, lesbian women, immigrants, Ab-origines, and women of colour.**



## PEIACSW 2006 PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIOLENCE

December 2006 marks the 15th year the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women has organized its Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence.



This year's theme is *the violence our teen girls face*. Date violence and date rape, "hooking up," bullying and girl-to-girl violence, exposure to family violence, pornography and negative media images, and sexual harassment: these are serious issues in the daily lives of many young women. Disabled girls, Aboriginal girls, immigrant girls, young lesbians, and girls in poverty are at special risk for violence.

With volunteer help and community support, the PEIACSW will distribute 30,000 purple ribbons with information about the violation of our teen girls. Information cards are available in both English and French.

This year, special thanks go to volunteers with PEI's Women's Institute. Local WI chapters pinned more than 6,000 cards. On November 2, the Council's annual Purple Ribbon Pinning Bee was another big success, with willing workers gathering at Beanz in Charlottetown to pin.



Special thanks also go to Prince Edward Island's four Members of Parliament and Senator Catherine Callbeck for scrounging up over 6,000 Canada-flag lapel pins to better secure the purple ribbons.

This year, again, the staff of Quilting B and More volunteered hours and hours to cutting reels of ribbons to the right length for pinning.

The Advisory Council is grateful! All these efforts make the Purple Ribbon Campaign possible.

## MONTREAL MASSACRE MEMORIAL SERVICES

On December 6, 1989, fourteen women were murdered at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. They were murdered because they were women. December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Memorial services will be held across the Island to remember all women who have been victims of violence.



**December 1, 2006 - 12 noon**

**UPEI Chaplaincy Centre, Charlottetown**

a small service for UPEI faculty, staff, and students

**December 6, 2006 - 12 noon**

**O'Leary United Church, O'Leary**

for information call 859-3916 or 859-8849

**Summerside Presbyterian Church, Summerside**

for information call 436-9856

**Memorial Hall, Confederation Centre, Charlottetown**

For information call 368-4510

**First mourn, then work for change!**

## COUNCIL

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