



Transitions Fall 2007

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Vicarious Trauma Conference

At the THANS Annual General Meeting in 2006, Vicarious Trauma was identified as one of the issues to be addressed by THANS. One of the first steps in addressing Vicarious Trauma is to understand what it is and how it affects the work we do. Therefore, on May 23 and 24, 2007 THANS hosted a workshop on Vicarious Trauma. Representatives from each of the THANS member organizations gathered at Pictou Lodge and with facilitator Jan Richardson examined the impact the work we do has on individuals and organizations.

Jan Richardson is the author of "Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers." On the first day, Jan guided us through the definition of vicarious trauma within the context of working with abused women, the personal effects of vicarious trauma, the organizational effects and the roles and responsibilities related to supporting solutions.

On the second day, we looked at developing no cost-low cost solutions and identified the ways in which we currently support solutions. We concluded the workshop by developing strategies for individuals and organizations. We also struck a committee to help address and develop strategies that can assist all THANS member organizations

The work we do changes us. Often the changes are positive. We are inspired by the strength and courage of the women and children who use our services. We can take satisfaction in knowing we are part of the solution and we are often in a position to be strong advocates for those whose voices are not always

heard. "Vicarious trauma is the experience of bearing witness to the atrocities committed against another. It is the result of absorbing sight, smell, sound, touch and feel of the stories told in detail by victims searching for a way to release their own pain. It is the instant physical reaction that occurs when a particularly horrific story is told or an event is uncovered. It is the insidious way that the experiences slip under the door, finding ways to permeate the counsellor's life, accumulating indifferent ways, creating changes that are both subtle and pronounced... Personal balance can be lost for a moment or for a long time... The waves of agony bombard the spirit and seep in, draining strength, confidence, desire, friendship, calmness, laughter and good health. Confusion, apathy, isolation, anxiety, sadness and illness are often the result." (*Jan Richardson, Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers, pg 7*) Recognizing vicarious trauma in no way minimizes the experience of the women who use our service.

Acknowledging vicarious trauma is not an admission of weakness rather it is an indication of how deeply we care. None of us would dispute the need for proper hand washing in order to help spread of germs. Addressing vicarious trauma is an essential component in promoting a safe and healthy work place.

SWAZILAND TRIP



Clockwise: Board Meeting at SWAGAA | Zebras in Swaziland | Thobile Winning Contest | Countryside | Visiting Nomsa
Swazi Traditional Wedding

The Canadian Crossroads - Swaziland Action Group against Abuse – Transition House Association of Nova Scotia Partnership – 2007 Africa Visit

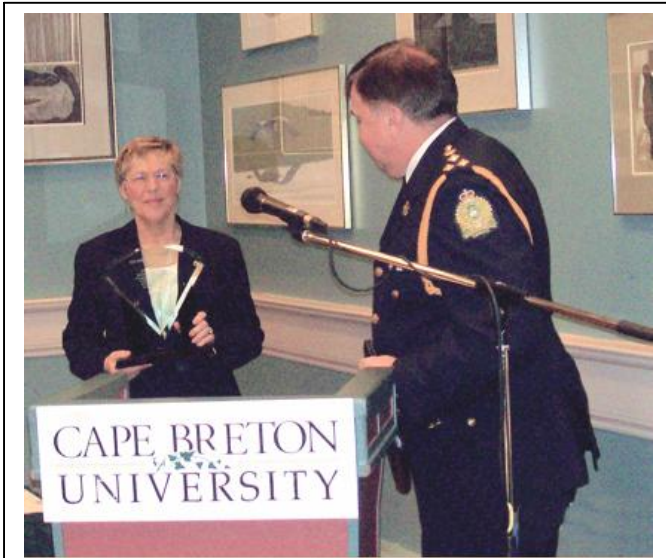
The second partner visit to Africa for THANS took place in April of 2007, when I went to Pretoria, South Africa, to attend a regional conference on Leadership and the Intersection of Gender-based Violence and HIV/AIDS. The conference was a revelation of cultural and practical differences among the seven countries, in their work, legislation and policy.

I then travelled to Swaziland, where I did presentations on THANS for both the SWAGAA staff and Board. I visited with a number of local organizations, including Women In the Law in Southern Africa, to discuss their draft Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Legislation, and had an opportunity to have a private breakfast audience with the new Deputy Prime Minister of Swaziland Constance Simelane, the first woman deputy prime minister in their history. Nonhlanhla Dlamini, Executive Director of SWAGAA, and I developed a plan for placements and sharing between our organizations over the next year. It is our hope that Mandla Ntshangase will travel to Canada this fall to attend the Nova Scotia Community College for technical courses.

In the new year, we will have Thobile Matsebula (a specialist in working with children) train here in Canada for several months, and then be accompanied by a THANS staff specialist in working with children, back to Africa. The goal is to learn some Canadian practises, and working together, Thobile and our THANS representative will create a culturally appropriate draft *"Working with Children who are Victims of Sexual Assault or Witnesses to Sexual Assault"* program manual, that will be workshopped, revised, and left for the SWAGAA staff.

I also had the privilege to meet the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) that my NS friend and I sponsor in Swaziland. The National Emergency Response Committee on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) and SWAGAA partner in dispensing donated school fees for many of these children and also provide much needed personal counselling. You can read more about sponsoring OVCs at the Young Heroes web site: http://www.youngheroes.org.sz/index_home.asp.





BEA LEBLANC, E.D. OF CAPE BRETON TRANSITION HOUSE, RECEIVING THE CARL CRAWFORD AWARD FOR HER MANY YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE, MAR. 8/07

Member Updates “INSPIRATIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR”

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
“CAMPY CRAWFORD HUMANITARIAN AWARD”
International Women’s Day
March 8, 2007

Bea LeBlanc, the long-time executive director of Transition House in Sydney, received a humanitarian award for her work. Ms. LeBlanc was honoured with the Carl (Campy) Crawford Award for her 26 year long service to the community by the Cape Breton Regional Police. The award, named for the first black officer on the Sydney police force, is presented jointly by Cape Breton Police, Cape Breton University and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. This award is presented to an individual who exemplifies the qualities similar to those qualities exhibited by the late Carl Crawford, such as being a true community minded individual who was mindful of fairness, equity and commitment to justice.

JUNIPER HOUSE SUMMER DAY CAMP

“The children help prepare healthy snacks and lunch in an effort to promote good nutrition practices.

The topics included bullying, making choices, anger management, self-esteem and expressing feelings.”

The idea for a summer camp was originally raised at our annual Staff/Board Planning Day in January 2003. Following discussion and research it was decided to offer a day camp. We were, and still are, very grateful to Leaside for sharing their camp manual, which is the basis for our programme.

The first step in setting up our camp was to find an appropriate place to operate. We approached the principal at the local elementary school (across the street from Juniper House) who told us that if approved by the school board we would be welcome to use their facilities. Approval was given and planning continued. The support from Central School staff and the Breakfast Program, was overwhelming. That support has been ongoing. We use of the staff room. This is a large upstairs room with large windows, a kitchen and bathroom.

We decided that although former and present clients of the House would be our focus, we would open the camp to the general public as well. We applied for funding for summer students and asked all elementary schools in the area to spread the word. We were able to hire two students and so in July 2003 the Juniper House Summer Day Camp became a reality. Our plan was to run 5 separate one week camps following the Leaside model of daily topics and discussion as well as crafts, outdoor play, short walking trips and museums visits. The children help prepare healthy snacks and lunch in an effort to promote good nutrition practices. The topics included bullying, making choices, anger management, self-esteem and expressing feelings. Because our focus is building self-esteem, the maximum number of children for each camp in twelve thus allowing each child to receive lots of individual attention.

We still follow the same basic program adding new material and activities based on the interests and abilities of different camp leaders. From 28 campers over 5 weeks the first year we have expanded to 7 weeks and over 70 children last year. Most summers we have run the camp with two leaders but this year we were fortunate to receive funding for four students. We offer the camps on a first come first served basis, free of charge. This has been our way of giving back to our community and has been a very rewarding experience for everyone involved.



Happy campers at the Juniper House Summer Day Camp. This year, over 70 kids will enjoy a wide variety of activities

Member Updates cont'd

Leeside Celebrates 15 Years of Service

On April 27, 2007, Leeside marked its 15th anniversary with a day long celebration at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre. Activities included display booths, workshops, live entertainment, a Birthday Party and a silent auction. We had many special guests at the Gala Dinner.



Celebrating Leeside's 15 Anniversary, left to right: Denise Boudreau, Chair of Leeside Board, Premier Rodney MacDonald, The Honourable Mayann Francis, Lieutenant Governor of NS, Glenda Maclean, His Worship Billy Joe MacLean, Mayor of Port Hawkesbury and Marina Martens, Executive Director Leeside.

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System HIFIS

The HIFIS initiative has been funded and supported by the **Homeless Partnering Strategy**, a directorate of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. HIFIS is a national database that was created to “count the homeless.” It has been expanded to capture the holistic approach needed to address different types of homelessness, from the “absolute,” living rough on the streets, to temporary, transitional and supportive housing. Recently, all 65 of the Salvation Army shelters in Canada and the Canadian Association of Foodbanks have signed data sharing protocols with HIFIS.

During the Family Violence Redesign Process, THANS had decided we needed a process to capture the kind of statistics that would release us from the one dimensional perspective of averaged occupancy over time. HIFIS allows us to input statistical information that more accurately captures the holistic services provided by our staff and organizations, as well as the complexity and comprehensiveness of the work we do.



The Executive Director & Staff at Leeside in Port Hawkesbury, deep into their HIFIS training

THANS has been involved with HIFIS since its inception in 2000, and has provided the Nova Scotia Community Coordination of HIFIS since the fall of 2006. Since THANS began the support, training and exports that are the mandate of community coordination, the number of shelters that are using HIFIS has gone from one to 18 across the province. THANS has activated HIFIS in nine of our 13 member locations, and will have all of our shelters activated by the end of October. By March 2008, all appropriate shelters in N.S. will be using HIFIS.

The National HIFIS Team and THANS have been working with the Department of Community Services in looking at the long-term sustainability of HIFIS, and the use of HIFIS to gather provincial statistics from all the homeless and transitional shelters it funds. Community coordination training has included the development of funding reports, the inclusion of an “Aggressor” module, and community analysis of the non-identifying information in the database.

By far, the most powerful impact of the HIFIS community coordination, has been the opportunities I have had to travel to our shelters across the province, meet and work with so many of our fabulous staff, and see first hand, the dedication of those who work towards the elimination of intimate partner violence.

I look forward to the possibilities that data analysis will provide, opportunities to track the contributing factors to women fleeing abuse, age trends, gaps in services, sustainability arguments, and data that may negotiate increases in funding and staffing for our organizations.

Stay tuned for more progress reports!

Upcoming Events

The Clothesline Project - November 25th – December 10th

The Clothesline Project commemorates the 16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Violence Against Women and enables women who have experienced violence to have an opportunity to express their feelings, experience and stories through art. Women decorate a scarf, write or type their story and attach it to the scarf to create a picture story of the impact of violence on their lives.

Because our public awareness campaign takes place in winter, we encourage the idea of stringing a clothesline with scarves in our various communities to bring awareness of violence to the public, and most importantly, to give violence survivors an anonymous medium in which to express their feelings around their experiences.

THANS, through the generous support of **Creative Canvas** in Dartmouth who cut our material into 'scarf size', is able to provide scarves to women across Nova Scotia.

Take Back the Night September 28, 2007 – Victoria Square Park, Halifax, 7-10pm

The first "Reclaim the Night" march was held in Belgium in 1976 by women attending the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women.

The slogan "Take Back the Night" was first introduced in 1978 in San Francisco. Canadian women also took to the streets that year when the "Fly-By-Night Collective" organized a march in Vancouver.

An event geared toward empowering women to confront fears about rape and assault, it calls for safety and equality for women in all places, at all.

This year, as the Dal Women's Centre has done for several years, is holding a rally and march. Speakers, music and hundreds of noisy women and child with take to the streets.

If you'd like to participate in a March in your area, contact your local sexual



assault centre or women's centre. Bring your noisemakers, meet some fabulous women of all ages and publicly celebrate women's solidarity.

What part of "NO" don't you understand?

December 6th

In 1990, a group called the *December 6 Coalition* held commemorative events each year to mark the Montreal Massacre. This included selling red rose buttons in TTC stations across Toronto and distributing pamphlets to raise public awareness about violence against women.

In 1991, the Parliament of Canada declared December 6th to be the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women*. The day represents a time to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. It is also a day for communities and individuals to think about the concrete actions that each of us can take to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women.

Each year, [Status of Women Canada](#) produces an information kit for individuals and organizations wishing to raise awareness and take action against violence against women.

Visit the THANS website for December 6 events in Halifax.

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Association of Nova
Scotia

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Fax:
(902) 429-0561

E-Mail:
admin@thans.ca

If you are a woman experiencing abuse, contact the nearest Transition House for assistance.

If you are a woman experiencing abuse, contact the nearest THANS for an organization near you.

Autumn House - Amherst
902-667-1200
will accept collect calls

Bryony House – Halifax
902-422-7650
will accept collect calls

Cape Breton Transition House –
Sydney
Local 539-2945
Toll Free 1-800-563-2945

Chrysalis House – Kentville
Local 679-1922
Toll Free 1-800-264-8682

Harbour House – Bridgewater
Local 543-3999
Toll Free 1-888-543-3999

Juniper House – Yarmouth
Local 742-8689
Toll Free 1-800-266-4087

Juniper Digby Outreach – Digby
902-245-4789
Toll Free 1-800-266-4087

Leeside Society – Port Hawkesbury
Local 625-2444
Toll Free 1-800-565-3390

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre -
Millbrook
Local 863-8483
Toll Free 1-800-565-4741

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre –
Whycocomagh
Local 756-3440
Toll Free 1-800-565-3440

Naomi Society for Victims of Family
Violence – Antigonish
Local 863-3807
Weekends 867-4229

Tearmann House – New Glasgow
Local 752-0132
Toll Free 1-888-831-0330

Third Place – Truro
Local 893-3232
Toll Free 1-800-565-4878