

Activities Update

PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women



Meet the New Chairperson

*Diane Kays, Chairperson
PEI Advisory Council on the
Status of Women*

Diane Kays grew up in Charlottetown, a first-generation Canadian of parents born in Lebanon. She spent more than 30 years in social work (in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) and eight years as a small business owner. Her social work career focused on individual and family therapy, community development, and

program development. Diane has also been a Lecturer at Dalhousie University School of Social Work and has worked in private practice (therapy and consulting).

Diane retired from social work in 2009. She lives in Charlottetown.

Throughout her career, Diane has focused on issues of violence against women and children, adult survivors of childhood abuse, poverty and women, women in conflict with the law, mental health and women, and multi-service systems (analysis, development, and delivery).

Chairperson's Message

I joined the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PEIACSW) in March 2011 and was appointed Chairperson in August of this same year. I was fortunate to have witnessed Isabelle Christian as Chairperson for a few months and admire her as a woman of considerable knowledge and skill. It is my hope to model her style of openness and inclusiveness and integrate this approach with my own skills and style.

It has been a renewing year on the Advisory Council. When I joined Council I was impressed with existing members: Susan Connolly, Gwyn Davies, Marcia Enman, and Pauline Thomson. Joining me in March were Louise MacLeod, Kelly Robinson, and Eileen Brown Wilt, followed by Catherine Rankin in July. What a delight to work with a group of women with so much experience and who hold similar values and goals!

I need to say that the PEIACSW is indeed fortunate to have such talent and dedication in its staff of Lisa Murphy, Jane Ledwell, and Becky Tramley, who amaze me on a daily basis as to the amount and quality of work that they do on behalf of the women of PEI. They have made my transition to Chairperson so much easier.

Upon my appointment as Chairperson, one of my immediate and long-term goals was to focus on networking with as many individuals and groups as possible throughout PEI during my three-year term. I am pleased to be able to say that I (along with Lisa Murphy) have already had a good start in the past few months to build networks that will benefit Island women.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women is involved with numerous issues and concerns relating to the needs of Island women and their families. A top priority has been and will continue to be our commitment to "Issues of Violence Against Women and Children," and it is my hope that given my background I will be able to contribute in this area.

During my term as Chairperson there are two other specific areas that I would like to focus on: 1) poverty elimination strategy and 2) moving towards a more accessible justice system (especially for women), including a domestic violence court. As we work with other community groups and government departments, I believe much can be accomplished in these areas, and I know that Council members and staff are committed to working hard on these issues.

In conclusion, I feel fortunate to have this opportunity to serve on the Advisory Council and to be Chairperson. On behalf of Council and staff we look forward to working with Hon. Valerie Docherty (Minister Responsible for the Status of Women) and her staff. I feel confident that together we can continue to make a significant difference on behalf of Island women and their families.

Wishing you all a joyous holiday season and all the best in 2012.

Diane Kays

Fall/Winter 2011



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Access to Justice for Family Law: 2011 Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence



"When violence and abuse occur in a family relationship, we need systems that let women and children get support and get safe," says Advisory Council on the Status of Women Chairperson Diane Kays. "We need more and better choices for accessing justice for family matters, inside and outside courtrooms."

The focus of this year's Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence is access to justice for family law.

"The cost of accessing the justice system for family matters such as separation and divorce or custody and access or child and spousal support is very high," Kays says. "This situation affects many low and middle income Islanders, but it leaves women and children who fear violence especially vulnerable."

"When relationships break up, issues of power and control can create volatile situations for families. Families need to be able to resolve issues with help and support to prevent violence and fear."

The Advisory Council's Executive Director, Lisa Murphy, says, "In PEI, there is a high priority placed on directing legal aid to those who need it most, especially to women who experience violence in their relationships. While this is important, it is clear that legal aid is only part of the solution." The Advisory Council is playing a

major part in coordinating a think-tank on Access to Justice being put on by CLIA, the Community Legal Information Association on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. "We hope to be part of fresh thinking about how to support families to resolve conflict, whether they do that in court or outside court."

Diane Kays continues, "Many people on Prince Edward Island have been calling for several years for a domestic violence court like the ones that are being piloted in our neighbouring provinces and across Canada. As a priority, the Advisory Council sees government commitment to a domestic violence court option as a crucial part of making access to justice for family law better for Island families."

Kays says, "The Purple Ribbon Campaign shows that we take a stand against violence against women and children. This year, we also want to take a stand for changes to the legal system that will protect women by making justice more equally available to all."

Volunteers from across the Island pinned purple ribbons to over 10,000 bilingual information cards for distribution to schools, churches, groups associated with law and justice, and the general public. Cards and purple ribbons are available free of charge from the PEI Status of Women office at 368-4510.

More information on the 2011 Purple Ribbon Campaign is available on the Status of Women website, www.gov.pe.ca/acsw.

Purple Ribbon Resource Guides for Island Grade 7 and Grade 9 Teachers



Resource guides for Prince Edward Island teachers are available again this year from the 2011 Purple Ribbon Campaign. These resource guides, published in French and English, are designed for Island teachers to use in classrooms. The resource guides, which are sent out with purple ribbons and Purple Ribbon information cards, include ideas for activities and resources linked to curriculum. Handouts provide background information about the Purple Ribbon Campaign and suggest actions students can take to end violence against women and children. The Grade 9 guides also include examples of art that responds to the Purple Ribbon theme. The resource guides were developed with the Grade 7 Social Studies and Grade 9 Health curriculum in mind. The teachers' guides can be downloaded from the PEIACSW website or blog.

Violence Against Women Events

First mourn, then work for change.



MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

Charlottetown

Memorial Service & Candle-Lighting

12 noon, Memorial Hall,
Confederation Centre of the Arts
More info: 368-4510

En français : Candle-Lighting for Victims of Violence

7:00 pm, Carrefour Community
Centre, Charlottetown
More info: 368-1895, ext 221

Summerside

Memorial Service In English

12 noon, Heritage Park,
Ottawa Street Entrance
Refreshments served.
More info: (902) 436-9856

O'Leary

Candle-lighting for Victims of Violence

12 noon, O'Leary United Church
More info: (902) 859-8849

Campaign for Access to Justice

This year, the Purple Ribbon Campaign is inviting people to take action by writing to the PEI provincial government to ask for commitment and action on access to justice issues. Please visit accessjusticepei.wordpress.com to find

- background information about access to justice issues
- templates and ideas for letters to government
- printable postcards, and more.

New resources and information from events related to access to justice will be added. For more information: accessjusticepei.wordpress.com

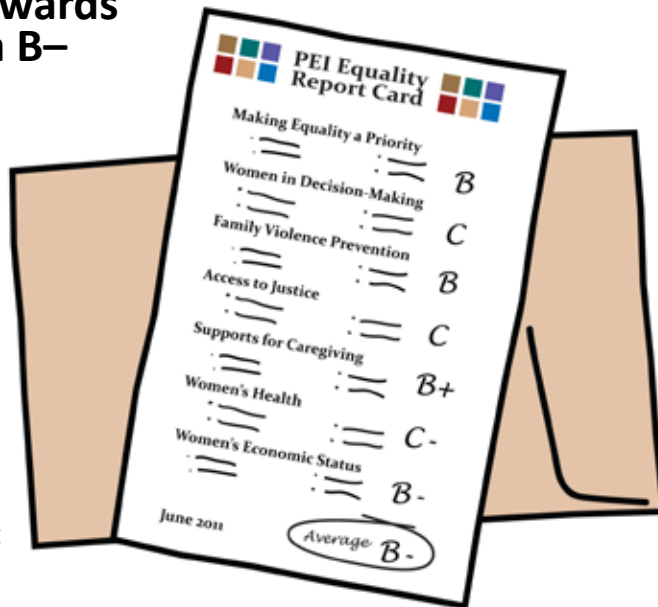
2011 Equality Report Card Awards Government a B-

In June of 2011, the Advisory Council released its 2011 Equality Report Card and awarded the PEI government a grade of B- for its progress on women's equality goals. This grade is an improvement over the results when the last Equality Report Card was released in June 2009.

"The B- grade shows that government is taking some important and concrete steps to meet needs that women have identified," said Isabelle Christian, then the outgoing Chairperson of the Advisory Council. "Government's grade has risen from a C in 2009 to a B- in 2011. This is a substantial improvement in just two years." The Equality Report Card grades government on 22 priority areas in seven categories.

"When we began the Equality Report Card, the Advisory Council made a commitment to work collaboratively with government to support them to achieve A and B grades," said Christian. "We are very pleased that they have accepted that collaborative spirit and achieved a B-."

Government's landmark investment in early childhood care and education in the past two years is an example of what has earned government higher grades from the Status of Women. "Supporting pre-school and kindergarten-age children and



their educators will have benefits for all Island families, now and into the future," Christian said.

The Status of Women noted some areas that still require attention. "Mental health and addictions were two areas the Advisory Council members saw a need for more action," said Council Executive Director Lisa Murphy. "It is clear to members of our Advisory Council that many Island women and men are experiencing hardship as a result of mental illness and addictions. We need to do better to support and help them."

"I have recently completed my term as Chairperson of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women," said Isabelle Christian, "and it has been a source of pride to lead the Advisory Council as we developed the Equality Report Card. I hope the Report Card will continue to be a tool for the Advisory Council to collaborate with government and to advocate for vulnerable women and others in the community who rely on public services to make their lives better and their situations more equitable."

Executive Director Lisa Murphy and outgoing Chairperson Isabelle Christian present the findings of the 2011 Equality Report Card in June in Stratford.



2011 Publications

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw>

Equality Matters Election Guide / Enjeux en matière d'égalité (Sept.)

Questions for candidates in the 2011 provincial election from the members of the Advisory Council.

2011 Equality Report Card / Fiche de rendement de l'égalité 2011 (June)

Council's assessment of government's progress towards women's equality goals on Prince Edward Island.

Input into 2011 Provincial Budget Consultations (February)

A summary of possible budget implications for the 2011 Provincial Budget from the priority recommendations featured in the 2011 Equality Report Card project.



News Releases & Editorials

Council Reacts to Cabinet Appointments (October 19)

Promises on Women's Issues Missing in Election Campaign (September 28)

Women's Equality Matters in the Election / Les enjeux en matière d'égalité des femmes et les élections (Sept. 12)

Violence Must Be Confronted (Aug. 22)

Government Earns a B- on 2011 Equality Report Card / Le gouvernement obtient un B- sur la Fiche de rendement sur l'égalité (June 22)

Women's Consultation Marks Equality Day (April 18)

Everyday Challenges for International Women's Day (March 8)

Facts Support Family Violence Prevention (February 14)

Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils Meets in Halifax



Some of the members of the National Coalition of Advisory Councils on the Status of Women. Left to Right: Stephanie MacInnis-Langley (Nova Scotia), Lorraine Phaneuf (Northwest Territories), Lesley Poirier McLernon (Nova Scotia), Yvonne Spyropoulos (Manitoba), Marlene Bertrand (Manitoba), Jessica Gallant (Newfoundland and Labrador), Diane Kays (Prince Edward Island), Linda Ross (Newfoundland and Labrador), Jane Ledwell (Prince Edward Island), Betty Irwin (Yukon), Jhoanna Gonzales Miners (Nova Scotia), Beatrice Farand (Quebec).



Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women from across Canada came together on September 14 and 15 in Halifax, Nova Scotia to discuss progress and challenges related to women's equality. The Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils is a national group consisting of provincial and territorial advisory councils from across the country dedicated to advancing women's issues within their individual provinces but who come together in the interest of women on a national level.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, three priority issues emerged: poverty among older women, hypersexualization of girls and women, and violence against women, particularly Aboriginal women.

Although the Advisory Councils all work on issues that are specific and unique to their own regions, it is clear some significant equality issues are shared by women all across Canada. "Without a doubt, Canadian women have experiences, needs and concerns in common, which should be addressed and advanced through a shared vision of women's equality and a national scope of action. For example, women in Canada are an aging population. While it varies from province to province, women still earn roughly 70% of what a man earns during their working lives. Fewer women than men have pensions and they are for the most part significantly less than

those of men. We are seeing more and more senior women living in poverty," commented Marlene Bertrand, Chair for the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council.

Attended by representatives from coast to coast, this annual meeting provides an opportunity to not only share individual experiences and information, but also create a national action plan to address issues affecting women throughout Canada.

Coalition chair, Linda Ross (CEO/President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women), believes that while the issues identified are significant, coming together on a national scale not only brings broader attention and awareness to their importance, but allows an opportunity for collaborative work to address them.

"Although Advisory Councils no longer exist in all provinces, the Coalition does take a national approach to addressing women's issues. Councils play a valuable role in their own provinces and territories and we would very much like to see the return of Advisory Councils in all provinces. Not only does the Coalition support one another in our Provincial and Territorial work but we are also a collective, strong voice in addressing the issues that affect women throughout our country," said Ross.

NB Advisory Council Abolished

In March, the New Brunswick government under Premier David Alward axed the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Women across New Brunswick and the Maritime region protested the loss of the Advisory Council. PEI Chairperson Isabelle Christian and ED Lisa Murphy attended a protest in Moncton to show support for the organization.

In her last column for the Moncton *Telegraph Journal*, Chairperson Elsie Hambrook had this to say about the loss: "What New Brunswick women lose with the ... disappearance on Friday of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a public body that speaks out to defend women's interests. There will no longer be a public body with a mandate that allows it to set its own agenda and its own priorities and to speak out based on the concerns and interest of women."



PEI's Isabelle Christian joins a Moncton woman protesting the abolition of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women in March 2011.

Advisory Council on the Status of Women Round-up of 2011 Meetings



In June, Executive Director Lisa Murphy presented outgoing Chairperson Isabelle Christian with a Service Award, on behalf of the members and staff of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The citation on the award read as follows:

"Isabelle Christian of Stratford has served on Council for five years, since 2006, and since January 2008 has been Council's Chairperson, filling this role with dignified leadership.

"Isabelle's experience as an adult educator has challenged Council members to engage in ongoing learning about issues of women's equality. Her dedication to knowledge and research-based policy change have promoted the credibility and legitimacy of the assessments on Council's Equality Report Card.

"Isabelle leaves a legacy to the Advisory Council in renewed strategic planning that will guide the Advisory Council's work on behalf of Island women for years to come.

"Thank you, Isabelle, for your work leading the Advisory Council and advancing the status of women in PEI."



EQUALITY Matters

February 17, 2011, Charlottetown, PEI Family Violence Prevention Week

Council members participated in the Walk in Silence for Victims of Family Violence from Province House to Charlottetown City Hall. They also evaluated the 2010 Purple Ribbon Campaign. Council members thanked outgoing staffperson Sandy Kowalik for ten years of work for the Council, as she completed her final year as Purple Ribbon Coordinator.



Four continuing members of the Advisory Council: Sue Connolly, Gwyn Davies, Marcia Enman, and Pauline Thomson



Three of the new members of the Advisory Council who joined in March: Eileen Brown Wilt, Louise MacLeod, and Kelly Robinson.



Catherine Rankin of Summerside was appointed to join the Advisory Council in July 2011.

Video Interviews with New Chairperson Diane Kays

Get to know the Advisory Council's Work. Check out our recent videos.

MISSING: Promises for Women

<http://vimeo.com/29735135>

Equality Matters

<http://vimeo.com/28692314>

Women and the PEI Election

<http://vimeo.com/28690143>

March 15, 2011, Cornwall, PEI Orientation for New Members

Council welcomed four new members to the table for their first meeting: Eileen Brown Wilt, Diane Kays, Louise MacLeod, and Kelly Robinson. Staff and returning members provided an orientation to Council's work and a workshop on interest-based approaches to the Equality Report Card.

May 4, 2011, Charlottetown, PEI Equality Report Card Workshop

Council members took part in a workshop to achieve consensus on the grades for the 2011 Equality Report Card and shared tools for consensus decision-making. Council members also nominated the Council member they wished to see as the next Chairperson, to be recommended to Executive Council.

June 22, 2011, Stratford, PEI Equality Report Card Release

The Council invited media and members of the public to the launch of the 2011 Report Card. They offered thanks and a service award to outgoing Chairperson Isabelle Christian and a 20-year service award to Executive Director Lisa Murphy.

September 8, 2011, West Point, PEI Strategic Planning Session

Council members welcomed new member Catherine Rankin and new Chairperson Diane Kays. Facilitator Julie Devon Dodd led a strategic planning session to focus the Advisory Council's priorities for the coming several years.



The Council's next meeting will take place on **December 6, 2011**, in Charlottetown, where members will take part in the annual memorial service for victims of violence.

Building Networks in the Prince Edward Island Community



ACSW Chairperson Diane Kays with Women's Institute President Doreen Cole

In her role as Chairperson, Diane Kays is setting a high priority on meeting with women from a diverse set of community organizations. "Building networks and relationships is an important part of working on behalf of Island women," says Diane. "These meetings are going really well. It is very impressive to see the volunteer and paid work so many women are doing to make Prince Edward Island the best place it can be."

This fall, Diane has met with representatives from the Women's Institute, the PEI Business Women's

Association, and the Canadian Federation of University Women. She has given a talk for the PEI Hospital Nurses' Alumnae, and has taken part in the October 4th Sisters in Spirit vigil organized by the Aboriginal Women's Association to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women. "I look forward to continuing to make connections with Island organizations that are interested in women's opportunities and wellbeing."



Diane Kays with PEI Hospital Nurses' Alumnae representatives.

Consultation with Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

Representatives of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women were pleased to meet for a consultation on Equality Day, April 17, 2011, with women legislators from a delegation of MLAs and MNAs from Saskatchewan, Quebec, and PEI. The event was part of an outreach program coordinated by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians organization, which brings together elected women from across Canada and all regions of the Commonwealth. The Advisory Council shared perspectives with the visitors on the roles of women's Advisory Councils in the provinces and territories, ways of negotiating equal treatment of women across languages and cultures in Canada and abroad, and emerging national debates on issues affecting women such as polygamy and changing laws on prostitution.



ACSW member Louise MacLeod, Saskatchewan MLA Sandra Morin, PEI MLA Cynthia Dunsford, ACSW Chairperson Isabelle Christian, PEI MLA and Speaker Kathleen Casey, Saskatchewan MLA Nadine Wilson, ACSW staff Jane Ledwell, ACSW ED Lisa Murphy, Parliamentary Exchanges Officer Jolène Savoie. Missing: Quebec MNA Charlotte L'Écuyer

Apply to Be Part of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The next known vacancies on the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women come up in December 2012. Members of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women are appointed by government, and you can put your name forward through the *Participate PEI* process. Advisory Council staff would be happy to provide help or support as you prepare a letter of interest for yourself or a friend. Application forms and more details are available at <http://www.gov.pe.ca/eco/participepei>.



Council Members

Diane Kays, Chairperson, Charlottetown
Gwyn Davies, Vice-Chairperson, Gairloch
Marcia Enman, Treasurer, Wellington
Pauline Thomson, Canoe Cove
Sue Connolly, Breadalbane
Kelly Robinson, Stratford
Louise MacLeod, Uigg
Eileen Brown Wilt, West Cape
Catherine Rankin, Summerside

Staff

Lisa Murphy, Executive Director
Jane Ledwell, Researcher/Policy Analyst
Becky Tramley, Office Administrator (p/t)

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Blog: peiacsw.wordpress.com

Location

Sherwood Business Centre
161 St. Peter's Road



Members & Staff of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women wish you, your families, and your loved ones a season of peace & goodwill.

