

# Activities Update

## PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Fall/Winter 2016

### Chairperson's Message



The Advisory Council has been active on many exciting fronts during this past year! We have also had several changes in our Council membership. Chairperson Kelly Robinson did an excellent job of leading the Advisory Council during the difficult time following the death of our previous chairperson, Diane Kays, in March 2015. At the end of March

2016, I was honoured to be appointed as the new chairperson following the end of Kelly's term.

In March, we also said farewell to council member Louise MacLeod, from Uigg, and, in July, to Council member and vice-chair Catherine Rankin from Summerside. We truly miss these wonderful women with their amazing talents and positive energy. We welcomed new member, Deborah Langston, from Blooming Point in the spring, and members Lalana Paul from Melville, Madison Blanchard from Charlottetown, and Pamela Schurman-Montgomery from Summerside in the fall. We appreciate the commitment the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Hon. Paula Biggar, has made in ensuring diversity on our Council, and we look forward to the new perspectives that these new members will bring to our table.

In 2016, we also celebrated office manager Becky Tramley's thirty years of work with the Advisory Council. Thank you, Becky for your knowledge, experience and dedication! History was made on March 30th when Premier Wade MacLauchlan announced that Island women will have access to abortion care in our province after three decades in which PEI women had to travel to other provinces to receive this needed service. On September 16th, following community consultations and planning, the Premier announced that the Ambulatory Care Department of the Prince County Hospital will open a Women's Wellness Centre to serve all of PEI. The Centre will offer a variety of sexual and reproductive health



*Hon. Paula Biggar and Mari review proposed priorities for the next Equality Report Card.*

services for women across the lifespan, including medical and surgical abortions. We look forward to the opening of the Women's Wellness Centre in 2017!

We have continued our relationship with the PEI Aboriginal Women's Association during this past year. From February to May we collaborated with the AWA to coordinate a study group to read and discuss the summary report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This was held in the Confederation Centre Library and was open to the public. The study group was very meaningful and successful to all who attended. In October, I had the honour of speaking on behalf of the Council at the Sisters in Spirit Vigil for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

This year the theme for the annual Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence Against Women is "Believe Survivors." The campaign will begin on November 25th (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) at The Guild with a special screening of the film *Singing to Myself*, by Island filmmaker Harmony Wagner. The annual Charlottetown Montreal Massacre Memorial Service to remember women murdered in the 1989 Montreal Massacre and women murdered in PEI will be held in the Memorial Hall at the Confederation Centre of the Arts at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 6. You are all encouraged to wear your purple ribbon from November 25 to December 6, and also during PEI Family Violence Prevention week in February 2017.

I wish to thank Jane, Michelle, and Becky for their invaluable work with the Advisory Council. It has been a pleasure for me to work with the staff and the members of the Council during this past year. On behalf of the Council, we wish you all a lovely holiday season and a peaceful New Year!

– Mari Basiletti, Chairperson



*At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reading Group. Left to Right: Gloria Dennis, PEI Family Violence Prevention Services; Judy Clark, AWA President; and Michelle Jay and Mari from the PEIACSW.*

*Mari Basiletti*

## Memorial Services for Victims of Violence

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

December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On and around December 6, candle-lighting services remember 14 young women who in 1989 were murdered because they were women in what became known as the Montreal Massacre. We remember ten women since 1989 murdered on Prince Edward Island by men who knew them. Join others in your community to light a candle of remembrance, to remember, to reflect, and to act so these murders end.



### **Charlottetown Memorial Service**

12:00 noon, Tuesday, December 6  
Mi'kmaq welcome: Elder Judy Clark  
Guest Speaker: Dima Mreesh  
Special performance by KINLEY  
Memorial Hall, Confederation Centre of the Arts (venue sponsor), Charlottetown  
More info: 902-368-4510  
PEI Adv. Council on the Status of Women

### **Summerside Memorial Service**

12:00 noon, Tuesday, December 6  
Summerside Presbyterian Church,  
130 Victoria Road, Summerside  
More info: 902-436-9856  
East Prince Women's Information Centre

**We remember 1989**  
**27 years**  
**since the**  
**Montreal Massacre**

## 2016-2017 Purple Ribbon Campaign Says: Believe Survivors



"Everyone has a right to have a future that is not dictated by the past," said Karen Saakvitne, quoted in a Manitoba resource, *The*

*Trauma-Informed Toolkit*.

The 2016–2017 Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence Against Women challenges us to **believe survivors**. When someone tells you that they have been harmed: believe them. Listen to their story and believe. Unless it is your job to doubt and question, you do not need to doubt or question people. Unless it is your job to find proof, you do not need to find proof.

Our society includes victims and survivors of many kinds of harm. People can survive many ordeals, including war and hunger, or discrimination, hatred, and isolation. Some Indigenous people in Canada have survived residential schools and their legacy;

across Canada, all Indigenous people have survived the historic trauma of policies and decisions that deny their worldview and that hurt them as a group.

Some people have been victims or survivors of violence – gender violence, family violence, sexual violence, emotional or psychological violence, or physical violence.

Victims and survivors of all kinds have experienced trauma. We can take a trauma-informed approach to those around us and build healthy relationships by listening to people's stories and believing what they tell us.

When we believe a survivor, we help to make the world more just, more safe, and more predictable for them and for all of us.

*On Friday, November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, please join us from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for a special screening of Harmony Wagner's award-winning film Singing to Myself. Tickets available at The Guild box office.*

## Purple Ribbon Guide for Teachers



Again this year, the Purple Ribbon Campaign has produced a resource guide for PEI teachers. The guide includes bilingual handouts for students about what it means to believe survivors, including resources on consent and healthy relationships. Resources for teachers focus on trauma-informed teaching, and resources from the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, MAN UP PEI, and the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention's Youth Engagement Working Group. The resource guides provide teachers with clear links to the curriculum outcomes for Grades 7–9 Social Studies, Grade 9 Health, and high-school Family Life. Resources from the teachers' guide are available on request or can be downloaded from the PEIACSW website, [www.gov.pe.ca/acsw](http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw).



## Multilingual Poster

This year's multilingual 11"x17" poster features striking artwork created by our Chairperson, Mari Basiletti. The poster highlights the Purple Ribbon Campaign theme "**Believe survivors**" in English, French, Mi'kmaq, Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, Nepali, Korean, and Spanish. These represent the founding and most commonly spoken languages of our province. Posters are available by request, or at our website, [www.gov.pe.ca/acsw](http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw).



## Advisory Council Meetings 2016: Highlights

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women meets six times each fiscal year in communities across Prince Edward Island. At meetings, members focus attention on issues important to the status of Island women. They plan actions to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and her government. They organize events and publications to raise awareness of issues among members of the general PEI public.

### February 10, 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

#### Setting Equality Report Card Priorities

At Kelly Robinson's last meeting as Chair, Council members decided on priorities to assess for the next Equality Report Card; a new timeline will see this released in 2018. Members also discussed points to raise at the Child Protection Act Review and celebrated retiring members, Louise MacLeod and Kelly Robinson.

### April 20, 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

#### Welcoming Our New Chairperson

During Mari Basiletti's first meeting as new Chair, Council members were engaged in a presentation on the situation of temporary foreign workers in PEI by Josie Baker of Cooper Institute. Members also reviewed positive updates on sexual and reproductive health services.

### June 8, 2016, DeBlois, PEI

#### Renewing Partnerships and Coalitions

Council members visited École Pierre-Chiasson in DeBlois for a meeting focused on reviewing community partnerships. Members welcomed Debbie Langston as

a new member and celebrated retiring vice-chair Catherine Rankin. They set new Council policies related to workplace violence and domestic violence and selected the Purple Ribbon Campaign theme.

### September 20, 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

#### A Preference for Equality Workshop

After a half-day afternoon meeting discussing policy priorities to present to Minister Biggar, Council members welcomed the general public to a workshop on a gender and diversity analysis of the electoral options on the plebiscite on democratic renewal.

### November 17, 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

#### Purple Ribbon Pinning Bee

Council welcomed three new appointed members to the table: Madison Blanchard, Pam Montgomery, and Lalana Paul. We heard a presentation on The Bridge, a service intervention for cases of acutely elevated risk, and Council opened up the meeting to the public for a Purple Ribbon Pinning Bee at lunchtime.



New Council member Debbie Langston of Blooming Point was appointed in March 2016. Originally from London, England, Debbie works with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy as a family support worker.

New Council member Madison Blanchard, appointed in September 2016, is a young Islander living in Charlottetown and is a journalism student at UPEI.



New Council member Pam Montgomery lives in Summerside, where she is CEO of Downtown Summerside Inc. and an advocate for people living on the autism spectrum.

New Council member Lalana Paul is a Cree woman living in Melville. She has extensive experience as a front-line worker with women leaving violence, and she works at Native Council PEI.



**Next meeting:** December 6, 2016, in Charlottetown, PEI. Council members will help to coordinate the annual Montreal Massacre Memorial Service.

## National Coalition of Advisory Councils Meets Federal Status of Women Minister in Ottawa

The National Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women held its annual meeting in Ottawa from September 26 to 27, 2016. The meetings provided the Coalition with an opportunity to meet with Hon. Patty Hajdu, the Federal Minister of Status of Women, to share and discuss issues related to women's equality across the country as well as to highlight how the Coalition can advance the interests of women. "We were very pleased to hear from Minister Hajdu," said Linda Ross, current Chairperson for the Coalition. "We were impressed by the Minister's comprehensive and helpful update on Status of Women Canada's work, especially on gender-based violence. Violence against women and girls affects all of our communities. It was heartening to hear the voices of women from across Canada

were heard in consultations. The themes from these consultations are very familiar from what we hear from women in our provinces and territories."

Ross said, "Minister Hajdu was also open to concerns at the table about how the National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls will hear Inuit women's stories in their own language and provide appropriate support for families." Added Ross, "The Coalition is a national voice for women. We are very happy to have had this opportunity to share with Minister Hajdu the work of Coalition members individually and together as a collective voice for women's equality."

During their time in Ottawa, members also met with the Federation of Canadian

Municipalities and Equal Voice National to discuss opportunities to increase women in leadership. Other national gender-equality issues we share in common include sexual assault response, the need for respectful workplace policies and codes of conduct that are effective and that apply to employees as well as elected officials at all levels of government.



Some members of the National Coalition of Advisory Councils on the Status of Women with federal Status of Women Minister, Hon. Patty Hajdu.

