

# Grandmother Moon

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

Spring 2009



## A Word from the Executive Director

We are coming to the end of our 2008-2009 fiscal year and many things have changed. I am currently on maternity leave but continue to work actively with the shelter and on various committees. During my absence, Lou Ann Stacey has stepped in as the Interim Executive Director. We welcome Lou Ann as an important addition; she brings with her extensive experience and drive to continue to contribute to the success of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal.

Financially, the shelter has undergone various changes. In 2008, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation approved additional funds for sweat lodges, workshops and the opening of an external office. For more information on these and other programs, please see Kerry Tannahill's report.

We have welcomed many new staff members to the shelter; in particular we would like to welcome Amira Messieh, our new Administrative Assistant. Amira brings with her a vast background of experience, education and training in accounting. Since Amira has begun the shelter has already undergone many drastic changes for the improvement of its accounting systems and administration.

As part of the many committees that I have been involved with I am proud to announce that as part of the Sweat Lodge Committee in conjunction with the Botanical Gardens, the grand opening of the Sweat Lodge will be coming this summer 2009.

In 2008-2009 we held three Urban Aboriginal

Community Strategy Meetings, the first of which was held on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. These meetings have proven to be a great success in bringing together the various organizations within the greater Montreal area and surrounding communities. Since our first meeting, the UACS has formed subcommittees made up of dedicated members committed to making a change and working together for the advancement of each of their causes. We all look forward to creating a positive change through these committees for the future of our urban Aboriginal clientele and urban Aboriginal population.

As mentioned, although I am on maternity leave I will continue to be very much involved in the workings of the NWSM as well as part of committees in particular the Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy. I look forward to the developments to come over the New Year.

In the Spirit of Healing,

Nakuset



## Welcoming our Interim Executive Director

Hi my name is Lou Ann Stacey. I will be replacing Nakuset as Executive Director at the Native Women's Shelter, while she is off on maternity leave. I am from the Mohawk Territory of Kah-

nawake. I look forward to working at the Native Women's Shelter.

Lou Ann Stacey

## Announcements

### External Office

The external office is now in full operation, sessions are being held Tuesdays and Thursdays with Art Therapist Pascale Annual and Psychotherapist Marcelle Durrum

### Logo

We will be revising the NWSM logo and will be holding a contest for the new design of our logo. The design must represent our vision and mission and be consistent with the shelter's goals and objectives. Please submit your designs.

### Survivors

If you or a family member is a survivor of residential school and you would like to share your story, please contact us.

### Volunteers

Thanks to our many volunteers the Native Women's shelter of Montreal is able to offer a multitude of services to our clientele. If you are interested in volunteering for the NWSM please visit our website, [www.nwsm.info](http://www.nwsm.info), or contact us

For more information, please contact Kerry Tannahill at 514-933-4688, [kerrytannahill@gmail.com](mailto:kerrytannahill@gmail.com)

## Clinical Supervisor's Update

Tansi, bonjour, greetings everyone,

As we move into a new season, we have had more than a few changes at the NWSM.

First and foremost I would like to welcome four new workers who have joined our team since the last newsletter: Lou Ann Stacey is going to be heading our team as the Interim Director for the next year and a half. She comes with a new outlook and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our team. We look forward to working with her and making positive changes as we move forward.

Amira Messieh, our new Administrative Assistant is also a great asset to the team as she too brings a wealth of experience and dedication to the team. She has not been here long and we all feel the positive input and charisma in her work. It's going to be a pleasure having her on our team.

Deborah Lee and Warittha Mangmeephol were hired as On Call Frontline Workers, both of these ladies also bring positive qualities and experience that they have began to share with both clients

and staff. They are both great assets to our team and we welcome and look forward to working with them a long while.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have devoted their time and energy in helping us with everything from child care to office work. We really appreciate the time and service that they provide to both clients and workers. A heartfelt thanks to each of them and the gifts that they bring and inspire.

The last few months' shelter has once again been operating at full capacity and unfortunately we have had to refer callers to other shelters because we could not handle the amount of calls received. Although, it is nice to see women and children at the shelter the flip side of that is there is still the same social problems and issues at hand that continue to manifest themselves against our marginalized population. Social problems such as lack of affordable housing, discrimination, conjugal violence to name just a few and although we are more knowledgeable about our rights as women, this still continues to be a battle that is not finished.

For a city large as Montreal, one would expect to see more resources available to meet the needs of Aboriginal women, but this is not yet the case and it appears that we are not the only shelter or Aboriginal organization that is working to capacity within limited funding. We may be in a recession but hopefully with time and effort we will find new ways of breaking down these barriers and developing the resources required.

In closing, I would like to congratulate each member of my team for their dedication and hard work. Working in this environment can be stressful and burnout is more apparent, but with each member of the team they bring knowledge, compassion and a very strong desire to help women who are experiencing difficulties. All I can add is that this is so commendable and I as Clinical Supervisor I appreciate their efforts in the fantastic work they do and am proud to be working with them.

Nakumik, Meegwetch, merci, thank you

Brenda Crane Martin, Clinical Supervisor

## Learning, sharing and loads of fun!

Here we are approaching Spring 2009 and we've survived another cold winter in beautiful Montreal. The artic winds could not dispel the laughter nor the warmth that enveloped the shelter. The hallways were brightly decorated with invitations and



Clients' collage, workshop with Terri Normandin - Sept. '08

sign up sheets to weekly workshops. Amongst a few of these I had the opportunity to take the ladies on 'walkabouts' through the city streets as we examined *Sexuality in the media* and to partake in grocery kart races while putting our budgeting skills to work. Educational and fun! As part of my vision for my programming I invited Maggie Carruthers, an energy worker from Nova Scotia to facilitate her workshop titled "Emotional Energy Conservation". The workshop having been a great success encouraged me to invite her back this spring. She will be returning in April for an encore presentation.

The holidays presented great opportunity for activities and workshops that revolved around the festivities. Joining me in co-leading workshops in December were frontline workers Jennifer Shearer,

Irene Qavavaug and Raina Diabo. I extend my gratitude and much thanks to them as they helped me discover new ways of sharing and presenting ideas. Discussions on family, party atmosphere gatherings, alcohol & drug awareness as well as interpersonal relationships were widely explored.

Once again I look forward to sharing my time with the clients and bringing new adventures in learning as we collaborate together in the workshops. In believing that the Great Spirit guides us, my hope for us all is that we may share in unity and peace for a healthy and healing atmosphere.

And the Universe will provide...

Terri Normandin, Sexual Assault Counselor

## Voices of Our Residents - Giving Thanks

First of all I thank my creator for taking care of me and watching over me.

I am thankful for my health and spirit. I am thankful for having had good parents and lots of brothers and sisters. I thank all my friends and all of those who helped me out through my turmoil.

I am also grateful for having nice hot meals and a nice bed to comfort me.

Thank you Native Women Shelter for taking care

of me, I cannot do it by myself and I need your help.

Thanks.

I am thankful for the family who brought me up, even though it was hard and hurt emotionally and mentally but they did not know who I would turn out to be.

Thanks for teaching me my ways of life who to be there for and who to help. I really love helping

others.

Thanks for my grandmothers, grandfathers, great aunt, and the elders who taught me how to live my life without drugs and alcohol. I paid attention to their words: just be there for who really needs you and who can't help themselves, respect is the passage for happiness.

Thanks.

## Conjugal Violence

Conjugal violence has been reported as one of the greatest issues impacting the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada. A 2004 Statistics Canada survey revealed that spousal abuse rates among Aboriginal women were three times higher than those of non-Aboriginal women. Furthermore, the report showed that Aboriginal women were more likely to experience the most severe forms of spousal abuse, and consequentially to suffer more physical injury, receive more medical attention,

and take more time away from their daily activities, in comparison to non-Aboriginal victims of conjugal violence. Emotional abuse, which includes name-calling, threats, jealousy, preventing access to income, and limiting contact with others, was also more commonly reported by Aboriginal women in Canada. Twice as many Aboriginal women reported having been stalked than non-Aboriginal women, and lastly the rate of spousal homicide among Aboriginal women was eight times

greater than that of non-Aboriginal women.

It has been the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal's mission since 1987 to combat these statistics in an environment that aims not only at providing safety, but also prioritizes cultural identity, self-esteem and independence. Together, with awareness and compassion, we can make a change.

Rachel Richer, Frontline Worker

## A Note from the Harm Reduction Coordinator

Hello,

The Harm Reduction Project is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation and there have been many great activities that have taken place over this time. In the past year alone we have seen many great things take place.

I have been attending various conferences and training to better serve the clients of the program. I am very excited to share with all of our readers that I was fortunate enough to receive a full scholarship from the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network to attend AIDS 2008 in Mexico City from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to August 8<sup>th</sup> 2008.

December was a fun filled month that kicked off



AIDS Awareness Celebration Cake - Dec. '08

with an AIDS Awareness lunch at the shelter. The women watched a special DVD presentation of 4 women sharing their stories of living with HIV; we gave a prayer for those living with and affected by HIV as well as a special prayer for the women we have lost; Odaya performed a few songs for us; and of course a delicious home cooked meal. All of this was preceded by an HIV 101 workshop.

The NWSM will be developing new policy and receiving free legal training sessions from Lynne Chlala on issues of HIV, Hepatitis C, Sexually Transmitted Infections, record keeping, etc. I have been working towards this project for some time now and it has finally come to fruition.

In collaboration with Jodi Ouimet of Onen'to:kon Treatment Services, I have been doing regular street patrol in the downtown area. We are hoping to reach as many Aboriginal women as possible to offer them Harm Reduction and Treatment Outreach services.

I continue to offer regular workshops on such topics as HIV, Hepatitis and STIs as well as my collaborative Nutrition and Cooking classes with Centre des Femmes. I also have a wonderful volunteer, Ruth Ronn, facilitating workshops on Contraception.

With Pascale C. Annual, I co-facilitated 2 new workshops on HIV. Using art, we developed our own personal messages on HIV prevention and anti-discrimination. The workshops were well received and we are hoping to continue using art as education. I am in the planning stages of a Body Mapping workshop.

If you have any questions about the services that I offer, please feel free to contact me by phone at (514) 933-4688 or e-mail at [carrie.nwsm@gmail.com](mailto:carrie.nwsm@gmail.com)

Carrie Martin,

Harm Reduction Coordinator



Workshop, Creative Responses to Health Issues II with Carrie Martin and Pascale Annual - Feb. '09

## Mother Nature's Gentle Healers

My name is Alexandra. Amongst many other things, I am a part-time frontline worker at the NWSM. I would like to share with you some of my knowledge and experience regarding a very ancient and gentle form of self-healing: *flower remedies*. I first came across them several years ago in my work with abused and neglected animals who were not responding to any conventional form of treatment.

So what exactly are these flower remedies, and how can they help you and your clients? Flower Remedies are a vibrational remedy. They are entirely natural and have no known side-effects.

They work on the subtle energy fields of the body. They have their greatest effect on emotional issues and mental states. They strive to heal the whole person. Most people who use flower essences experience big shifts in their lives, always in a very positive manner.

Here are some examples of the kinds of issues the remedies can help with: depression, fear, anxiety, trauma, low self-esteem, lack of hope, mental and physical exhaustion, jealousy, anger, impatience, mental chatter and many more...

The most widely-available remedies today are Bach flower remedies and can be purchased from

natural health stores. There are 38 Bach remedies, each of them dealing with very specific mental states. For a complete list, go to

<http://www.bachcentre.com/centre/remedies.htm>.

If you have any questions concerning these remedies, or would like to find out how to make your own, or how you could use them in your work with others, please do not hesitate to contact me at [alexandra.kramer@gmail.com](mailto:alexandra.kramer@gmail.com)

I shall be more than happy to help you.

Alexandra Kramer, Frontline Worker

## Message from the Program Coordinator

I would like to first introduce myself, my name is Kerry Tannahill and I have been the new Program Coordinator since September of 2008. Prior to my position as Coordinator I was employed at the shelter as a Frontline worker. The experience as Frontline worker provided me with the opportunity to work directly with the clients and helped open my eyes to the many needs, hopes and concerns of our diverse clientele. In the short time that I have worked as the Program Coordinator I had the opportunity to broaden my own horizons even more. The residents of the shelter, as well as all our staff, are such an inspiration and every day I am honored to learn something new from each and every one of them. I also had the opportunity to work closely with Nakuset, the Executive Director, prior to her departure on maternity leave. During the past few months we were able to secure extra



Retreat Destination, May '09

funding for the opening of an external office as well as additional workshops and quarterly sweat lodges.

We are now offering monthly workshops at the shelter on Parenting, Self-Esteem, Anger Management, and Recovery from Violence. We are also offering workshops with testimonials from survivors of residential schools as well as women impacted by the residential schooling system. It is important that the stories of these women are shared and their voices are heard in order to move towards healing the past, present and future generations. If you or a family member are a survivor of residential school and would like to share your story with the ladies at the shelter in order to carry on the spirit of healing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Further to the workshops and testimonials we are proud to announce the opening of our new external office. We are currently holding weekly Art Therapy and Psychotherapy sessions at this office for in-house and outreach clients. These sessions are open to all clients and are also free of charge to all clients.

In addition to extra funding received from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, they have also provided us with the funds to hold quarterly sweat

lodges for clients. The first of these sweat lodges will be held at a retreat in early May and we are looking forward to inviting all staff and clients in-house and outreach to attend.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our great thanks, on behalf of the shelter and all our staff and residents, to all the dedicated volunteers who continue to offer their time and energy to the betterment of our organization. The volunteers' dedication has made it possible for us to have a working clothing depot, childcare for clients, help in office work, as well as accompaniments to our new external office. We also have volunteer Yoga instructors, Reiki massage therapists and an Accupressurist among many other things. On a daily basis these individuals contribute to the healing and well-being of the shelter, staff and residents and we thank them all for their support.

If you would like more information or if you are interested in offering your services, volunteering, or if you would like to offer residential school testimonials, please do not hesitate to contact me at 514-933-4688 or by email at [kerrytannahill@gmail.com](mailto:kerrytannahill@gmail.com).

Kerry Tannahill, Program Coordinator

Achieving balance through empowered healing.

## Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

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We're on the web !  
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