

Grandmother Moon

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

Winter 2009-2010



A Word from the Interim Executive Director

The fall season has come and gone. The staff of the Women's Shelter have put together some great workshops, programs and initiatives for the clients. The end of November and the majority of December focused on assisting the clients who are in house as well as the out reach clients to have a better Christmas.

The Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy work continues with the development of the steering committee while the four sub-committees: Health, Social Services, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Education, Employment and training hold their own meetings while working on their individual responsibilities. Staff members from the Shelter are representative on the steering committee as well as the sub-committees. The next meeting for the larger UACS committee is tentatively scheduled for January, 2010.

The Shelter has been very fortunate for hosting students who will do their field placements with in the shelter. We have one student from the Dawson College Social Work program and another student from the Université de Montréal. Although we are here to offer hands on learning experience for these students, the Shelter benefits by having extra hands during busy periods. Thank you to our students.

We would like to thank the community for their continued support in terms of donations and requests to volunteer at the shelter. It is very much appreciated.

Wishing you and yours a very Happy and prosperous New Year.

In peace and healing,

Lou Ann Stacey

Interim Executive Director

Announcements

External Office

The external office is in full operation, sessions are being held Tuesdays with Art Therapist Pascale Annoual and are open to all clients of the NWSM, in-house and outreach.

Logo

Yet another call is being made for submissions. We will be revising the NWSM logo and are still looking for submissions from the community. The design must represent our vision and mission and be consistent with the shelter's goals and objectives. Please submit your designs to Kerry Tannahill at kerrytannahill@gmail.com

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

For more information, please contact Kerry Tannahill at 514-933-4688, kerrytannahill@gmail.com

Thank You 2009

This has been an exciting year, with bright changes everywhere we look. The shelter received a well deserved face lift with renovations and our Interim Executive Director, Lou Ann Stacey, has worked her magic on the staff. The clients officially started the walking group back in April called "Spirit Walkers" and to date we have had over 400 pairs of feet walking towards better health. The weekly workshops have flourished with the help of co-facilitators. Special thanks to Raina Diabo for her skills in adaptations and teaching me the true meaning of "time". As well in 2009 we welcomed Maggie

Carruthers and Robert Jones to the shelter to share their knowledge and help give the women the added tools to succeed. More workshops with these very talented individuals are planned for the New Year.

The stars of the day are indeed the clients. They have shown me what it means to be a survivor and it is the lessons I learn from them that help me in my daily healing. Bravo to the women of the NWSM for they are the ones that give me the courage to step out into the sunlight and face another day. My wish for the New Year is to bring to them big-

ger and better workshops that will lift their spirits and put smiles on their beautiful faces and help them through the tough times. I plan to walk beside them, encourage them each and every day, and go the distance that it takes. This has been an amazing year and I am blessed and filled with gratitude for the support and team work from my co-workers. Let's give it all we have and make 2010 another wonderful year!

And the Universe shall provide...

Terri Normandin

Sexual Assault Counsellor



Zoë Thomas and the NWSM's Christmas Gingerbread



AIDS Awareness Cake - 2009



NWSM at the 2009 Walk for Life

Voices of our Residents

Dear Shelter,

It's very hard to say how thankful a person is for all you do for a client. It's even harder to say "thank you" to people who have dramatically changed a person's life. I have three people whom I care for dearly who have dramatically changed my life.

Firstly, a very warm and loving thank you to Sedalia (Sweat Lodge Facilitator) who encouraged me to push forward and

has helped me in my journey even though it's hard as she's family. Secondly, to Terri: our stories are similar and I know that you'd be proud. I think you are a huge contributor to my progressive healing and have helped me become a much stronger person. And lastly, and best for last, to Charlotte: you're tough but have helped me in ways I cannot even think of. I don't think you can understand how much your thoughts and opinions matter to me and I care for you dearly.

You've all helped me move forward and I have benefited in more ways than one, and I look forward to more healing as I accept that it is continuous. I love you all and you hold a special place in my heart.

P.S. If it weren't for the shelter itself I wouldn't be where I am so thank you everyone. You are a blessed place and I pray for you everyday.

Client

Clinical Supervisor's Update

Tansi, Kwei,

Winter has finally come and as we look forward to the holidays I would like to take some time to reflect on the past year.

Over the past year the shelter has changed quite considerably. We have seen the physical changes made at the shelter with all the renovations, making it more comfortable and more of a home to our clientele. To those workers who have joined our team, each bringing a wealth

of knowledge, skills, and experience has only made our team stronger. I will take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their hard work and dedication that they have displayed over the past year. I am grateful to be working with staff that is skilled and motivated in helping our clientele. Our jobs are not always easy but with teamwork and support we always make the best of the situations that we are faced with. I thank them from the bottom of my heart and hope that the

next year with all its challenges and opportunities for growth will be better than ever.

Lastly, I take this time to remember those who have departed to the Spirit World; it is during this time that we come together in sisterhood for strength and prayer for change for a better future.

May the Great Spirit walk with you!

Brenda Crane Martin

Clinical Supervisor

A Note from the Harm Reduction Coordinator

Once again, the employees and clients of the shelter took part in the annual "Walk for Life" in September. Many hours were spent in preparation for the event and the end result was a beautiful banner reading, "Beautiful Sisters: In memory of those we have lost and those who continue the journey today". Also, in December, for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Day, we had even more activities including an art workshop during which time everyone designed their own canvas bags decorated with personalized messages of HIV prevention.

More recently, I took part in a Talking Circle facilitated by Jessica Yee, held on the stage at Café Cleopatra in Montreal for the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers. And back in November I took part in the "Sisters in Spirit Vigil Walk around downtown Regina to publicly highlight the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. This latter event was part of the All Nations Hope AIDS Network's 3rd

Annual Aboriginal HIV/AIDS & HCV Conference called "Women: Keepers of the Tipi".

As part of the work for the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Health Committee (MUAHC), I organized and took part in a 2-day trip to Toronto to meet with the employees of Anishnawbe Health to assess the feasibility of opening a similar health centre in Montreal. The MUAHC continues to move forward and if you would like more information about the work we do or about assisting the committee in any way, please feel free to contact me as we are always looking for volunteers.

Apart from the usual workshops offered through the program, I arranged for a 2-day training session for the employees on Self-defence. I also made special arrangements for Sedalia Fazio to offer Women's Teachings to all. Both events were a huge success and due to the response of the latter, I requested once



The MUAHC visits the Anishnawbe Health Centre

again that Sedalia return to the shelter, this time to offer a traditional dancing demonstration which took place at the end of December.

Lastly, I have once again applied for and have been selected as a beneficiary of V-Day McGill. Last year, the money was used to help get our very own clinic at the shelter.

I am looking forward to another great year of project activities and wish everyone a very happy holiday season and wonderful New Year!

Carrie Martin

Harm Reduction Coordinator

Message from the Program Coordinator

We have now come to the end of 2009 and with it we look back at all the things that have been accomplished over the past year. Thanks to the shelter's staff, program funders, donations, and the countless volunteers that we now consider important members of the NWSM team, the shelter offers a broad range of services throughout each month to their in-house and outreach clients. These services range from physical activities like weekly Yoga, to weekly sessions with a Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Art Therapist and Spiritual Healer, to Reflexology, Reiki massage, Beadwork, Hand Drum making, and traditional dancing.

All these services provide our clientele with the opportunity to focus on each of the four aspects of their individualized

healing plans, physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional. The feedback from clients has been overwhelmingly positive and we are working hard to ensure that such services continue to be available.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) project, "Moving Toward the 7th Generation", will be coming to a close at the end of March 2010 and the shelter is working hard to ensure a renewal of this project. In anticipation, we will be organizing wind-down activities over the next quarter that will help the staff and clients to recognize the extent to which the AHF project has contributed to the services offered by the NWSM as well as the great impact this project has had on the population served by the shelter.

We move forward into 2010 with great anticipation and excitement for what the new year holds, working together toward healing.

Kerry Tannahill

Program Coordinator

Meet Cedrik...

Cedrik the Gnome is the newest member of the NWSM team. Cedrik loves to travel and he will be accompanying the shelter's staff on their many adventures in the future. To find out where Cedrik's travels will take him next, check in with us next quarter!



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Achieving balance through empowered healing.

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

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We're on the web !
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