

# *roar*

**The Newsletter of Salt Spring Women  
Opposed to Violence and Abuse:  
Community Development and Research Society**

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*Pat Fagan, Adult Facilitator working with the Youth Team*

## **SWOVA**

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This newsletter is published twice a year by Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse, Community Development and Research Society (**SWOVA**). **SWOVA** is a non-profit registered charity that works for social change. Our primary purpose is to develop solutions to prevent violence and abuse against women and children, through research, education, and community development. Helping to create a world where women and children are valued and able to live without fear of violence and abuse. **SWOVA's** work is in primary crime prevention. Our commitment to develop healthy and respectful relationships, ultimately means a safer community for everyone.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Board of Directors or the staff at **SWOVA**.

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On cover: Youth team members  
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*Maria Rosshumer. Austrian Information Centre Against Violence, Vienna.*



*Verena Kaselit, Program Coordinator of WAVE in her office in Vienna.*



*Exchange Experience conference participants at the Gender Studies Centre in Prague. Czech Republic.*



## *A Busy Little Office*

In June, I gave a workshop on our schools-based violence prevention project at the Exchange Experience in Prague, an international conference on family violence. This is one of the many exciting events that has taken place since our last newsletter.

Things have been very busy in our little office. We have entered our fourth year of the Women and Violence: Education is Prevention project, funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy. Students in grades 7, 8, 9, and 11, in School District #64, will continue to participate in the workshops on Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships.

The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal, and Women's Services of B.C. has contracted with **SWOVA** to assist two other school districts in the province to set up a schools-based violence prevention program similar to ours. Quesnel and the Gold Trail School Districts (Cache Creek, Clinton, Ashcroft, and Lytton communities) are the two districts that we will assist in delivering the

healthy relationships curriculum this school year. The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre and the South Cariboo Elizabeth Fry Society are the two community groups partnering with their respective school

districts to coordinate the project.

Each district has hired their own coordinator and is in the process of hiring their own adult and youth facilitation teams. **SWOVA** will provide the training and overall coordination of the projects. This is an exciting opportunity for the knowledge and expertise of **SWOVA** to be

shared with other rural and semi-rural communities, such as Salt Spring Island. These school districts will be left with local trained facilitators and the knowledge of how to operate this type of community-school partnership program.

All of these things are keeping us busy and providing us with opportunities to see our work grow and flourish. I hope you enjoy reading about the many activities that we have been involved in since our last newsletter.

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**Lynda Laushway**  
Projects Coordinator

At the end of May, Ahava Shira and I traveled to Antigonish, Nova Scotia for a consultation visit with our sister project, The *Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education* Project. Both projects are funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

It was exciting to return to Nova Scotia for our second consultation visit and check in with the project after their first year of program delivery. We had many experiences to compare and a lot of information to share. Ahava, an adult facilitator here on Salt Spring, was thrilled to observe the Nova Scotia facilitators deliver a very familiar workshop to Grade 7 students.

We reviewed the four foundational curriculums of our projects and discussed pieces that worked well, in addition to the challenges. The Nova Scotia group shared curriculum adaptations created to meet the needs of their diverse student population.

by Lynda Laushway • SWOVA Projects Coordinator

*“When I dare to be powerful - to use  
my strength in the service of my  
vision, then it becomes less and less  
important whether I am afraid” -  
Audre Lorde*

In Nova Scotia there are significant First Nation’s (Micmaq) and African Nova Scotian student populations. While many of the workshop sessions have been successfully received in both Antigonish and on Salt Spring Island, N.S. facilitators found it necessary to adapt certain workshop material to insure its cultural relevance.

It was great to see the Antigonish project flourishing and we look forward to a continued consultation with our sister project on the east Coast of Canada.



The Nova Scotia team meets with SWOVA representatives

## Exchange Experience in Prague

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, I flew to Vienna and then traveled by train to Prague in the Czech Republic. I was in Europe to attend an international conference on family violence. This was an amazing opportunity to share the work of our schools-based violence prevention project on the international stage. I gave a presentation based on the WAV: EIP project to an audience of people from North and South America, Europe, British Isles, Scandinavia, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Not only was this an incredible chance to share our project, it was also a tremendous opportunity to learn about the violence prevention work and research from diverse international communities.

Rose Wilde from the Womenspace Domestic Violence services gave a presentation on Eugene, Oregon's school based anti-violence work.

Many of the strategies that Ms. Wilde presented were similar to our program here in School District #64. Speaking with Rose after the presentation it was great to learn that she had ordered our Freedom from Fear book and found it very useful. She visited our project this fall so she could see our work first-hand.

A presentation entitled "Young People and Human Rights- Promoting Healthy Relationships, Preventing Domestic Violence" was given by Fiona K. Buchanan from Nourlunga Health Services, Seaford Australia. Ms. Buchanan described their schools-based violence prevention program "Keep Safe, Stay Cool", as "a unique program empowering all young people to choose healthy relationships and to consider domestic violence as a violation of human rights." Again, there were many similarities with our program.

I had the opportunity to meet and exchange project resources (including a beautiful youth designed poster and video) with Ines Zuchowski from the North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service in Australia. Before traveling to Prague, I had heard of Australia's active role in youth violence prevention and my connection with the Australian conference participants confirmed this as true. (See review of Relationship's: Making them Work in this newsletter)

Another highlight of the conference was viewing "Wayward Girls" by Lois Herman from Minneapolis, United States. It is an excellent video tracing the lives of a number of women who were abused as children and went on to share the same foster home. The video portrays the link between childhood abuse, prostitution and other crimes. Inmates at a women's prison shared stories of their lives throughout the video.

Ms. Herman also presented a video that documented a family violence performance art project exhibited in various public spaces including shopping malls. Women, who had experienced family violence, hung their wedding dresses in a creative art installation. Dancers moved through the dresses interpreting the beauty and hope that was ultimately destroyed as the relationships moved from the hopes, dreams and promises, symbolized in the wedding dresses, to violence and abuse.

Another video called "I Witness" was presented by Angelique Jenney and Gary Fohr, from Toronto. This new video explores the effects of family violence on children. In one

particularly emotional scene, we witness a 911 call from a child whose mother is being battered. I know that I had tears in my eyes during the presentation. It's an important video because, as a number of presenters stated, the most powerful way to reach a perpetrator of family violence is to show the effects their violence has on children.

I was also pleased to meet and attend a 'think tank' session organized by Iris Evans, Minister of Children's Services, from Edmonton. (Being the small world that it is, Ms. Evans has a sister who lives on Salt Spring Island, who I know, and she has visited the island numerous times.) Evans gave a presentation on the Alberta program to re-locate and provide new identities for women who have experienced severe family violence. She explained that this is a last option for women whose lives are in danger.

There were numerous other presentations of great interest. If anyone would like further details on conference presentations, please contact me at the **SWOVA** office at (250) 537-1336 or e-mail [swova@saltspring.com](mailto:swova@saltspring.com).

*...it was an  
incredible chance to  
share our project*

# The Gender Studies Centre in the Czech Republic

As part of a series of site visits, I went to the **Gender Studies Centre**. With the assistance of translators, I was able to hear about the ongoing work of the Centre Staff. This was a fascinating experience for me. Fourteen years after the Russian communist occupation of the Czech Republic, democracy is a fairly new experience and Czech people are undergoing many transitions.

The women at **GSC** explained that it is primarily the young women who are working for equity. The older generations of women are used to working outside the home all day, coming home at night and taking full responsibility for the children and the household. Many women are conditioned to accept this as part of what it means to be a woman. In many cases, living with a violent or abusive partner is a daily reality.

**GSC** is a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to gathering and disseminating information about gender issues and women's rights both in the Czech Republic and around the world. Their goals are to promote an understanding and tolerance for lifestyles that do not follow traditional patterns, to create a forum for discussion of social status and behavior of men and women in society, and to circulate information abroad concerning gender issues in the Czech Republic.

Trafficking in women is a very serious problem in the Czech Republic as it is in many countries in Europe, where women are economically disadvantaged. Many women are lured by traffickers through promises of employment as a barmaid or waitress in another country. They are then held captive by the traffickers and have all their identity papers removed as well as any access to contact help. They are forced into prostitution.

*GSC is a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to gathering and disseminating information about gender issues and women's rights*

The Gender Studies Library has an extensive collection of books, periodicals and multimedia. **SWOVA's** book *Freedom From Fear: The How-to Guide on Violence Prevention, Inspired by Teens for Teens* was donated to their resource library. They have an online feminist bookshop, and can be accessed through the Gender Studies information server [www.feminismus.cz](http://www.feminismus.cz). **GSC** also organizes public debates and lectures about gender related issues.

Their educational programs include an ongoing series of lectures and seminars devoted to topics related to gender and feminism, held several Tuesdays a month in their library. **GSC** organizes training seminars for the general public and offer more specialized lectures for civil servants, politicians, non-profit organizations and interest groups from various parts of the Czech Republic. In 2002 they offered specialized seminars about equal opportunity issues and prepared an educational module for students and teachers at secondary schools, covering basic information on gender, social stereotypes, gender equality, legislation and other gender related issues.

**GSC** has launched a year-long media project entitled *Women and Media* aimed at increasing gender awareness in the work of Czech journalists, media and advertising companies. Through lectures, seminars, and a new section on their [feminismus.cz](http://feminismus.cz) website, the *Women and Media* project addresses relationships between language, media, gender and stereotypes in representation of women and men. The ongoing project will culminate in the production of gender-related social advertising campaign.

**Feminismus.cz** is an independent internet magazine offering information relating to feminism and gender issues. The first Czech information server of its kind, it is a resource of articles and other references. The website also offers users an opportunity to discuss current events and to share their thoughts. The magazine is located at:  
**www.feminismus.cz.**

The ProFem Consulting Centre for Women Projects operates out of the same offices as the **GSC**. Through training, consulting and publications **proFem** supports the development of projects that contribute to the social, personal and political empowerment of women.

**GSC** is one of the five member groups of The Coordination Circle of Prevention of Violence Against Women, an association dedicated to informing the public about domestic violence and other forms of violence against women.

**Established in 1995,**  
**members of The Circle include:**

**ELECTRA**

*(helping victims of rape and sexual abuse)*

**La Strada**

*(prevention and assistance to victims of trafficking in women)*

**proFEM**

*(consultation centre for women's projects)*

**ROSA**

*(helping victims of domestic violence).*

E-mail contacts for these organizations:

- [gender.office@ecn.cz](mailto:gender.office@ecn.cz)
- [electra@brailnet.cz](mailto:electra@brailnet.cz)
- [lastrada@ecn.cz](mailto:lastrada@ecn.cz)
- [profem@ecn.cz](mailto:profem@ecn.cz)
- [rosa@telecom.cz](mailto:rosa@telecom.cz)

The Gender Studies Centre is also involved in two international projects. **Women's Memories** is an international project recording the everyday life and experiences of women from three generations (born in 1920-1960), using the method of oral history and narrative interview. Participants are from six European countries. Selections from interviews with Czech women have been published in a two-book series entitled *All Our Yesterdays* and *Roma Women's Memories-Roots I*.

The second project, **The KARAT Coalition**, is a network of central and eastern European women's non-governmental organizations. The

coalition supports cooperation among women's organizations which often face similar problems in the post-communist era.

The work of the Gender Studies Centre is of vital importance to women in the Czech Republic. **GSC** survives on donations from international groups and organizations. They receive no government funding

from the Czech Republic and center staff receive on average \$500.00 per month salary. It is difficult for me to understand how they can survive on this.

If anyone is interested in donating to the Czech Gender Studies Centre, they can send their donation to **SWOVA** with a note designating it for this centre.

*...projects that  
contribute to the  
social, personal and  
political empowerment  
of women.*

by Lynda Laushway • **SWOVA** Projects Coordinator

On the return trip home from Prague, I stopped in Vienna at the Head Office of **WAVE** to meet with Program Coordinator, Verena Kaselit.

**WAVE** is a network of European women's non-governmental organizations working in the anti violence field (including women's shelters, counseling centres, crisis lines, prevention, and training). There are approximately 2,000 European member groups in **WAVE**.

The **WAVE** network was founded in 1994 and participated in the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. There are 60 focal points that form the basis of the **WAVE** network. They disseminate **WAVE** information regularly to groups within their network and gather information from the groups within their network and pass it on to the Coordinating Centre in Vienna, and to other focal points. The focal points serve as **WAVE**'s regional and national bases and are its primary source of information.

The Daphne Program supports efforts to stop violence against children, young persons and women. There is a 5 million Euro dollar budget for 2000-2003 for Daphne projects that cover trafficking and sexual exploitation, all forms of domestic violence and abuse, as well as violence in schools and violence towards minority groups and migrants. Many projects by groups associated with **WAVE** are funded by the Daphne Program.

Further information on **WAVE** can be found by accessing their website at: [www.wave-network.org](http://www.wave-network.org)

In the same office complex I also met with Maria Rosslhumer the head of the Austrian Information Centre Against Violence. This is

the prevention, education and information section of the Austrian Women's Shelter Network. It was wonderful to hear about the work that they are doing in Austria to prevent violence against women and children. I was warmly welcomed and it was terrific to be so far from home and to be welcomed by women sharing a deep commitment to shared issues.

*"...violence against women and children destroys marriages, partnerships, relationships and people..."*

In their survey on Women's Shelters in Austria it states that "...violence against women and children destroys marriages, partnerships, relationships and people... In Europe as a whole- and the same is true of Austria in particular- between one fifth and one tenth of all women living in intimate relationships suffer abuse. In the Austrian context this amounts to between 150,000 and 300,000 abused women. Assuming that 5 percent of women and girls in Europe (excluding the former Soviet Union) are subjected to domestic violence, this amounts to a total (in absolute figures) of 12 million women."

For more information on the Austrian Women's Shelter Network you can look up their website at: [www.a oef.at](http://www.a oef.at)

## Year 4 of Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships

Welcome to the fourth year of the Women and Violence: Education is Prevention program. We began the year with a new name: **Get Some Respectful Relationships (R&R)** and a new logo design which we have had printed onto bumper stickers, community resource cards and our new youth team sweatshirts.

This is the first year of the program that we didn't have to hire or train any new facilitators. Instead, we have been able to direct our energy toward deepening the communication and co-facilitation skills of the returning adult team.

We began by whetting our curricular appetites with the final review of grade nine curriculum before delivering it in the classroom during the second and third weeks of September.

Next came training with our local trainer Maggie Ziegler. She helped us to clarify our personal and organizational boundaries and to examine our diverse team values through the lens of an ethical ladder. We were also able to hone in on facilitation issues that particularly confound us and tried on new techniques for dealing with difficult situations that inevitably arise in class.

SafeTeen Boys' Program Director David Hatfield astonished us with his ability to solidly grasp the issues at the core of our facilitation challenges after only a single hour of in-class observation. Our two days together were filled with intense learning and practice.

Especially powerful was the process of telling our personal stories. Through experiments with different ways of sharing the story, we became aware of the essential details which would be the most valuable for sharing with students.

One important element to our work that is new this year is working with the local community group **G.L.O.S.S.I.** in order to address

homophobia and heterosexism as a part of our curriculum. We are also attempting to sensitize ourselves with regards to having English Language Learners in our classes. Although it is an ongoing challenge to try to satisfy the needs of diverse groups, we continue to work toward including the needs of all Gulf Island youth for acquiring the awareness and skills necessary to have healthy and respectful relationships.

As an adult facilitator returning for my fourth year, I am grateful for the astounding personal transformations that I experience through my involvement in this work. Teaching and learning continue to go hand in hand.

*...acquiring the awareness and skills necessary to have healthy and respectful relationships.*

*"It goes on one at a time,  
it starts when you care to act,  
it starts when you do it again after they say no,  
it starts when you say We and know what you mean,  
and each day you mean one more."  
Marge Piercy, "The Low Road"*

by Ahava Shira • Adult Faciliator

## YOUTH TEAM ON THE MOVE...

There is a positive and dynamic role for developing healthy and respectful relationships education and skill-building in the school setting. Youth have shown us that they are not only keen to learn this information and adopt these skills, but that they are also excited to take on a leadership role in violence prevention. We have developed a Youth Team comprised of high school students whom we train and mentor to co-facilitate workshops for their peers and younger students. These peer educators work alongside the adult facilitators, bringing their insider knowledge of youth culture and their ability to model key anti-violence attitudes, values and skills in the classroom, in the developing **Healthy and Respectful Relationships** program.

Our Youth Team members sometimes travel to other communities to co-facilitate workshops with the adult team members.

The following articles have been written by Taylor Booth and Brooke Shergold, two youth team members who along with adult facilitator, Pat Fagan, co-facilitated a two day workshop in Creston, BC. in October.

### **Taylor Booth:**

*When I walked into the room I was amazed at how many youth had shown up. The day started off a bit slow but as the workshop moved along they got more into it and by the end of day 2, I was really pleased by the progress of the group. As a group who had never worked together I was impressed how they really opened up to us and each other. My favorite part of the workshop was the role plays because the student's realistic performances were great. All in all it was a blast and I really appreciate the opportunity.*

### **Brooke Shergold:**

*The workshop in Creston went brilliantly. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and learned so much. At first I was so nervous but after the first part I calmed down and it all went quite well. The group that we were working with had many different individuals who normally wouldn't even talk to each other. It was so great seeing so many*

*unique personalities come together in one room. When the students started to open up about their lives everyone learned quite a lot. Some of the youth shared stories from their lives that were heartbreaking and I could really feel their pain. I'm sure the youth from the workshop will take a step towards making changes in their school and community. Not only did the Creston youth benefit from this experience but Pat (Adult Facilitator) Taylor and I really felt impacted as well. This was a fantastic experience and I look forward to more opportunities in the future. Thank you for inviting me- It was Awesome.*

### **Pat Fagan:**

*The plan for the 2 day workshop in Creston was three-fold;*

- 1) We wanted to empower Youth with the belief that they could contribute to healthy changes in their school and community.*
- 2) We wanted to share the SWOVA workshop philosophies, skills and techniques.*
- 3) We wanted to assist the youth and adult partners in developing a base for a future violence prevention program in their school.*

*The workshop was attended by approximately 35 students and four adults (2 teachers, 1 community youth worker, and their principal). The group of youth was very diverse but their unifying interest of creating a safer school enabled us to make some incredible progress as a group.*

*In the two-day period we moved the group through many of the SWOVA workshop components including ice breaking games, a separate gender exercise, small and large group discussions, individual reflective writing, role-playing, personal story sharing, group building exercises and a workshop closure exercise. The SWOVA youth team members, Brooke and Taylor, played an important role in the workshop. They lead activities, directed discussions, shared their personal experiences and modeled key facilitation skills throughout the 2 days.*

*On the afternoon of the second day, all the youth participants took turns leading the group through workshop components. Demonstrating their new knowledge, the youth facilitated a group discussion on social issues, acted out an impressive role-play on the impact media has on young people and shared personal stories relating to empathy, personal growth and healing.*

*The youth and adult participants enthusiastically engaged with the SWOVA workshop material and methods. This connection was obvious in the energy and positive spirit generated within the group. Beyond my observations of their experience, I was affirmed by the following comments in our closing appreciation circle:*

*“If everyone in our school got to be in these workshops for the 12 hours then our school would be a place I’d actually want to go to everyday.”*

**Male student, gr.8**

*“I think there is a lot of discrimination in our community and it feels like we can change things now.”*

**Female student, gr.11**

*(To the Facilitators)*

*“Thank you for treating us as equals while we expressed our opinions and learned from you.”*

**Female student, gr.11**

*“I was really touched by the personal stories that people have been able to share today.”*

**Bruce, School Principal**

*The workshop in Creston was a great success. It left me feeling very hopeful for the youth in Creston as they embark on creating a safer school community. The experience also re-affirmed my confidence in the SWOVA Respectful Relationship workshop process and content. In making this happen, I am very thankful for the time and effort put forward by the SWOVA board and staff, most notably Lynda who redefined the word persistence while making transportation arrangements.*



In February, 2003, a youth council was established on SSI with funding from the Office of Learning Technologies of the federal government's Human Resources Development Canada Department. The council is part of a network of eight BC communities endeavoring to make a difference for youth in their local communities. The other communities are Vernon, Castlegar/West Kootenay, Port McNeil/Port Hardy, Quesnel, Houston, Prince Rupert and Fort St. John. The SSI youth council is sponsored by the Core Inn, Salt Spring Community Services and **SWOVA**.

In the first quarter, the youth council conducted a survey of local youth to determine what issues youth identified as important to them and what activities were of interest to youth. The survey results showed that housing, transportation and night-time, (cheap or free) recreation activities were of primary interest as well as social justice and environmental issues.

The first quarter focused on recruitment of youth to sit on the council through a theme dance event, promotion at the schools and word of mouth as well as a press release in the local paper. In addition, a Tai Chi Chuan introductory course was offered as well as a dance class. A logo contest was held and the youth council adopted the name "**Youth.comUnity**", signifying our intention to develop computer skills to network and increase youth visibility in our community. One of the youth council members began writing a youth column in the local paper discussing the housing and transportation issues. Another youth council member began researching a rental housing registry for youth.

Six members of the youth council attended a conference in Kelowna where employers and youth met to discuss the expectations of the workplace. The

conference also provided members with an opportunity to network with other youth who are working in other communities.

One of the biggest needs identified by youth in our initial survey was for recreation activities featuring live music as there is no social venue for youth available in our small rural community. To this end, in the second quarter, the council sponsored several dances with performing young musicians, both locally and from Victoria. This gives support and encouragement to our local youth as well as providing young audiences a chance to socialize and dance to live music in a drug-and-alcohol-free space supervised by adults and other youth. Plans for the third quarter include a focus group for a research project on sexual exploitation of youth in conjunction with the Community Policing organization. One of our youth council members will

be the co-coordinator of the "Go Salt Spring Ride Share" program committee, a position funded by the youth council. A group of young people are going on an education and awareness campout to the Walbran, one of the nearby local areas that is threatened by clear-cut logging.

This fall, the council will be working to recruit new members by approaching the secondary school's leadership program, making presentations to

individual classes at the high school, and canvassing local sports events and popular hang outs to let youth know what the youth council is all about. The council will also present a brief to the local school board regarding its Futures 64 program.

There are many types of training opportunities offered through participation on the Youth Council including writing skills, meeting procedures, organization, leadership skills, basic computer skills, networking and developing excellent communication skills. Membership is open to any youth between age 15 – 26. The council feels this fall will be a fresh start on the solid foundation we have implemented so far this year.

*One of the biggest needs identified by youth in our initial survey was for recreational activities*



# Support the work of SWOVA

Please accept my donation toward **SWOVA** research, education and community development in the amount of:

- \$25
- \$35
- \$50
- \_\_\_\_\_ (other)

Donors will be provided with a tax receipt upon request.

## To become a member of SWOVA!!!

Annual membership is \$5-20 depending on ability to pay. Members receive the bi annual Roar newsletter and are invited to attend the AGM.

## To order copies of our resource materials:

Please send me the following items:

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of **Freedom From Fear** book at \$15.00 each

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of **Women and Violence** video at \$25.00 each

(Please make cheques payable to **SWOVA**)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed form and cheque to:

**SWOVA** 390 Upper Ganges Rd., Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 1R7  
Tel/Fax (250) 537-1336 email: [swova@saltspring.com](mailto:swova@saltspring.com)



*“Learning moment to moment  
to be free in our minds and hearts,  
we make freedom possible  
for everyone the world over”*

*-Sonia Johnson*