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

Issue 21 • SWOVA *roar* • Fall - Winter 2004/05



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

inside ROAR

Issue 21 • Fall/Winter 2004/05

- 2 **Message from the Projects Coordinator**
- 3 **SWOVA Awarded International Honours**
- 4 **Evaluation Results - Gulf Islands**
- 5 **Two Districts Evaluation**
- 6 **Successful Partnership**
- 7 **On the Move**
- 8 **2004 Youth Team Profiles**
- 12 **Support the work of SWOVA**



Youth Facilitators Becky Acheson and Taylor Booth, and Project Coordinator, Lynda Laushway, pose with some participants in their workshop in San Diego, California

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. We are 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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Graphic Design: Barnyard Graphics

On cover: Tammy Dean, Youth Facilitator
presents flowers to the Lieutenant Governor of BC,
Iona Campagnola



Lynda at her desk

It keeps getting busier...

We've had an exciting year traveling and training people in the Gold Trail and Quesnel School Districts to deliver a one-year pilot of SWOVA's *Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships* program. We had the opportunity to see some beautiful parts of BC, gained insight into many of the issues facing other rural communities and had the opportunity to work with terrific and very committed individuals.

The "Two Districts" pilot was a huge success and there is a demonstrated need for the program to be continued in these and other communities. Unfortunately, at this time, there are no funds to secure the future of the project in these communities. You will read more about the evaluation of these pilot programs in Researcher/Evaluator Judi Stevenson's article on page 5.

On March 8th, International Women's Day, six female youth facilitators hosted our annual celebration. The guest speaker was The Honourable Iona Campagnolo, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. Eleven of the twelve-member youth team were present and honoured for their work.

SWOVA's program outreach continues. In April, I traveled with two youth team members, Becky Acheson and Taylor Booth, to the 'Violence in The World of Our Youth: Partners in Prevention' conference in San Diego, California. The conference was sponsored by the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute, located in the California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego. There were approximately 300 people attending the conference from all over the United States.

SWOVA's workshop was the only presentation from outside the U.S and was well received by conference participants. Almost half the conference participants were youth, many from the Los Angeles area. Our workshop, *Respectful Relationships- Youth and Adults Partner in Primary Violence Prevention* was a wonderful opportunity to teach people about our project and to learn a lot about youth violence prevention programs in the United States.

In May, SWOVA was honoured with a Women's Safety Award 2004 by Femmes et Villes International, in Montreal. This was a great acknowledgement of the work of this project and we were very honoured to be among the ten recipients who are creating innovative work in this

field across Canada. The Honourable Anne McClellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness presented the award to SWOVA Board member, Heather Bovey at a ceremony in Edmonton, Alberta (see article pg. 3).

At the end of June, Adult Facilitator, Pat Fagan and I traveled to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, to meet with the Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education project. This project is in its fourth year of replicating the model of our program. We had a rich and successful two-day meeting and shared experiences and learnings in working with the curriculums. Antigonish project staff are very pleased with the impact the program has had in their community.

We are currently delivering the Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships program in classrooms in School District #64 and things are running very smoothly. We have a great curriculum, our biggest youth team ever (17 high school students) and great cooperation from the school staffs in fitting the workshops into classroom time. Meet our Youth Team members on pages 8 & 9.

Preparing an overview of the past eight months, I am amazed and proud of SWOVA's commitment to anti-violence work both here in the Gulf Islands and in other communities. This year marks the final year of our core funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre. The SWOVA Board is currently looking at ways to make the program sustainable and for ways for this valuable proven 'best practice' to reach other communities. The future is unknown at this point. We are all hoping that the very positive content and model of this program will have an ongoing presence in our schools, both locally and throughout Canada. We are open to any suggestions or ideas you may have in assisting us in continuing this valuable work.

Happy Autumn!

Lynda Laushway
Projects Coordinator

Awarded International Honours

On May 28, SWOVA's (Saltspring Women Opposed To Violence and Abuse)

Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships program was honoured at an awards ceremony held in Edmonton, Alberta. The Awards were created by 'Femmes et Villes International' based in Montreal, and funded by Status of Women Canada. The awards are designed to reward good practices and policies related to women's safety.

Women's groups, grassroots community organizations, municipal governments, youth organizations and business community groups competed in this first Women's Safety Awards competition. The international jury was impressed with the range of innovative and exciting initiatives from across Canada. Of the 90 submissions, SWOVA was one of the twelve projects selected to receive the honour.

Heather Bovey, SWOVA board member, travelled to Edmonton to receive the award. "Receiving this international recognition was a huge validation of the incredible partnership happening between SWOVA, the local school district and the Saltspring community as a whole. We are extremely proud of our facilitators, Youth Team members and all the students who have participated in this project."

SWOVA's "**Get Some Healthy and Relationships**" program is in its fourth year of delivering healthy relationship/violence prevention workshops to youth at SIMS, GISS, Phoenix and the Outer Islands schools. This past year has also been the first in which the program was successfully delivered in two additional BC school districts, the Quesnel and Gold Trail school districts.

"I'm convinced that SWOVA's program, which is professional, sensitive and thorough, is crucial to stopping the cycle of violence and abuse" notes Judith Boel, a local school board trustee. "This program is very transportable to other districts, as has recently been done in central B.C".

The SWOVA Board is currently involved in strategic future planning as next year is the final year the project will receive funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre. "We are extremely committed to finding the financial resources to continue the delivery of these violence prevention workshops here in the Gulf Islands with our own youth. We are also committed to expanding our initiatives into provincial, national and international communities who could greatly benefit from the last 4 years of evaluated program development," notes Project Assistant Christina Antonick.

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(250) 537-1336.

*"I loved working with
the facilitators because
I could talk and in this class
I no longer felt invisible
- I felt I could talk and
I liked that a lot.
This has really helped."*

Grade 8 Female Student

Evaluation Results for the HRR Program in the Gulf Islands



by Judi Stevenson • Minerva Research & Communications

After three years of extensive evaluation of the 'Healthy and Respectful Relationships' program in Gulf Islands' schools, we've learned a lot. This rare opportunity to conduct longitudinal research, thanks to funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre, provided the basis for curriculum improvement to be done each and every year in response to students' comments and outcomes on a range of measures. Now, it allows me to draw some conclusions, with confidence, about the overall impact of the program.

First, the program model is a strong one: the curriculum and the way it is delivered is effective, both at engaging the great majority of students in activity and discussion that they find stimulating and personally valuable, and at changing their attitudes and behaviours in the direction of healthier relationships. How do we know? To begin with, analysis of social scientific literature shows that SWOVA's program combines almost all of the program elements found in other studies to make a positive difference. More importantly, the majority of Gulf Islands teens and their teachers rated the program highly and showed independent evidence of gains in selected variables.

In terms of program structure and curriculum content, I've identified 20 elements that have contributed to program success. Let me mention just four of them here: (1) a strong community-schools partnership has been built over almost a decade of cooperation between educators and activists; (2) specially trained community-based facilitators have proven to have more credibility and rapport with teens on these sensitive relationship topics than 'regular teachers' and teachers have agreed that such specialists are best; (3) the Youth Team adds to classroom and curriculum effectiveness and might be called 'traction' with other kids; (4) it takes a multi-session, multi-year course to begin to make a statistically significant difference in critical outcomes.

The last point is particularly important because of the difficulty, in schools generally, of finding time in the pressured curriculum for a five-year, 12-sessions per year, non-academic program. To many teachers and educators, it seems long. But what counts as 'long' in a child's life?

Compared to other published anti-violence programs, SWOVA's is middling in length. There are programs out there as short as one session (not usually found by evaluators to be effective) and others that are 60 or 80 sessions long; a few are even longer.

Looked at another way, the American Academy of Paediatrics published a study in 2001 in which they reported that children aged 2-18 years of age were

spending an average of 6.5 hours *per day* using or exposed to all forms of media added together. Some of the time they may be reading Harry Potter or playing innocuous games on the internet, but it is chilling to consider how much of that time is likely to involve displays of verbal abuse, psychological abuse masquerading as humour, and outright bloody violence. In that light, does SWOVA's program still seem long?

The majority of students asked found the length of the program each year (12 sessions) to be about right. More students wanted to have 'more sessions' than wanted fewer. And although a small but vocal minority in

some classes complained that they had 'done the program before' when they encountered it again in a later grade, the objective results from measurement of attitude and behaviour change in all students showed a greater number of statistically significant gains after two years' exposure to the program than after one, and more still after three years' exposure.

Without data on these teenaged girls and boys through adulthood, we cannot know for certain if they will have healthier, more satisfying intimate relationships and experience less violence over the course of their lives, which is the HRR program's vision and goal. But these research results provide a strong basis for optimism on that score, and solid grounds for continuation of a program that engages teenagers in depth and over several years, as this one does.

"Thanks for being open and letting us be open during conversations. I really liked the separate gender activities because you hardly ever get to sit with a group of guys and talk without being judged."

Grade 8 Male Student

Evaluating the ‘Two Districts’ Project

by Judi Stevenson • Minerva Research & Communications

In the fall of 2003, the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services (MCAWS) provided the funding for a one-year test of SWOVA’s “Healthy and Respectful Relationships” program in the school districts of Quesnel (SD 28) and Gold Trail (SD 74). (Gold Trail is a sprawling district that encompasses Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Clinton, Lytton, Lillooet and other villages in the area.) Twenty-nine classes of grades 7, 8, 9 and 11 students participated.

Policy makers in the ministry were particularly interested in the take-up and impact of the program in school districts that are much less homogenous than the Gulf Islands district is. Gold Trail serves a student population that is about 50% First Nations, and Quesnel has a broadly diverse multi-cultural population, including a significant number of Indo-Canadians as well as Asian-Canadian and First Nations children. The ministry provided funds for the evaluation of their experience, and I was pleased to be able to interview and survey students, teachers, administrators and project staff in both communities, and produce a comprehensive report for the ministry. Here are some highlights.

Overall, evaluation results were very positive, providing strong evidence in support of the applicability of the “Healthy and Respectful Relationships” curriculum in other rural communities, where the diversity of the students is more typical of the province. Administrators in the two districts named four aspects of the program as the key elements that attracted them: most importantly by far, the fact that the program takes a multi-layered, multi-session approach to violence prevention, exploring healthy and unhealthy relationships in all their complexity; the use of specially trained, community-based facilitators to deliver the program in the classroom; the inclusion of a peer education component; the fact that the program is well grounded in research and evaluation.

Student outcomes were very good indeed – in fact, better than the results after just one year of program experience in the Gulf Islands. This difference is likely explained by two factors. First, the program has matured significantly since its first year of application in this district: the curriculum has been revised several times in response to evaluations, and facilitators are more experienced; second, evidence from the two districts suggests that baseline or starting levels of disrespect and violence among students were greater there, with fewer parent and community supports for schools and students

generally than is the case in the Gulf Islands.

Data from student surveys showed that very substantial majorities in both districts liked the program and believed that it had value, both in general (for their schools) and also, significantly, for them “in their personal lives”. Substantial majorities wanted to do more HRR sessions next year themselves, and recommended that other students at their grade level have the chance to participate in the program in the

future. (Sometimes they also recommended that younger students be given that opportunity as well.)

On measures of ‘peaceful problem solving’ and ‘conflict resolution skills,’ students in the two districts showed modest but encouraging gains. On frequency measures of disrespect, abuse and violence (as perpetrators, victims and witnesses), there were positive shifts - i.e., decreases from pre- to post-test on a number of dimensions. These are very good results, particularly for a one year trial of a four-year program.

“It was especially good to work with the facilitators because they weren’t afraid to talk about difficult things.”

Grade 11 Male Student

by Christina Antonick

In late June, project coordinator Lynda Laushway and Adult Facilitator Pat Fagan traveled to Nova Scotia for SWOVA's third annual consultation and site visit with Antigonish Women's Resource Centre's "Rural Youth Healthy Relationships Education Project", based on the model of SWOVA's Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships Program.

"I am very pleased with the Antigonish project. It is exciting to hear how the program has positively impacted both the school and larger community here in Nova Scotia." noted Lynda. Pat Fagan was also impressed with the enthusiasm and determination of the Antigonish facilitators. "Their facilitation skills are evident in the energetic and thoughtful quality of their presentations. Their passion as activists fuels their facilitation and training of youth facilitators."

During the consultations, Lynda and Pat also had the opportunity to hear that, like SWOVA, the Antigonish program is currently addressing the continuation of their NCPC funded violence prevention education project, another successful partnership between schools and a

community agency. Antigonish Women's Resource Centre staff expressed the tremendous potential they feel the program possesses and would like to see an expansion to other school districts in the province if funding can be secured.

Lynda remains hopeful about the future for both SWOVA and the Nova Scotia program.

"Partnerships such as the one we have participated in with Antigonish for the past three years are of great significance and value for all involved. Meeting with all the dedicated individuals who make this work possible, it is apparent to me that in addition to the need for anti-violence programs, there is also a strong and determined collective voice willing to see that this work continues in communities throughout the country."

"A lot of students don't realize the effect they can have on other people and I think these sessions are an eye opener."

Grade 9 Male Student



Pat Fagan, SWOVA Facilitator in discussion with Patrick Taman, Antigonish Facilitator during the annual site consultation

Healthy and Respectful Relationships on the Move

by Ahava Shira

As one of the adult facilitators involved in last year's training of two additional school districts in rural B.C. I learned a tremendous amount from the interactions and connections with the new facilitators. I especially appreciated the feeling of shared commitment to preventing violence against women and children.

This expansion of SWOVA's program to include the training and delivery of the Developing Healthy and Respectful Relationships program to two rural school districts in B.C., one in the Quesnel School District and one in the Gold Trail School District, (Lytton, Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Clinton, Lilloet) was an exciting endeavor. The genesis of our original program took place in a predominantly white community. Expansion into these two rural multicultural communities with high First Nations and Indo-Canadian student populations offered SWOVA the occasion to study the transferability of our program to communities with different cultural compositions.

A large part of what has ensured the success of our award-winning program must be attributed to the ongoing attention that we pay to the development of partnerships. This was indeed a vital part of the experience in Quesnel and Gold Trail. Initially, Maggie Ziegler and David Hatfield traveled to the two communities for a weekend workshop on team-building and facilitation skills. Both the adult facilitators and the coordinator

from SaltSpring spent five days training and mentoring with the new facilitators and coordinators at a conference center in 100 Mile House. Follow-up included a weekend in each district to train the local youth teams; two subsequent visits by the adult facilitators to observe the local facilitators in the classroom and provide feedback and encouragement; and a final visit to share the curriculum changes that were necessitated by the differences in population.

Back on SaltSpring, the adult facilitators went through an extensive curriculum review process to incorporate the changes from the two districts into the original curriculum, which is now considerably richer in content and meaning due to the contributions from the two districts' facilitators.

Having participated in this training, I am confident in SWOVA's ability to engage youth in violence prevention education. I am excited and hopeful that SWOVA's work will continue in provincial, national and international communities.

"These sessions help people to realize that bullying and abuse is serious and it will make them think about it and they may try to stop."

Grade 9 Female Student



Deanna Hostings, Gillian Cure, Rebecca Romanchych, Miguel Godin, facilitators, Gold Trail School District, with SWOVA Facilitator, Ahava Shira and Coordinator, Cyndy Howman

2004 YOUTH TEAM PROFILES

Amy Glode Marchant:

Why are you on the youth team?

In grade 9, I was in one of the SWOVA workshops and the message that the program gives is one that I strongly believe in, so I wanted to help spread it.

Someone you find inspiring?

Steve Irwin – animal/environmental conservationist from Australia.

What are the skills you are learning in working with SWOVA?

How to be myself in public without having a hard time about it.



Morgan Smith:

What are the skills you are learning in working with SWOVA?

Communication, public speaking and confidence in sharing my own stories.

Someone you find inspiring?

Dancers – their dedication and how they stick to the physical work constantly – its hard work!

How do you think other schools might benefit from having a program like SWOVA's?

It may open the eyes to abuse and violence and possibly make it an easier topic to talk about.



Addi Perkins:

Why are you on the youth team?

To make a difference. I have enjoyed the in-class program and wanted to experience it as a facilitator.

Someone you find inspiring?

My family.

What are the skills you are learning in working with SWOVA?

Respecting other people's ideas and communication skills.



Garrett Macdonell:

Hobbies?

Snowboarding, playing music, surfing and social events.

Someone you find inspiring?

John Coltrane.

How do you think other schools might benefit from having a program like SWOVA's?

I think that there is a lot of violence throughout schools in B.C. SWOVA's program would be beneficial to other schools.



Amanda Noyes:

Hobbies?

Acting, swimming and being with friends.

If you could change one thing about the world today?

I would make it so there was more understanding among people because with understanding comes compassion.



Nicola Temmel:

Why are you on the youth team?

I strongly believe in positive youth involvement in community.

Someone you find inspiring?

Harriet Tubman for her courage, wisdom and strong sense of justice.

If you could change one thing about the world today?

I would end the world wide suffering caused by AIDS.





Dejan Loyola:

Someone you find inspiring?
Michael Moore. He isn't afraid to speak his mind and stand up for what he believes in.

How do you think other schools might benefit from having a program like SWOVA's?

Especially in bigger schools, they might realize what bullying is.

Jessica Dollheiser:

Why are you on the youth team?

It's a lot of fun, a great way to meet people and there are so many cool opportunities to do things.



How do you think other schools might benefit from having a program like SWOVA's?

I think every school should have a program like SWOVA because it is really beneficial to all. Research has shown that it helps.

If you could change one thing about the world today?

Poverty because it is such a big problem.



Brooke Shergold:

Why are you on the youth team?

I'm on the youth team because I want to make a difference in our community.

What are the skills you are learning in working with SWOVA?

This is my final year on the youth team and I will definitely be maximizing my learning. In the last 4 years I have learned so much and have really grown as a person.

If you could change one thing about the world today?

I, like so many Miss America's, would like world peace.

Taylor Ashton Booth:

Why are you on the youth team?

I'm here because it's a great growing experience for life.

Hobbies?

Guitar, Hackey sack, music, computers and food.



Jenna McBride:

Someone you find inspiring?
My mom for being strong yet sensitive and caring.

What are the skills you are learning in working with SWOVA?

Public speaking, team work and learning to always keep an open mind.



Becky Acheson



Joel Eddington



Edwin Kwong



Tammy Dean



Buffy Jones



Jacob Schweda



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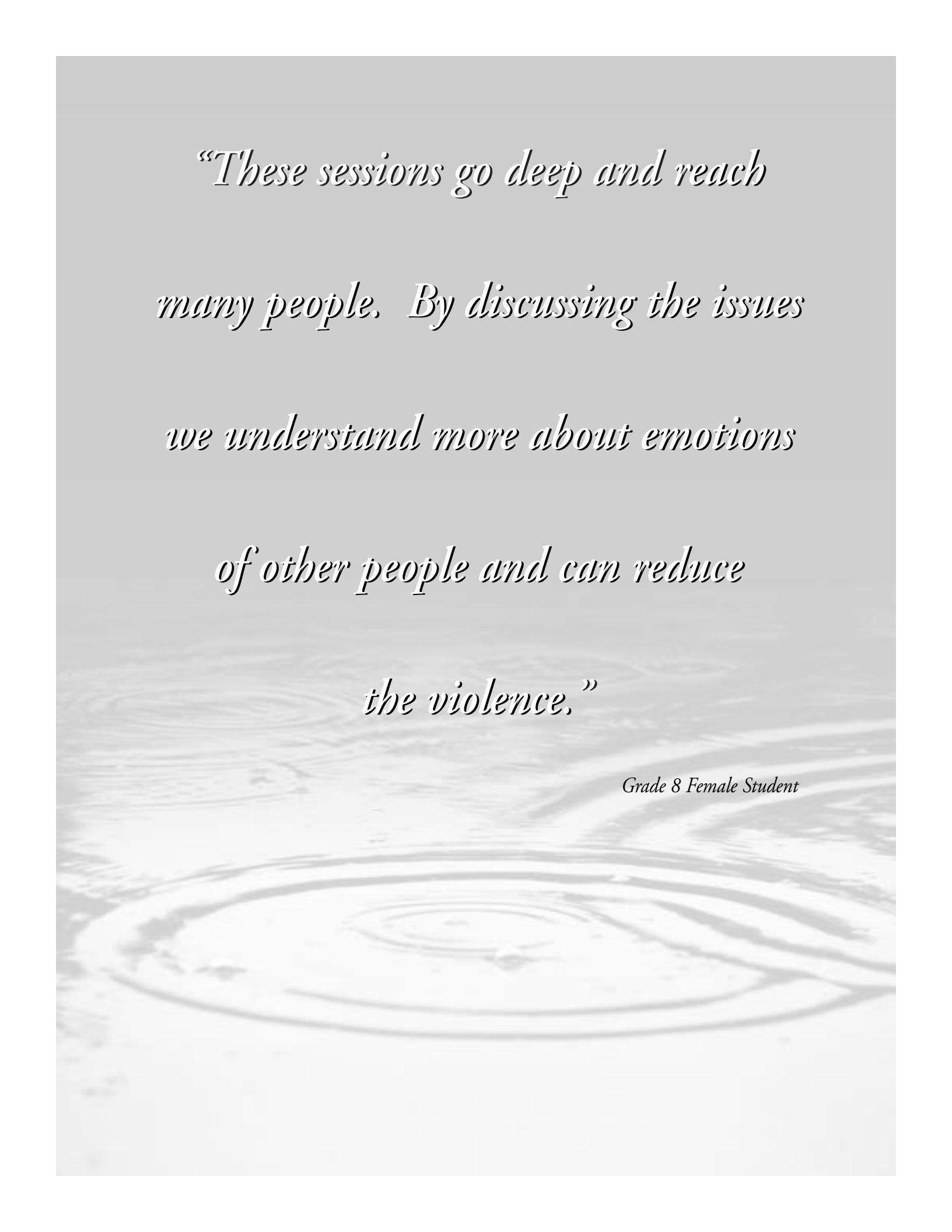
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*“These sessions go deep and reach
many people. By discussing the issues
we understand more about emotions
of other people and can reduce
the violence.”*

Grade 8 Female Student