

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

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Empowering women to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and society

Honourary Patroness - Her Honour Ms Lenore Berscheid

President's Message

By Mary Scott

Dear Friends,

A happy and healthy New Year to you all. This newsletter comes to you with news of Provincial Council and our Federates. We hope the programs organized for the coming months will attract your interest and any member of a Federate is, of course, welcome at all our meetings.

Our January 25th meeting, 7:00 pm, is open to the public and will be on the topic of Mental Health. The Ad Hoc Committee of Provincial Council on Mental Health has just released a discussion paper *The Way We See It: A Discussion Paper which examines Perspectives of Families and Clients within the Current Mental Health System in Manitoba* (see page 5 for more information). Congratulations to this hard working committee, particularly the co-chairs, Beverley Goodwin and June Menzies. We look forward to the meeting, and the discussion on this important topic.

Not to be missed - February's meeting will be our second Round Table for Federates, at Wolseley Family Place. Two members from each paid up Federate are invited to the Round Table, which includes lunch, on Friday, February 23rd, from 11:00 am to 2:00 p.m. Individual members are welcome too, but the focus is on hearing from each of our Federates what their issues are, what they've been working on, and where Provincial Council, and other Federates, can help. It's a great opportunity! Special thanks to Federate members Wolseley Family Place, and the Women's Enterprise Centre for their support in making it happen.

The March meeting will be our Resolutions Meeting, March 22nd, at 7:00. The discussion will be on the National Council Resolutions. Our Resolutions Chair, Muriel Smith, has been distributing these, by mail and e-mail. If you have not received yours and would like an electronic version, please send an e-mail to the office at pcwm@mts.net.

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Panel Discussion on Human Trafficking at the Semi-Annual Meeting held on November 26, 2006
From left to right: Val Noseworthy, Major Karen Hoeft, Sister Lesley Sacoumen and Liz Crawford.

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Empowering women to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and society

President's Message, Continued from Page 1

Provincial Council has been represented at several community meetings recently – the Campaign 2000 Consultation and the *Pathways to Progress* publication; the release of the *Inner City Voices: Community Based Solutions* report by CCPA; a community meeting on Women and the Media and a community meeting on a Birthing Centre for Winnipeg. Many members of Provincial Council and Federates were at the Funeral for Women's Equality December 8th. The Brief that we prepared is printed in this Newsletter, and was submitted to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Six of us from the Provincial and Winnipeg Councils of Women met with Joy Smith, MP, on Wednesday, January 10th for an hour. We tabled our Brief, and our earlier letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and discussed our major issues of concern, namely, changes to the budget and mandate of Status of Women Canada; Child Care and Early Childhood Education; Pay Equity; Women and Poverty, including housing. We wished we had more time to go through the list of affected programs. National Council of Women of Canada has presented to the Standing Committee, and has been very supportive of our work.

Archives continues to be a continuing priority of Council. Our history goes back many years, with the Council of Women of Winnipeg formed in 1894. Our joint *Babs Friesen Councils of Women Archival Project* welcomes the support from the YM-YWCA, who have added to the financial contribution from the Winnipeg Foundation. This will mean we can proceed with the hiring of a professional archivist to catalogue the materials that have been preserved by our long time members – a heritage for all of us.

Thanks to all of you for your work, and your support of Provincial Council. Together we can make a difference.

Web Site Launched!

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc. has a web site – you can check it out at <http://www.mts.net/~pcwm/>.

Included are links to all our Federates, some history of Council, newsletters, a calendar and lots more. It is still being tested, and if you have any problems or suggestions, please send them to pcwm@mts.net.

Round Table for PCWM Members**Special Invitation to all PCWM members:**

On Friday, **February 23rd**, from **11:00 am to 2:00 pm**, there will be **Round Table** for members of Provincial Council, at **Wolseley Family Place**, 691 Wolseley. We are working with the Women's Enterprise Centre to hold the second of such Round Tables, after a very successful meeting last year. This is a great opportunity for our Federates to network and to talk about their work, as well as get an insight as to how Council functions. Individual members are encouraged to attend and participate as well. Lunch will be provided. So begin to think what you might want to say, bring your brochures, dust off your displays and join together to listen to, and support the diverse membership of Provincial Council. Thanks to the Women's Enterprise Centre, and Wolseley Family Place for their generous support. Details to be sent shortly.

Wondering who our Federates are?

- Autism Society of Manitoba
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian Federation of University Women – Manitoba Council
- Consumers Association of Canada (Manitoba) Inc.
- Council of Women of Winnipeg
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba
- Girl Guides of Canada, MB. Council
- Ikwe Widdjitiwin Inc.
- Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, Inc.
- Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.
- Manitoba Association of Home Economists
- Manitoba Association of Women & the Law
- Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters
- Manitoba Business and Professional Women's Clubs
- Manitoba Child Care Association
- Manitoba Dental Hygienist's Association
- Manitoba Hydro, Employment Equity
- Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Conference United Church Women
- Manitoba & NW Ontario Synodical Society, WMS, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- MATCH International
- MORN (Mother Of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba)
- Osborne House
- Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
- Reseau action femmes (Manitoba)
- Salvation Army
- Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada (Mb. Branch)
- UN Platform for Action Committee, Mb.
- Wolseley Family Place
- Women's Enterprise Centre
- Women's Health Clinic
- Women's Health Research Foundation of Canada

Brief for the Standing Committee on the Status of Women

By Mary Scott, President

Outline of the potential impacts of the changes to the terms and conditions of the Women's Program and/or the reduction in the administrative budget of Status of Women Canada (SWC)

- The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc. is an incorporated non profit organization, with a membership of 32 provincial organizations. We are a federate member of the National Council of Women of Canada (www.ncwc.ca) and the International Council of Women.
- The reduction in the administrative budget will have a considerable impact. The five million dollars is to be withdrawn from the agency's operational budget of 12.7 million. This represents a cut of approximately 40% of the SWC operating budget. This is a significant reduction and the remaining 7.7 million must cover salaries, including staff (mainly women), rent, supplies, web site, communications, publications etc. We in Manitoba are concerned because we have had an officer located in Winnipeg. At the present time, the position is not filled – and with this announcement is unlikely to be filled. Yet, previous officers were key to coordinating the delivery of the project component of the Women's Program. This can not be done as efficiently or effectively from an office located in Alberta. The Program Officer also played an educational role. For example, training sessions were done on Gender Based Analysis (GBA) – to federal, provincial, and community representatives. By working cooperatively with the community, by managing more effectively the funded SWC projects, and by funding needed research on current issues and concerns of Canadian women, there was actually a significant return on the investment of dollars. We are concerned to see that the decision is in contradiction to the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Gender Accountability which called for stronger federal mechanisms.
- There are very significant changes to the Women's Program's mandate, the objectives, the eligibility criteria and activities no longer funded. Women's equality, social justice, political and legal participation of women are examples of the language which has been totally removed from the T's and C's. The opening of eligibility to for-profit groups will mean increased demand. Activities related to advocacy, lobbying and most research have been excluded. The very few dollars that went to these activities were well spent. The excellent research funded by SWC can be seen by a quick look at the publications listed on the SWC web site – topics such as homelessness,



- economic gender equality indicators, women and trade etc. In our work at the local and provincial level we depend a great deal on the research funded by SWC. The need to support advocacy work on behalf of women and other vulnerable populations (such as aboriginal peoples, new immigrants, persons with disabilities) is important to recognize. Supporting direct services to women may be useful, but is not enough. To make for lasting change, there needs to be systemic change. Barriers removed not just for one woman, but for all women.
- With these announced changes to the Terms and Conditions and reduced operating funds, Status of Women Canada's role within government has been severely diminished. It will no longer have the resources to inform, with independent policy research, government on policy decisions, nor ensure that GBA is understood and implemented. Although we have not commented on the international obligations under CEDAW, we wonder who and how these will be monitored. Further, SWC has always played a very positive role with respect to the annual meeting of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women.



PCWM Members mourn cuts to Status of Women and other social programs at the Funeral for Women's Equality, held on December 8, 2006

A Message from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Mental Health

The discussion paper, *The Way We See It: A Discussion Paper which examines Perspectives of Families and Clients within the Current Mental Health System in Manitoba*, attempts to provide the background needed to discuss the issues and assess our interpretation of the failure to progress towards mental health renewal in Manitoba in spite of the assertion by the Manitoba Government and Manitoba Health that it is at the heart of all new activity in the mental health field.

We (the Ad Hoc Committee on Mental Health, Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba) are writing about the issues from the perspective of individuals and families suffering from mental illness and dealing with the mental health system. This is a limited perspective undertaken initially with the intention of playing a positive role in mental health renewal in Manitoba. We are trying to understand why the system has so alienated the families of those suffering from mental illness and why there is toleration for so many failures to serve adequately those who suffer from mental illness.

Our objective and our perspective lead us to conclude that we are faced with a massive systems problem. It is not unique to Manitoba, nor is it unique to mental health. However, our focus is mental health and the families and individuals in that system. Our analysis makes us realize the futility of making recommendations under the current system. Under this system the government may make a policy, and may appear to reflect new techniques and new thinking, but it has no authority to make its will effective. It has given away its authority to administer and has built no accountability into that delegated authority. At the same time it has legislated so much protection for actors within the system that the system serves itself and those working within it, not the public. There is no-one to regulate the regulators. There is privacy legislation, ostensibly to protect the public but which is used to protect the regulators. No-one, including the government, is accountable and a corporate loyalty and secrecy has been allowed to flourish at the cost of the mentally ill.

We are particularly indebted to the reports of judicial inquiries into the system. It gives us our only opportunity to understand what happens within that system.

It is our responsibility to inform ourselves and others about the issues in this paper.

You may access the Discussion Paper from the PCWM web site at <http://www.mts.net/~pcwm/> and please join us at the upcoming meeting January 25th, at 7:00 to hear and learn more.

Thanks to the Ad-Hoc Committee

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba thanks the Ad Hoc Committee on Mental Health who have worked so diligently this past year, and produced the Discussion Paper: *The Way We See It: A Discussion Paper which examines Perspectives of Families and Clients within the Current Mental Health System in Manitoba*.

This has been an enormous amount of work, of research, of discussion, of editing and of sharing expertise. Particular thanks to Beverley Goodwin, and Dr. June Menzies, both past presidents of Provincial Council. Their leadership was invaluable. More detailed biographies are included in *The Way We See It* Discussion Paper.

Co-chairs:

**Beverley Goodwin
Dr. June Menzies**

Members of the Ad-hoc Committee:

**Win Gardner
Louise Smendziuk
Mary Scott
Carol Hiscock
Johanna Jonker
Linda Murray
Heidi Loewen
Deloris Ankrom
Annette Osted
Linda Gervais
Jane M. Smith**

Celebrate International Women's Day with Grassroots Women

Grassroots Women celebrates International Women's Day on March 8th with a fundraising event at the Kum Koon Restaurant. Keynote speaker will be Heather Bishop. The event will honor Flor Marcelino, Karen Naylor, Leslie Hughes, Leslie Spillett, and Roz Usiskin. Tickets are \$50.00 each and net proceeds will be used to support international missions in the Philippines where government is murdering labour leaders, human rights activists and leadership of both women's organizations and indigenous peoples. Call 990 9508 or 255 1142 to purchase tickets.

Excerpt – State of the Inner City: 2006 Report

By The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba Office

What is the “state” or the condition of the inner city in Winnipeg in 2006? How do we measure the conditions, the strengths and the challenges? What do we use as our yard stick and to what are we making our comparisons? How will we know if progress is being made? Do we rely solely on the reports of others? Media accounts? Or do we go to the people who live and work there to ask what counts, what is most important to them?

In 2005 we began to look at the state of the inner city through a community-led project guided by the expertise and knowledge of people who live and work in the inner city. In *The Promise of Investment in Community Led Renewal: State of the Inner City 2005*, we concluded that there are no easy solutions to the challenges that continue to exist in the inner city. We learned that community-based solutions work best when people in the community are involved, when they participate in deciding upon what is to be done and when their community-based organizations (CBOs) are provided with sustained core financial support. We saw that these important ingredients can result in slow and steady improvement for neighbourhoods. In *Inner-City Voices – Community-Based Solutions: State Of the Inner City 2006*, we continued with this project to look deeper into issues identified by our community partners. Our findings reflect a similar theme to that in 2005. Communities that have adequately funded community-based organizations working daily to address the multitude of physical and social challenges in their neighbourhoods, are making slow but steady progress.

Another theme emerged over the past year that is troublesome, yet solvable. We found that there is a disconnect between what people say they need, and the way that the systems that they encounter everyday respond to those needs. There is a level of frustration reflected in each of the sections of this report that is articulated through the voices of the community people that we spoke with. They want more of a say in how systems respond to their communities. They want to be heard. They want more control over the decisions that affect their lives. They want an action strategy that starts from the community. In other words, they want government systems to be more democratic.

Decolonization researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (127) notes that: “Community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, have skills and sensitivities which can enhance (or undermine) community –based projects”. We have seen that the CBOs that are most effective are those with meaningful

community involvement. Policy makers can learn from this. As is demonstrated in this report, individuals most affected by government policy and programs have insight into how those policies and programs might be improved. Governments should take advantage of those insights in improving their delivery of services.

In this second *State of the Inner City Report*, we continue to measure and report on the factors that are most important to the people who live and work in the inner city. They are the people whose lives revolve around the inner city and therefore any discussion of the state of their community must begin with them. Central to this project is the belief that community members are most knowledgeable about the dynamics of their communities and have significant insight into what they need. The pages that follow include the voices of the many individuals that we interviewed and worked with over the past year. They kindly and often passionately shared with us their hopes and dreams, their joys and sorrows, their frustrations and anger. We report our findings of the strengths and the progress, as well as the problems and challenges that continue to persist.

As with the *2005 Report* we start by describing *Two Neighbourhoods*. West Broadway, with its attractive setting on the edge of downtown, is revitalizing. Agencies such as Crossways in Common and West Broadway Community Renewal Corporation and Wolseley Family Place, have community-led programs tailored by and for the people who need their services. West Broadway’s strengths are attractive for housing revitalization too, which as we will see is preventing further decline, but may lead to greater exclusion of those same people that make it such a vital neighbourhood. North Point Douglas is also making progress, gathering strength through community-based organizations such as SISTARS and Norquay Community Centre. As one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Winnipeg the elderly buildings and homes are at risk of complete deterioration. Improving housing though, may also bring the threat of displacing the vital community of people who currently call the neighbourhood home. Our examination of these two interesting inner-city neighbourhoods reveals some of the contradictions involved in the process of neighbourhood revitalization.

Closer to Winnipeg’s downtown, in and around Central Park, a different kind of change is taking place. New immigrants and refugees arrive from all over the world, and many of the new inner-city residents are from African countries. In *Lessons for Public Policy*, the women describe the horrors of their journeys here and how settling in Winnipeg continues to be difficult as they adjust to a new language and culture, and try to negotiate and navigate public policy to get the renewed start they need. They

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provide creative ideas for systemic change that can help with making it possible for all of Winnipeg to benefit from their arrival. Safety, a fundamental right for us all, is a critical concern for a great many people who live and work in Winnipeg's inner city. *Bridging the Community-Police Divide* explores the role the Winnipeg Police Service plays in making inner-city neighbourhoods safer for citizens. The seemingly unmanageable divide between the police officers who work there and the inner-city residents who need to feel safe can be bridged, we think, by their common goals of wanting greater involvement together through community policing.

Finally we worked with the women of CLOUT (Community Led Organizations United Together) to develop new ways for *Measuring Progress* in inner-city life. The women involved are frustrated with the indicators and measures currently used by governments and funding agencies because they do not get at the nuances and complexities of inner-city life. By creating more finely-tuned indicators of what true progress is, beyond numbers and statistics, we can learn more about the comprehensive factors that make for progress, such as opportunities to share and inform each other as the inner city grows.

Reference

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books and University of Otago Press.

Each of the above topics and other research in Winnipeg's inner city is discussed in detail in the full report *Inner-City Voices Community-Based Solutions: State of The Inner City 2006*. This project is the result of a collaboration involving several community-based organizations, community researchers, students and university professors. The full report is available at www.policyalternatives.ca.

Thank you to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives for allowing the PCWM to re-print the Introduction of the State of the Inner City 2006 Report.

For Your Information

The 24th annual Volunteer Awards Dinner and Awards Presentation is Wednesday, April 18th, at 5:30 pm at the Convention Centre. There are a number of awards: Lieutenant Governor's Make a Difference Community Awards; Premier's Volunteer Service Awards; Mayor's Volunteer Service Awards; HSBC Bank Canada Business Award; RBC Financial Group Local Hero Award; Golden Hand Award (for media); Volunteer Manitoba Award for Outstanding Community Leadership. Deadline for nominations is Friday, February 23rd. Deadline for purchasing Dinner tickets is Friday, April 6th. For further information, contact Coralee Dolyniuk, Volunteer Services Awards Manager at 975 8203, or email volunteer@strauss.ca

More About Water...**By Muriel Smith, MB Government appointment to the Red River Basin Commission Board**

Women care about the environment. Perhaps it's the long tradition of being "closer to the earth", or the experiences of raising children and caring for family health that is responsible. Too often the media bring s tales of what is not being done. For example, the current debates on whether Canada is or can live up to its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, and where being "Green" should figure on political party priority lists, give evidence of that.

For a change, I would like to tell you about a positive initiative. In the late '70s, a grassroots initiative from Selkirk, Manitoba, gave birth to The International Coalition on the Red River basin, fondly referred to as "TIC" for short. Members were local and provincial/state governments including aboriginal and individuals from North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Manitoba, all joint occupants of the Red River Basin. Their initial function was to promote public education as to the interlocking factors affecting the health of the Basin. In time, driven by more severe flooding and growing concern over water quality in Lake Winnipeg, the end point for the water, TIC morphed into a more activist organization called the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC).

In its first days, the RRBC conducted inventories of the key concerns: flood damage reduction, drainage, water quality, conservation, fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation, and jurisdictional differences. For example, MB, ND and MINN currently all have different laws governing water management. These inventories were then converted into an integrated cross-border plan called the Natural Resource Framework Plan (NRFP). Goals and objectives were developed within each topic area, and cross-cutting issues of public education, research, and stakeholder participation and commitment to coordinate efforts across jurisdictional boundaries were addressed.

Careful inventories are kept of projects in each area, their goals and the progress made to implement the NRFP. Educational programs are held to share the latest research findings. Every year, a major conference is held in one of the jurisdictions. The 2007 event entitled "The Ripple Effect" will be held this year in Fargo, January 23-25. Facilitating meetings are arranged to try to settle jurisdictional disputes before they are sensationalized by the media, inflated by political oratory, or taken into costly court battles.

More About Water..., Continued on Page 7

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Notable among their achievements to date has been the development of computer models of flows along the Red and its tributaries before, during and after spring and summer flooding. The data derived from these models helps guide projects to retain water during peak flows, protect people and livestock, and lessen erosion of the land. Another initiative is to conduct drought planning and tackle contentious issues like trans-boundary water transfers and

allocation of water, this most precious and vital of natural resources. Probably the most important contribution is the gradual building of a will to speak and act with a common voice throughout the Basin rather than simply to promote one's personal interests.

RRBC is one of our area's unsung "achievements in process" and deserves our support.

Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters - Update

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters embarked on a research project whose aim it was to gain a greater understanding of the needs of women in Manitoba who were accessing shelter services.

Highlights of the report include:

- 85% of community agencies surveyed have referred to their local shelter in the last six months.
- 70% of women in shelter identified as Aboriginal.
- 57% of women in shelter did not graduate from high school.
- 42% of women were on social assistance.
- More than one-third of women had a medical diagnosis of mental and/or physical illness.
- 48% of women had requested police intervention in the last six months.
- 66% of women had been in shelter before.
- 52% of women requested follow-up services when leaving the shelter.
- Improved children's services was the area most identified for improvement.
- Myths and misconceptions still exist for those women who use shelters.

For a copy of this report, please contact Aldora Neto at aldora@maws.mb.ca, providing your name, organization name, mailing address and telephone number in your e-mail. Jennifer Hagedorn, Provincial Coordinator for MAWS, will have copies of this report at the PCWM Round Table discussion on February 23rd, 2007.

Resolutions Committee Update**By Muriel Smith, Chair of the Resolutions Committee**

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc. has received the National Council of Women of Canada's 2007 Resolutions. These resolutions will be debated and voted on at the March 22nd PCWM meeting.

The resolutions have been sent to the all individual and federate members of the PCWM by e-mail and mail. If you did not receive a copy of the resolutions, please contact me at muriel_smith@shaw.ca. Amendments to the resolutions may be made at the meeting, but it would be appreciated if you would send them to me in advance of the meeting.

Place of Hope for PCWM**By Jean G. Campbell, WICM Board member and individual member of PCWM**

On November 16, 2006, the sod-turning took place on Logan Ave for Endiiang (Ojibwe for *Place of Hope*). This is a project of Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), being developed as part of the Winnipeg Housing and Homeless Initiative. It is funded by all levels of government, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) which is a federate of both the PCW and the NCW, the Winnipeg Foundation and many individual donors. Participating in the ceremony were Rev. Margaret Mullin, Executive Director of WICM, an aboriginal woman elder, the Hon. Gord Mackintosh for the Provincial Government, the Hon. Joy Smith for the Federal Government and Rev. Brenda Fraser, Moderator of the Presbytery of Winnipeg, PCC.

The building will provide safe accommodation and needed supports for single aboriginal persons seeking a better life and committed to change from an often turbulent past. The building is adjacent to Anishinabe which offers a wide range of programs to the community at large: First Steps Program for counselling and advocacy, Aboriginal Head Start Program, AA, children's and family programs, food and clothing banks, summer camping, Christmas hampers, etc. WICM was formed in 2002 with the amalgamation of two Presbyterian inner city missions – Flora House, established by the WMS in 1962 and Anishinabe, begun by one minister in 1964 in a storefront on Henry Ave. then taken over by the Presbytery. Place of Hope is in Centennial neighbourhood where, according to statistics, 49% of the population is aboriginal, 69% do not have a Grade 12 education, 38% receive government transfer payments and 75% earn less than \$20,000 per year.

Laurie Helgason Receives Award

By Marilyn McGonigal, Chair of the Poverty Committee

In September 2006 PCWM nominated Laurie Helgason for the second *Defender of the Public Good Award* created by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg to recognize extraordinary commitment to community and social justice. On December 8, at SPCW's annual Open House, Laurie received the Award with several members of PCWM present. It was particularly gratifying when it was revealed that the first time recipient of this award was Lloyd Axworthy.

Laurie Helgason was permanently disabled in an automobile accident in 2001 and has been confined to a wheelchair ever since. She is a determined and conscientious person who is prepared to work and fight for her community and for the right of every citizen to participate and live healthy contributing lives. She is presently the chair of the City of Winnipeg Citizens' Equity Committee where she takes a stand on policy issues on behalf of citizens in many different circumstances. She was secretary for the PCWM Board in 2005/6 and continues as an individual member. She has recently established a Winnipeg chapter of the national organization, DAWN (DisAbled Women's Network).

The Award

The criteria for the award (a tall order by any standards) is as follows:

...for people who have contributed to the public good by:

- *standing firm for social justice among competing visions of the public good*
- *seeking equal opportunities for everyone to participate in community life*
- *working to give people more influence over the social, economic, spiritual, government forces affecting their lives*
- *pursuing collaboration between people from different backgrounds, socio-economic circumstances and ethnic origins*

How Laurie's work contributed to the public good is stated in the nomination papers (in part) as follows:

"Laurie has the qualities of a person who gets things done. The issue of accessibility for disabled persons means "holding firm against policy". On the Citizens' Equity Committee she has tackled such issues as free bus tickets (achieved in July, 2006) and successfully encouraging more disabled people to use public transit at the same time educating bus drivers and riders about their needs and how to overcome the fear (of drivers and riders) that impedes participation. The cost savings (in using regular transit and not Handi-transit) and expanded opportunities for disabled riders are significant. She has agitated successfully for sidewalk snow clearance for all citizens (whether with



Laurie Helgason with members of the PCWM

walkers, canes or wheelchairs) who cannot go outside or participate if there is snow on the sidewalk (this is a work-in-progress vis-à-vis the city). She has taken a stand as chair of the Committee not to support (attend) events where there is no wheelchair accessibility. By insisting on her right to participate she has raised consciousness and pushed able-bodied people and policy makers to confront their indifference. She says, "disability is a culture", and "if the disabled were not excluded there would not have to be a distinct culture". These contributions to the public good are tangible and invaluable. They are also significant challenges requiring unique personal qualities to achieve.

What difference has she made?

"Laurie re-organized the Ralph Brown Community Club and the neighbourhood youth now have a place to go and they participate in running the centre, developing positive skills and giving them purpose and direction in their activities. She has opened doors for disabled people who were afraid to use public transit. The sidewalks are safer and accessible in the winter for more citizens. The biggest difference is in the lesson that disabled people are not different from others and have the same rights, that accessibility is achievable and affordable, and that barriers can be overcome with persistence and insistence on one's rights (not charity)."

Sincere congratulations, Laurie, from all your friends at PCWM.

Coming Events

January 25, 2007

Meeting on Mental Health

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

Panel members will speak on a recently released Discussion Paper on Mental Health: The Way We See It: A Discussion Paper which examines Perspectives of Families and Clients within the Current Mental Health System in Manitoba
Balmoral Hall School
630 Westminster Avenue
7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Open to the public. Everyone is welcome.

The Discussion Paper is available at the PCWM Website at: <http://www.mts.net/~pcwm/>

Info: 992-2751 or e-mail: pcwm@mts.net

January 29, 2007

Report, Discussion, Action on Violence Against Women

MATCH International - Manitoba

Wolseley Family Place
691 Wolseley Avenue
12:00 noon

Facilitator: Stella LeJohn

Topics will include: Trauma and Trafficking of Women and Children

Bring a bag lunch. Coffee will be provided

Info: Stella at 489-3531 or Helen at 895-8108

January 30, 2007

Meeting: UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) – Manitoba Chapter

University Women's Club of Winnipeg, 54 West Gate
7:00 p.m.

Program to include a report on the World Urban Forum (WUF) and the Grassroots Women's International Academy (GWIA) held in Vancouver last summer.

Gisele Saurette-Roch, Becky Thiessen and Jennifer deGroot will share their experiences.

Info: Muriel at 488-8263 or e-mail: unifem@mts.net

February 23, 2006

Round Table Discussion – PCWM Members

This is a great opportunity for our Federates to network and to talk about their work, as well as get an insight as to how Council functions. Individual members are encouraged to attend and participate as well.

11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Wolseley Family Place

691 Wolseley Avenue

Info: 992-2751 or e-mail: pcwm@mts.net

Important Reminders

YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction call for nominations:

Nominations are being sought for the 31st YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards to be held on Wednesday, May 2, 2007 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Award categories include: Active Living and Sport; Arts and Culture; Business and the Professions; Community Voluntarism; Creative Communications; Education and Training; Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise; Health and Wellness; Research and Innovation; and Young Woman of Distinction. Nomination forms are available at: website: www.ywinnipeg.ca or by calling the Event Coordinator at (204) 831-2974. **Nominations close Wednesday, January 31, 2007.**

PCWM Calendar of Meetings and Events

- January 25th General Meeting 7:00 start
- February 8th Board Meeting 5:30 start
- February 23rd Round Table (A Friday, from 11:00am to 2:00 pm)
- March 8th Board Meeting 5:30 start
- March 22nd General Meeting (Resolutions)
- April 5th Board Meeting 5:30 start NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
- May 5th or May 11th - Annual Meeting. This is a Saturday, and could be changed to a lunch/dinner as it likely will be in Winnipeg.

Please note, all Board meetings are held at Aikins House, General Meetings in the Common Room of Balmoral Hall School.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, its members or federates.

Editor
Karen Sharma

Deadline for submission for next issue: April 5, 2007
Submissions may be e-mailed to the editor at ksharma@mts.net

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Empowering women to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and society

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.
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An opportunity to hear Panel Members speak on a recently released
Discussion Paper on Mental Health:

The Way We See It:

**A Discussion Paper which examines
Perspectives of Families and Clients
within the Current Mental Health System
in Manitoba**

**Thursday, January 25th, 2007
7:00 – 9:30 pm**

Balmoral Hall School
630 Westminster Avenue, Winnipeg
Parking Available in Balmoral Hall School Parking Lot
Open to the public
Fully Accessible Meeting Space

All are welcome to join us to at our first meeting of the new year –



**The Discussion Paper is available at the PCWM web site:
<http://www.mts.net/~pcwm/>**