

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2002

\$57,000 Dollars Raised!

Proceeds from the 8th Annual "Tribute" go directly to services at the Clinic

A fabulous venue, a crowd filled with excitement, great food and drink and wonderful entertainment described the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic's 8th Annual "Tribute" on February 28th, 2002.

Attended by over 350 people and held by the incomparable Milano Restaurant on King Street West, the event was an unqualified success.

With the generous support from our host sponsors: McCarthy Tetrault, Torys, CIBC and Ogilvy Renault, the evening raised \$57,000 to help the Clinic continue to provide legal, counselling and interpretive services for women who are victims of violence.

The evening, hosted by CBC's Barbara Smith (The World at Six), began with a VIP Martini-tasting where hosts were treated to free martinis concocted by Milano's capable bartenders. As the evening continued, serious bidding ensued around the silent auction tables and the sound of popping balloons punctuated the conversation, each balloon revealing a numbered prize. And in the midst of it all, the bands kept everyone's heads bobbing and their feet moving.

Darlene Lawson, Executive Director of the Clinic, was especially pleased with the event.

"It was a roaring success because of the collaboration of the staff, volunteers, the sponsors, the people who donated, the restaurant, and the bands who provided entertainment. We are also very grateful to Barbara Smith, who was a wonderful host for the evening."

The success of the event is also a testament to the dedication of Toronto's legal community who continue to support the Clinic's services. The success of the Clinic, this year and in the past, is a shining example of the legal community's ongoing commitment.

"We are grateful to the legal community in Toronto for the sponsorship of this event. And it was wonderful to see some of our funders attend and see first hand the breadth of community support for the work that the Clinic does," remarked Darlene. "There are many worthy community issues in our society – from homelessness to AIDS – and it is gratifying to see people take the time to support an organization that focuses on protecting women and children from violence."

Special thanks go out to the Special Event Committee at the Clinic, the Board of Directors, John Berman and the staff at Milano, the businesses and individuals who donated for the silent auction, The Thin Skulls, Jonas and the Fifth, The Reubens and numerous volunteers and ticket-sellers. With the support and hard work provided by these individuals and corporations, the 8th Annual "Tribute" was a tremendous success.



Host Barbara Smith & Board Member Amelia Golden

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Thanks to Our Sponsors

Host Sponsors: McCarthy Tetrault, Torys LLP, CIBC, Ogilvy Renault

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BARBRA SCHLIFER COMMEMORATIVE CLINIC

Bill C-11

The Government of Canada passed Bill C-11, now the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, on November 1, 2001. This new legislation is scheduled to be implemented on June 28, 2002.

One of the major problems with this Bill is that many crucial details are left to the "Regulations". As Regulations do not have to go through the legislative process, major rules can be changed with little or no Parliamentary scrutiny. Therefore, many details of the new legislation will only become apparent after implementation of the regulations this coming summer.

Some positive aspects of the new legislation include:

- people may be able to sponsor dependent children who are up to 22 years old (as opposed to the current bar at 19 years or younger)
- the definition of spouse may be broadened to include common-law and same sex partners
- the length of spousal sponsorship could be reduced from 10 years to 3 years.

The BSCC and representatives of hundreds of other organizations across Canada have expressed serious concerns with the upcoming implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Some of the concerns include:

- The Bill automatically denies refugees access to the refugee determination process if they have been convicted in another country for a crime that would in Canada be punishable by a maximum of at least 10 years. This sounds reasonable, until you realize it includes people who have been caught using a false document to enter Canada (as many refugees have to). This is the crime of "personation" and can carry a sentence of 10 years.
- No one will ever be able to make a second claim for refugee status in Canada. No matter how many years pass or how much the situation in the person's country of origin changes, there will be a lifetime ban.
- The Bill will allow for deportation of permanent residents (who may have lived in Canada since they were children) without any right to appeal and without consideration of their circumstances, as a result of a single criminal sentencing.
- People on social assistance will be prevented from sponsoring close family members, including spouses and minor children. This measure prevents family reunification on the basis of economic status. Immigrant and Refugee Women will be the most adversely affected, especially given that this new law is extremely complicated and hard to understand and women are less likely than men to have access to information and legal counsel.

Minister's Support Letter

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December 14 2001

Ms. Darlene Lawson
Executive Director
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
489 College Street, Suite 503
Toronto, ON M6G 1A5

Dear Darlene,

Thank you for graciously hosting last month's event. I enjoyed having the opportunity to meet you, your president, Ms. Lisa Clarkson, cultural interpreters, including Ms. Eva Nguyen, as well as other service providers in the community who work with women who are victims of domestic violence.

Our government is committed to ending violence against women and their children, and to working with organizations that share this commitment. No woman or child should live with violence or the threat of violence. It is my hope that one day, none will.

I wish to thank all those associated with the Clinic for the important work they do, including providing cultural interpretation services to women. Language should not be a barrier for any woman who needs access to shelters, social services, health care and legal services to keep herself and her children safe from violence.

Our government is proud to support this Clinic. With your help, vulnerable women are escaping the cycle of violence and changing their lives for the better.

Sincerely,

Dianne Cunningham
Minister



Dianne Cunningham (Minister Responsible for Women's Issues) and the Barbra Schlifer Staff.

Legal Department News

The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic would like to extend our appreciation to Legal Aid Ontario for its generous funding of our Specialized Legal Service for Victims of Violence. Without the vision and commitment of Legal Aid Ontario and its CEO, Angela Longo, this important service would not be available to the hundreds of victims who so desperately need our assistance and expertise. We look forward to working with Legal Aid Ontario on this service initiative over the next several months and into the distant future.

Sistering Partnership

During the past year, the Clinic has been involved in an ongoing partnership with the agency Sistering, which provides a wide variety of support services to women who have experienced violence, who are poor, are often homeless, and may have been through the mental health system. Many of the women had identified a need to talk about their experiences of abuse with others. However these women did not feel they fit into a mainstream group. The confines of a structured therapy group can often feel rigid, and can be very intense. The model which seems more suitable and works more effectively for this client group is an open-group model, which is not therapy-based but rather is designed to provide support, education and information. Women have an opportunity to address issues which are relevant to them without necessarily reliving traumatic experiences. This particular model also allows more flexibility as women can attend as often as they are able, which is important as their lives may be in a constant state of transition, meaning they cannot commit to an intense therapeutic process. The group is co-facilitated by a staff member from each agency, both of whom bring their own experience and knowledge. The feedback from women who have attended this group has been very positive and ongoing consultation and evaluation between the two agencies indicates that this model and this partnership are working well.

Hello Nora

The Clinic is pleased to welcome Nora Angeles as the new Director of Interpreter Services. Nora brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her new position. As an immigrant to Canada herself, she has had intimate knowledge of the barriers that immigrant and refugee women face. She decided early on to focus on helping other women overcome these barriers.

Nora has an extensive background in women's issues and specifically access issues involving women and immigrants. In her country of origin, the Philippines, she worked with the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, an organization dedicated to aiding women and their children. In Canada, since 1972, she taught for a year at the Assaulted Women and Children's Counsellor/Advocate (AWCCA) program at George Brown College. She also became an interpreter/advocate for a victim of the 1995 TTC crash and was integral in helping him navigate the support and legal services. In addition, Nora was appointed from 1990 to 1999 as a lay benchner for the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Nora says, "I was drawn to the Barbra Schlifer Clinic because of my interests in women's issues, my connection with the immigrant community and the law. But the Clinic also possesses a lot of credibility within the greater community. And it is so encouraging to find a workplace with such a level of commitment. We all have an understanding here that this work may not always be fun, but we are all doing it for a very important reason."

Creating With Our Hands and Hearts

The Arpilleras (Quiltings) Therapy Group for Latin American Women is a collaboration between the Women's Health Center of St. Joseph's Hospital and Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. Those attending the twelve week group are Latin American women survivors of trauma and abuse. They come to the group to gain support in validating and understanding the impact of trauma and abuse they have suffered within the context of migration, re-settlement and adaptation to this country. The use of Arpilleras has proven to be significantly valuable for dealing with the psychological and socio-political effects of violence both in Chile and in Canada. During the course of the group, we combined the techniques and general process used in participatory psychodynamic therapy with the Arpilleras technique as a creative and critical tool of inquiry and action.

Women attending the group had the opportunity to share their experiences of trauma and abuse, not only through their spoken words, but through the creation of an Arpillera. The technique utilizes colour, symbolism, shape, space, texture and different types of stitches and materials to enable women to give a new form and meaning to their thoughts and feelings surrounding their difficult experiences. In gathering weekly to create a new meaning for their suffering, they learn to identify new strategies to cope with it, to regain self-confidence, and to build their strength for looking after themselves and their children.



Arpillera Quilt

Hello Zahra

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Zahra Dhanani, an immigration lawyer who will be working at the Clinic over the next year. Zahra has been in the practice of immigration law since her call to the Bar in 1999 where she focused largely on representing female immigrants and refugees who have experienced violence. Zahra has considerable experience in public legal education and community development activities promoting social justice for women. Zahra also has ten years experience within the South Asian community working on equality, justice and community awareness as well as participating in the design and implementation of many cultural and arts events. Zahra brings a unique, multidisciplinary perspective to her legal work and we are fortunate to have her join us.

Self Esteem Group

The Schlifer Clinic offered a thirteen-week self esteem group, from November 7, 2001 to February 19, 2002.

This group was specifically geared towards women who have experienced partner/wife assault, sexual assault and incest/childhood sexual abuse.

The group was based on the psycho-education therapeutic model. Participants had the opportunity to explore and experience possibilities for healing through several avenues, such as:

Journal writing, group discussions, structured written exercises, art and collage work.

Some of the topics discussed in-group are:

Self acceptance, self responsibility/empowerment, body image, self care, boundaries, impact of childhood messages on self esteem, connection between trauma and addiction and their impact on self esteem.

Following are some of the comments from the women who participated in this group:

"Through participating in the group from Nov.2001 to Feb.2002 I have finally found the piece of the missing puzzle, Me, I no longer agonize over finding that woman. Glenda is alive and well and taking risks. I have found my voice. I am silent no more.

I learned so much from the group reading each week. I faced a lot of my fears and challenges and took risks with the support and safety of the other group members and Tina. This experience has led me to a whole new way of living.

I can take my space in this world, because I now believe, I am a lovable and valuable woman who is doing the best she can.

I wish a similar experience for all clients of the BSCC. I encourage the BSCC to keep this group ongoing so other women can also have the privilege of walking away empowered.

Who would ever think that a dose of self-esteem would make my world a more meaningful place to live."

" I was very blessed to have been in the self-esteem group at the Barbra Schlifer Clinic. Even from the initial interview I found the facilitator Tina, to be quite intuitive and caring. The women I had the good fortune to meet are strong, courageous women, each dealing with past abuse and surviving. There is a real beauty in working on one's self esteem. I have found my self esteem again. Thank you."

Welcome Donya!

The staff of the Clinic would like to welcome Donya Sartorelli Mashkuri to our community. Donya is the new baby daughter of our staff lawyer Sudabeh Mashkuri and her partner Angelo. Donya arrived on January 15th, 2002 weighing in at 7 lbs, 6 oz. Congratulations to Sudabeh and Angelo.



Volunteer Corner

The Clinic is pleased to recognize volunteers who worked for the special event "Tribute". Our volunteers helped us in all the different activities with great enthusiasm and commitment.

Thank you: Amelia Navarrete, Amita Nayyer, Anna Altomare, Annie Song, Billie Laskin, C.J. Clancy, Carol Dahan, Cathy Bennett, Cristina Aquilina, Deanna Aubert, Deb Parent, Farkhondeh Faramarzi, Ilana Mantell, Joanne Lawrence, Jordana Berstein, Jose Sanchez, Karen Zhao, Katie Wood, Krysta Siuda, Lilian Valverde, Lisa Hung, Lisa Romano, Mariela Cardenas, Mey Mey ly, Susan Shin, Susan You, Theresa Howard, Traci Folkins, Vany Glavic, Virginia Picado.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

call Julia Sanchez at: 416.323.9149
extension 240



Or email her at:
j.sanchez@schliferclinic.com



**YOUR DONATIONS
ARE APPRECIATED**

Although the Clinic receives funding from the Province of Ontario, City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto, we also greatly rely on the generosity of individual donors. If you wish to make a contribution in support of our counselling, interpretation and/or legal services for female survivors of violence, please send a cheque to the address below. Your donation, large or small, is vital to the operation of the Clinic. Income tax receipts will be provided.

**Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
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You can also call us at (416) 323-9149 x 237 or e-mail us at :fundraising@schliferclinic.com with your Visa, MasterCard or Amex number.

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