

2008 Annual Report

West Central Women's Resource Centre

Empowering women, families and the community



Message from the Board

It has been my pleasure to be Chair of the Board of Directors for the West Central Women's Resource Center (WCWRC) again this year. It has been another year of growth and excitement at the centre. We have seen a continued increase in the number of women who use our services and we have worked hard to ensure that existing programs are supported and new programs are developed to meet community needs. Our new status as a registered charity will allow us to continue to bring in needed funds for our growth and sustainability. For more details about the many programs offered at the WCWRC, please read their attached reports.

The WCWRC continues to work with the women of our community to provide a voice on issues of concern. This year the centre has been vocal about women's right to adequate, safe housing, working to raise the provincial income assistance levels, and providing training and work experience for child minders.

We are all proud of the WCWRC, where we have come from, what we have become, and what we can become in the future. We hope that all of you will join us in our journey to advocate for and work with west central women and their families.

Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, board members and community members who are a part of this organization. Your commitment, energy and enthusiasm are what makes this place so great.

Heidi Wurmman, Chair
West Central Women's Resource Centre



Message from the Executive Director

It's been a huge pleasure to see the growth of the Centre over the last year, and with that the growth and transition in the lives of all those the Centre touches.

Through the years it's been amazing to watch women walk through the door for the first time and slowly find ways to become involved, supported and strengthened and 2008 has been no exception. Over the year the Centre also continued to be involved in several community initiatives and initiated a new community support for new comers.

Operationally, the WCWRC experienced many highlights in 2008 including being granted Charitable Status; welcoming a record number of visitors; and expanding our budget and programming.

The staff of the Centre have continued to show tremendous dedication and care for their work and those they work with. I'm grateful to all the visitors, volunteers, staff and board who help make the WCWR such a wonderful place for so many!

In solidarity,
Jackie Hogue

Program Reports 2008

Childminding Report

It has been a dynamic year with many changes and exciting new developments. The Childminding Program has been very successful throughout its second year in operation. Robyn Rybachuk was the Childminding Coordinator from January – June, 2008. Fiona Muldrew started as Childminding Coordinator in August, 2008.

Over the year the coordinators were active in the recruitment of participants, developing and enhancing the training, promoting the program, seeking funding, keeping statistics, scheduling work and follow-up, coordinating and supervising the Play and Learn program and networking with Childminders. The coordinators also developed contracts and built relationships with hiring organizations. By the end of 2008, over 36 hiring agencies hired childminders from our program.

The Play and Learn Program brought about 10 families with pre-schoolers to the Centre for activities led by Marie Claude Barrette-Molgat from April to August. Almera Oduca and Fiona Muldrew shared the facilitation of Play and Learn for the last month of programs in September.

Childminding Trainings were held in April, May and September followed by First Aid and CPR trainings. Thirty two people attended the trainings, with an average of 11 participants at each training. Many of those trained continued their work as Childminders throughout the year. One of the training was held specifically for Gordon Bell and Daniel McIntyre Collegiate students who childmind in the evenings or weekends. Of those trained in 2008, 52% were newcomers/immigrants and 31% were Aboriginal.

Additional training and support was provided to Childminders throughout the year. In part this was done through monthly workshops on topics including: Building Attachment with Children, Peaceful Play, Healthy Eating, Building Character with Children, Promoting Aboriginal Culture with Children, Singing and Art.

The employment highlights for the year include:

- Over 2185 hours of work created for childminders.
- Over \$2100.00 in income generated for the program and \$19,665.00 in income generated for childminders.
- 26 (34%) childminders trained in 2008 or earlier continue to be childminders.
- Approximately 55% of childminders are newcomers and 39% are aboriginal women
- 39 (51%) people are now involved in other employment or further education since being trained in the Childminding Program.

Childminders are gaining support, income and job skills through the program and many agencies appreciate the special service we provide. One childminder said, "I'm learning so much about relating to all children and giving them what I didn't have." We are excited to see so much learning and growth between staff and women at our centre, childminders, children and community agencies. We're all learning together.



Respectfully Submitted,
Fiona Muldrew
Childminding Coordinator

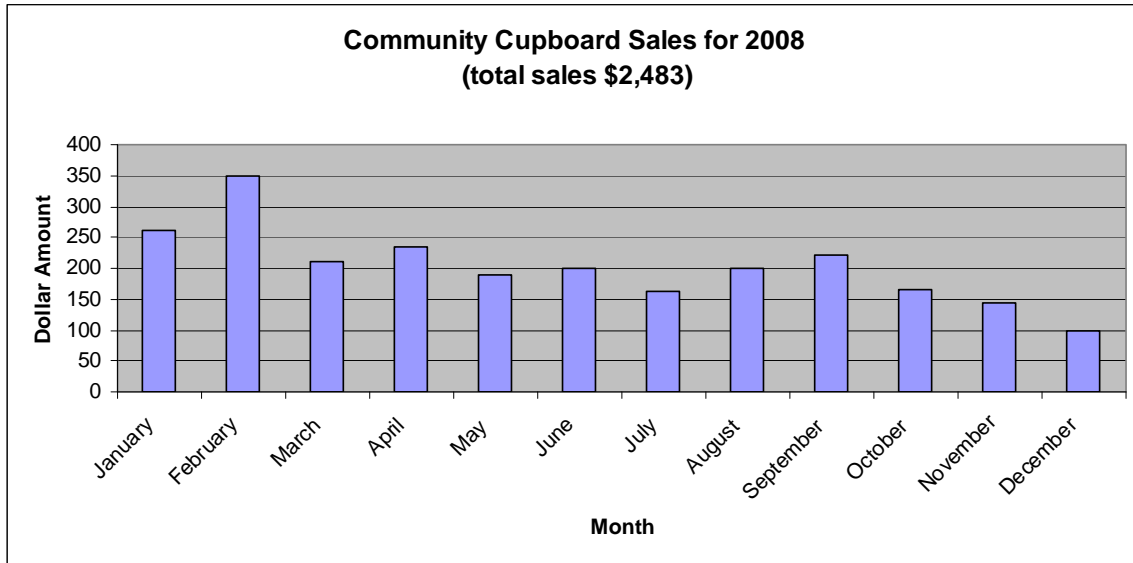
Community Cupboard Report

The Community Cupboard continues to increase neighborhood folks' accessibility to food. It was which opened on November 18, 2002, by the end of this year has 1313 members. In 2008, the Cupboard had 257 new members and a total of 562 visitors. Please refer to **Chart A** for a breakdown of the monthly sales.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre remains an active partner and continues to provide Community Cupboard food vouchers to its visitors. Ma Mawi also increased the value of its food vouchers from \$5 to \$10.

Submitted by,
Dione C. Haynes
Volunteer and Centre Coordinator

Chart A: Community Cupboard Sales



Drop-In Report

The Drop-In has been a busy place in 2008. Looking at numbers alone, the visitors to the centre tripled in the last year. In 2007 there were 3,746 listed visitors; at the end of 2008 there were 9,809. Our May 2008 visitor survey told us the welcoming environment and friendly staff were key reasons women enjoyed visiting the Centre. Both these numbers and the comments by visitors tell us we're doing something right!

2008 has also brought improvements to our drop-in. With the centre being able to hire more volunteers, we were able to provide more assistance and healthy food to those visiting the drop-in.



We've heard many times from women that they really appreciate having women only time at the Centre. Given the overwhelming request and positive feedback for this, this year we increased the women only hours at the Centre. We also began a free draw on Tuesdays. It began as an incentive for people to come on Tuesday (when our hours changed) and has continued even when Tuesdays have become a busy day at the Centre.

I, Nana-gale Fagnan, held the position of Drop-In Coordinator throughout 2008. Working as a Drop-in coordinator has changed my way of looking at the world and learn to appreciate the little things in life. We are people, real people, and we are here to empower each other. I really appreciate the recourses we have and those we are able to direct people to. On an average day I make over 20 resource referrals and often follow up to see how people have made out and if they need more assistance. Over the year, this has meant providing over 4,000 referrals. Some examples of resource referrals include:

- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.
- Victim Services – Domestic Violence Unit
- Spence Neighborhood Association
- Pregnancy and Family Support Services Inc.
- Centre Flavie – Laurent Inc.

I would like to thank everyone who has came out or dropped by the centre and wish them to come again. And if you have not came yet, drop in for a cup of coffee or juice and some pleasant conversation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nana-gale Fagnan
Drop-In Coordinator

HOMES Report

The HOMES Program completed our first full year in 2008. We continue to work on three areas; 1) individual on-to-one support, by the staff mentor and 4 volunteer mentors, 2) community women's group and workshops and 3) systemic, policy and interagency networking.

Since 2007 we have assisted 251 women, 177 of those women were assisted in 2008. We assisted women in gaining over \$8511.00 of income. Mentors assisted women through many means, including coaching, information sharing, faxing, phone calls, resource referral and attending meeting or hearings. Many women were assisted with more than one issue. Chart B below details the areas of assistance provided by the HOMES Mentors in 2008.

Marianne Cerilli was the HOMES Mentor throughout 2008 and worked with a number of volunteer mentors; Natasha Noel and Robin Roberts were replaced by Lynn Sommerville and Caroline Woolston. Almera Oduca and Denise Duncan completed a full year of mentoring. Thanks to all of these mentors for their caring and commitment.

There were 12 workshops held in 2008 with a total of 192 participants. Some of the most popular topics included getting IDs, the creation of HOMES ID and a session to foster coordination between with Health Inspectors, Residential Tenancies and EIA.

The second 3 day mentor training in October of 2008 trained 21 women. The women's group held a spring day long training where 17 participants generated some priorities for HOMES women's group. This included writing a letter to the Premier about the need to construct more affordable rent geared to income housing. In addition to this, women and mentors also got involved in various community meetings and committees.



Networking done through the HOMES program in 2008 has been incredibly productive and has included participation on the following committee and networks:

Winnipeg Rental Network

Prepared to launch a citywide Rental Network web site for April 2009 that will assist in finding low income rental housing and connecting people with housing supports and programs.

SPC Poverty Committee

Is developing a kit for community groups regarding the Raise the Rates Campaign and Make Poverty History Manitoba. We began negotiations with Shaw to providing EIA recipients with home phones. We also presented a 5 point action plan to the City of Winnipeg to address poverty and they have agreed to set up working groups in the 5 areas: a recreation fee waiver expansion, a low income bus pass, a living wage policy, expanding the Aboriginal Youth Strategy, and recommendations on repairing, zoning and inspecting rental housing.

Advocacy Network

Our main action has been the developing and submitting a detailed complaint on EIA concerns to the Manitoba Ombudsman. This complaint has resulted in an investigation into EIA rules, policies and procedures. The report is due late spring 2009 and will be a blue print for improvements to EIA. HOMES Mentor, volunteers and students created EIA Jeopardy game for the network to use.

Right to Housing

We worked to ensure the Federal Stimulus package included funds to construct new social housing. The Community Mentor is on the municipal group recommending a policy to ensure zoning of rental and affordable housing.

Make Poverty History Manitoba

We worked on developing a comprehensive Make Poverty History strategy.

Respectfully submitted with gratitude for the opportunity to do this meaningful work with women in our community -

Marianne Cerilli

HOMES Community Mentor

Chart B: Issues Addressed through HOMES Program

Housing Issues		Economic Security Issues		Other Issues	
Bed bugs	13	Access education / training	9	Abuse or violence	15
Damage deposit	11	EIA cut off	1	Child welfare	5
Dispute with landlord	16	EIA medical & disability	11	Child care	9
Dispute with neighbour	2	Moving expenses	5	CPP	0
Dispute with roommate	4	EIA refused	1	Custody	3
Eviction	23	Treatment by staff	0	EI	0
Homeless	42	Get on EIA	19	Health problems	14
Moving	36	EIA dispute	8	Justice system	3
Repairs	13	EIA benefits	2	Pregnant	2
Safety (vandalism, theft, trafficking, violence, prostitution)	16	EIA reduced	1	Prostitution	2
Housing	34	Debt	4	Mental health	17
Total	210	Utilities	8	Recreation access	2
		Total	69	Treaty status	0
				Immigration	1
				Other	18
				Addictions	7
				Total	98

RESPECT Report

Since June 2006, the West Central Women's Resource Center has operated the RESPECT Program. RESPECT supports individual, family and community safety with a focus on parenting, counseling and community capacity building. Due largely to the wonderful support from our funders and the demand for the program, the West Central Women's Resource Centre has been able to offer the program throughout 2008. Kathy Downs held the RESPECT Program Coordinator position.

One of the activities of RESPECT was the Peace Begins at Home sharing circles. This parenting program model is offered at the center to mothers and female caregivers on a weekly basis to support those caring for at risk youth. The circles address: safety and isolation, advocacy and communication. In 2008 53 sessions were held with over 12

women sharing their lives and honoring the community of sharing within the peace circles each session.

The philosophy of the circle is to come together to create the community that we all need to feel more powerful in our lives and to understand the positive effect we can have on each other's lives. We've created a space for the women to share their own stories in a trusting atmosphere. Through evaluations, we've learned that participants feel the circles instill respect and honor.

Through RESPECT we were pleased to initiate and start an adolescent girl's group "Liking Me" in the fall of 2008. After connecting with many in our community and beyond, we offered the first session on September 17th. In 2008 we held 10 sessions in total with an average of 6 girls attending each week. Thank you to MERC for allowing us to use their space for the group.

As well, through out 2008 RESPECT offered monthly safety workshops to the community. Topics ranged from personal to community safety. Some of the most successful workshops in 2008 were a self-defense session with WEN-DO and a safety session from Elizabeth Fry Society on court support and advocacy.



Finally one-on-one support was provided to women through RESPECT on a regular basis. Over the year, over 400 women came in through the RESPECT program for individual advocacy and support. Women were assisted but also referred to other community agencies such as Osborne House, Mother of Red Nations (MORN) and Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

Helping women and families have successfully met the overall objectives of the RESPECT program in 2008 with their safety and parenting concerns. The program supports and honors the strength of the West End neighborhood.

Respectfully Submitted
Kathy Downs, RESPECT Coordinator

Sewing Program Report

The Sewing/Craft Program is in it's second year and getting busier all the time. By the end of 2008 there were an average of 15 women (and their children) attending the Sewing Circles. One of the program's goals is to welcome newcomers to the Centre. Through some active outreach we have been very successful in increasing newcomer participants with newcomers representing over 60% of those attending.

Held twice a month, the program provides instruction on basic sewing projects while also welcome women to work on their own projects. Projects have included: pillows, cross-

stitching, receiving blankets, shopping bags and table mats. Women are enjoying the program, thrilled to be creating things they can use while having fun.

From January to June 2008 this program was held in partnerships with wit Graffiti Art Gallery and we thank Jill Ramsey for all of her support. We from August – December the program was facilitated by Simone Bissecck and Shelly Burnell.



Submitted by,
Dione C. Haynes
Volunteer and Centre Coordinator

Volunteer Report

The Volunteer Program at the Centre is a vital part of our mandate. Through the Volunteer Program women in our community gain and share skills, the effects of which, reach into their personal and professional development. We are also enriched by the time they give and knowledge they share, therefore, the community as a whole is strengthened. Over 2008, the Volunteer Program was coordinated by June Love and Dione C. Haynes.

As of December 31, 2008 there were approximately 26 regular volunteers and 66 casual volunteers. The total number of volunteer hours for the year was 3,420. This total does not include the uncounted hours put in by the volunteer board, which totals over 800 hours.

The work that the volunteers did at the Centre was as varied as the women who volunteered! Our volunteers are kept busy in the Community Cupboard, the Clothing Room, each of our programs and particularly with the sewing and craft program. They also assist with reception, food preparation, cleaning, and outreach. We thank all of our volunteers for their excellent work!

The Centre also offered Practicum Placements from Red River College and U of W Urban Studies Program for students to have hands-on work experience. We also hosted placement opportunities for the Salvation Army Correctional & Justice Services and for the Fine Options Program.

During the 2008 year the program hosted a variety of appreciation events to thank the volunteers for all of their contributions. These events were held at the Centre, such as parties or movie afternoon, but also included some trips out of the city. One example was our volunteer trip the Beach, which was a very special day and something we plan

on continuing. The volunteers also enjoyed several celebrations throughout the year including a game filled Halloween party and a Winter Holiday Party in December.

Our volunteer program continues to be key in supporting local women and in offering our general services to the community. We look forward to future work with volunteers to bring richness, respect and a true celebration of diversity to the West Central neighborhood.



Submitted by,
Dione C. Haynes
Volunteer and Centre Coordinator

With Gratitude

Our Supporters

We would not be able to do the work we do without partnering with our funders. We would like to thank our funders not only for their support, but also for their belief in our Centre.

Assiniboine Credit Union
Daniel MacIntyre/St.Mathew's Community Association
Downtown Parent Child Coalition (Communities for Families)
Healthy Child Manitoba
LITE (Local Investment Toward Employment)
Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Neighbourhoods Alive!,
National Crime Prevention Centre Canada
Spence Neighbourhood Association
Status of Women Canada
United Way of Winnipeg
Winnipeg Foundation
Winnipeg Child & Family Services Central Area Council
Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative

Our Partners and Friends

We were grateful for the opportunity to work with many partners and friends during 2007. Partners are those we work together with on events, programs or activities. Friends are those we support and receive support from.

A Women's Place
Age and Opportunity
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Canadian Mental Health Ass. Winnipeg
Centre for Equity Rights in
Accommodation
Community Financial Counseling
Services
Community Legal Education Association
Elizabeth Fry
Fine Options
Food Fare
Graffiti Gallery
Healthy Living Program
House of Opportunities
Ikwe
Income Advocacy Network
Inner City Women's Mission
Klinic Community Health
Legal Aide
Low Income Intermediary Project
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata
Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre
Manitoba Association of Women and the
Law
Manitoba Child and Family Services
Manitoba Family Services and Housing
Manitoba Food Charter
Mediation Services
Mother of Red Nation
New Directions
North End Community Renewal Corp.

North End Women's Centre
North Point Douglas Women's Centre
Osborne House
Paapiiwak
Pregnancy and Family Support Services
Pritchard House
Pro Bono Law Students
Public Interest Law Centre
RAY (Resource Assistance for Youth)
Red River Community College
Rental Housing Registry Advisory Group
Right to Housing Coalition
Sage House
Skills Bank
Social Planning Council
Spence Neighbourhood Association
St. Mathew's Maryland Community
Ministry
Stella Mission
University of Winnipeg
Welcome Place
West Broadway Development
Corporation
West End Biz
West End Cultural Centre
Winnipeg Harvest
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Winnipeg School Division
Wish
Wolseley Family Place
Women's Health Clinic

Appendix 1

Centre Usage Stats 2008

Services	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Drop In	671	628	815	1040	1076	1146	839	802	921	839	467	565	9809
Clothing Depot Clients	125	130	135	140	173	120	106	133	121	121	118	77	1499
Community Cupboard Clients	60	52	49	61	41	54	42	52	44	40	36	31	562
Crafting/Sewing Program	16	25	13	44	21	24	23	22	28	14	27	37	294
Programs													
Prgms/Wrkshps/Events	16	15	15	20	20	21	7	7	19	18	12	9	179
Participants	128	131	189	187	221	66	39	84	162	220	125	155	1707
Volunteer Program													
Active Volunteers	18	23	21	21	26	22	24	16	15	24	23	23	256
Volunteer Hours	322	315	353	418	358	374	114	123	140	389	200	315	3420
Volunteer Events/Activities	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	28