

**“Be the Peace...Make A Change”**  
**\* Newsletter / Progress Report \***  
**October 2012**

Greetings Fellow Peacemakers of Lunenburg County!

The Be the Peace Project has completed 6 months, (amazing- where does the time go?), so we thought it a good time to send an update of current activities addressing violence against women and girls in Lunenburg County.

**News**

- With Municipal elections upcoming, we have submitted **4 questions for the candidates** regarding steps municipalities can take to address violence against women. You can find them here: [www.secstory.com](http://www.secstory.com)
- Our **Be the Peace web site is under construction!** But you can see the report of the Public Forum and other documents about Be the Peace at the Second Story Women’s Centre web site: <http://www.secstory.com/include/peace.htm> .
- Introducing **Elisabeth Bailey, our wonderful administrative support person**, recently hired to help us manage our growing distribution lists and admin functions. She now has a Be the Peace e-mail address: [admin@bethepeace.ca](mailto:admin@bethepeace.ca) .

**Public Forum, July 5-7<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

- We hosted the first Public Forum, July 5-7<sup>th</sup> in Lunenburg, attended by over 150 people who came to lend their voices and ideas to what we might do together over the next 3 years to collaborate and build a community response to this issue in Lunenburg County
- With enormous thanks to Julie MacAlpine, film editor and mentor to Stephanie Moynan, who video’d the entire event, we now have a **YouTube video of the Forum** which you can watch and share: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdoaihngVwM>

**On a Provincial level:**

- **N.S. Department of Justice and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women...**
  - Presented the Be the Peace Project to the Domestic Violence Action Plan Implementation Committee
  - Attended a forum devoted to understanding what current research is available about violence against women and areas for further research

- Attended a 2-day training in the newly launched **Neighbours, Friends and Families** program, which will roll out in Lunenburg County with area partners soon
- Seeking assistance in compiling baseline statistics about violence against women and girls for the County
- Attended the 2-day Nova Scotia Women's Summit in New Glasgow hosted by the Pictou County Women's Centre
- **N.S. Department of Health and Wellness...**
  - Met with Celeste Gotell, Executive Lead on a new initiative to create a **Sexual Assault Response Framework** for the Province
  - In conversation **with Lisa Tobin, Provincial Coordinator for Sexual Health**, on engaging men and boys in the issues; as well as with **Natalie Flinn, Active Healthy Living Consultant at the N.S. Department of Education** regarding youth and school-based programming regarding healthy relationships and sexuality, given the influence of media, social media and other on-line influences.
- **Women's Centres Connect!**
  - Working with other Women's Centres across Nova Scotia to share resources, programming and healthy relationships curriculum already developed in other parts of the Province that can be applied here.

### Updates on Our Theme Areas:

As you may know, we had about a dozen theme areas for the project, some of which are being actively pursued, others that are in need of community champions to steward them into action. **If you are interested in being involved or on the distribution list for any of these, please let us know!**

- **Community Planning Team**
  - A small group has stepped forward to help guide the overall project.
  - Our next step is to develop guidelines and principles for all activities and teams
  - This group is **open to more members. Let us know if you can join us!**
- **Youth and Schools**
  - We have met with the **South Shore Regional School Board and Schools Plus** Coordinator and Outreach Workers to explore how Be the Peace can partner in school programming to raise awareness and skills in healthy relationships, conflict resolution skill building, and critical thinking about youth norms, culture and technology, including the influences of media, social media and widespread access to on-line pornography on intimate/sexual relationships and gender roles and expectations.

- We will be involved in a **regional professional development day** for teachers in November, and possibly **Grade 9 curriculum** components to address healthy relationships and media literacy.
  - **If you know of a principal, teacher or guidance counsellor who would be keen to explore how Be the Peace can be involved in their school, please connect us with them!**
  - There is a **BTP Youth Working Group** actively meeting to explore ideas and possibilities, inside and outside of schools for engaging youth in these important conversations. **If you would like to be involved with this group, please let us know.**
  - Hypersexualization and on-line pornography-- An initial meeting with members of the **South Shore Hypersexualization Group**, viewing of the **documentary, "Sext Up Kids,"** and phone conference with academic and **author of the book Pornland, Dr. Gail Dines**, has revealed the enormity of this topic in "hijacking the sexual template of young people that is formed in adolescence." Ms. Dines may be coming to Nova Scotia in 2013 to train people in addressing the issue of hypersexualization and pornography and how it is a contributing factor in youth violence and sexual assault.
- **Alcohol and Violence**
    - Nine people attended the first meeting of this working group. The possibility of an alcohol- free and more family focused Big Exhibition was discussed. We also formulated questions about the link between substance abuse and violence for the Candidate Forums in upcoming Municipal elections.
    - The second meeting is **October 10<sup>th</sup>, 7pm @ Bridgewater Police Station.**
- **Engaging men and boys**
    - While there are a number of men who have participated in the project so far, no one has stepped forward as a champion.
    - David Hatfield, who has 15 years experience in running men's groups and mentoring boys and young men is offering a program at Tatamagouche Centre, October 24-26. He may be available in **Lunenburg County on October 28<sup>th</sup> for a Gathering the Men** lunch event to explore and strategize how to engage men and boys in the issues of relationship violence.
- **Spirituality and Healing**
    - We are looking at meeting with church leaders and interested individuals soon to explore the role of faith communities in addressing relationship and family violence. Let us know if you are interested!
    - Incorporating a variety of spiritual modalities for healing is another area yet to be explored.
- **Sexual Assault Response**
    - Soon we will call a gathering of interested people to explore the new Provincial initiative to create a Framework for Sexual Assault Response, and what local actions we might take in the interim.

- **Parenting and Family Support**
  - Initial conversations have begun regarding an approach to parenting training, support and Parenting Cafes. A next conversation will be called soon in collaboration with the Family Support Centre to explore assumptions and strategies.
- **Interagency Collaborative**
  - We are exploring reforming a local Interagency Collaborative on violence against women to share resources, ideas, programming and to collaborate on new initiatives and approaches.
- **Restorative Practices in Domestic/Relationship Violence**
  - At the Provincial and local level we are exploring reopening conversations about the use of restorative practices in cases of domestic or relationship violence, as an alternative to the usual judicial and sentencing processes. Currently there is a moratorium on using restorative practices in these cases, but understanding that in situations of relationship/family violence, 80% of families stay together, jail does not seem the most effective option.

### **Thank you!**

Thank you all for your involvement with us to date- we so appreciate the enthusiasm, inspiration and passion in our communities to do significant work on this topic throughout Lunenburg County.

There are SO many more great ideas!! It's hard to keep up with all we could do!

So, please keep in touch, let us know:

- What are you thinking?
- What do you want to make happen?
- What else could we do together that hasn't been done yet?
- Where do you want to step in?

Please feel free to contact us at any time:

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