



## **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS FOR YOUTH:**

*A school-based,  
violence prevention program  
of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre*

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**FOR PERIOD: September 1, 2006 - March 31, 2006**

**Submitted by:**

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## Table of Contents

BACKGROUND .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
PROGRAM DELIVERY .....	2
ADULT FACILITATORS .....	2
YOUTH FACILITATORS .....	3
CANADIAN WOMEN’S FOUNDATION .....	3
CURRICULUM .....	4
EVALUATION .....	4
OTHER ACTIVITIES: .....	4
HIGHLIGHTS .....	5
NEXT STEPS .....	5
APPENDICES:	
Appendix A: Program Facilitators	
Appendix B: Map of Schools	

**BACKGROUND:**

The Healthy Relationships For Youth program is funded through The Canadian Women’s Foundation 2006-2008 Multi-Year Violence Prevention Grants with Teens. This is one of four national multi-year grants to further our ongoing work of violence prevention with youth.

“Healthy Relationships For Youth” continues the school-based, violence prevention work of the Rural Youth Education Project (2002 - 2006) . The dynamics of delivery will alter to accommodate working with an increased number of schools, being in one grade level and working with teachers and community partners as adult facilitators while the youth facilitator component will remain unchanged. The curriculum will maintain the diversity focus developed over the past four years by the RYEP, and will also draw upon the resources provided by other youth violence prevention models which represent best practices in this field.

**INTRODUCTION:**

“Healthy Relationships For Youth” is a school based program which highlights youth involvement as peer educators in the classroom and within their schools and communities. The focus of this program is to deliver a series of twelve sessions within the Health curriculum of grade 9 which focuses on developing and maintaining healthy relationships. For the classroom delivery of this curriculum a community person will be partnered with the classroom teacher and they will be assisted by a member of a Youth Team. The Youth Teams in each participating school will be recruited from Grades 10 - 12 and will be trained in leadership and facilitation. Youth Team members will also develop self-directed in-school projects. By the second year of this program, we anticipate that ten schools in the Strait Regional School Board will be engaged.

**Belief Statement**

“Healthy Relationships For Youth” is based on the belief that communication which reflects sexism, racism and homophobia creates harmful stereotyping and discrimination and that these oppressions are forms of violence. Through enhancing awareness of the social context of their lives and by promoting skill development to promote healthy interpersonal communication, youth can make positive decisions about their own behaviour.

#### Goal

The goal of this work continues to be working to reduce the risk of violence for youth through developing skills and knowledge related to creating and maintaining healthy relationships.

#### Objectives

- To engage Grade 9 students in ten school sites within the Strait Regional School Board, in a series of classroom sessions designed to promote healthy and respectful relationships.
- To assist youth in developing the attitudes, values and skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- To increase students' understanding of racial/cultural diversity specifically relating to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian community.
- To increase students' awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender based perspective.
- To foster youth development which includes: peer support, youth empowerment, youth-adult partnerships, meaningful contribution and experiential learning.

#### PROGRAM DELIVERY:

- By October, 2006, all five schools approached had agreed to participate in the HRY Program; East Antigonish Academy, St. Marys' Academy, Canso Academy, J.H.Gillis High School and Chedabucto Place.
- There were a variety of starting dates in different schools: Chedabucto - March 23, East Antigonish - May 1, Canso - early April, and J.H.Gillis and St. Mary's will be starting in late April.

#### ADULT FACILITATORS:

- In December, it was confirmed that at this time, Public Health Services would not be able to commit their staff to co-facilitate with the PDR teacher. However, the long term vision is that this work will fit well with the duties of PHS staff in Youth Health Centres as they become established in area schools.
- In order to achieve a male/female dyad for the Adult Facilitators in each school, other staff were recruited from within the participating schools and as well two counsellors from the Naomi Society are working with the male teachers in St. Mary's and East Antigonish. See Appendix A.
- Two Inservice Days were held for school and community staff :  
Both days were held at East Antigonish School with Jean Crosby and Krista DeCoste facilitating.
  - February 21<sup>st</sup> - Nine/ten facilitators attended . This day provided an orientation to the program and the delivery model for this curriculum. The group workshopped some activities from the curriculum to familiarize them with this material. Maureen Shebib, Equity Officer from St. Francis Xavier University accompanied by student members of X-Pride - presented on LGBT issues.

- April 26<sup>th</sup> - Five/eleven facilitators attended. While there were some staff absent, there were two school staff attending that had not been able to come on the first day. This was a very productive day with a focus on roles and responsibilities, sharing experiences, updating on the youth facilitator education days, evaluation issues and focussing on sexual assault session from the curriculum.

#### YOUTH FACILITATORS:

- By February, 2007, Youth Facilitators had been recruited in each school from grades 10 & 11 with facilitators returning from last year's teams at East Antigonish and Chedabucto Place. See Appendix A.
- Two Education Days ( 6 hours x 2) were held for Youth Facilitators. Both days were held at East Antigonish School with Jean Crosby and Krista DeCoste facilitating.
  - March 21<sup>st</sup> - Thirteen students in attendance from four of the five schools. St. Mary's students were unable to attend due to transportation issues. The day's session included many of the activities from the curriculum to enable students to become familiar with these as participants. Also, last years facilitators delivered a number of the activities and led discussions. An orientation to the program was provided as well as a discussion about roles and responsibilities of the youth facilitators. Other topics covered included; defining relationships and violence prevention, exploring expectations in relationships, boundaries, defining and exploring diversity, effective communication skills, conflict resolution and facilitation skills which involved all participants in practicing facilitating. The evaluation comments were positive and this is an engaged, eager group.
  - April 24<sup>th</sup> - All eighteen Youth Facilitators from the five schools in attendance. Issues of LGBT awareness, sexual assault and media awareness were covered.

#### CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION:

- CWF Funder's Meeting:  
Lucille and Jean attended this two day meeting in Toronto in early January, with the three other grantees and Leslie Tutty, the researcher who will be working with the group. There will be ongoing contact with conference calls. The focus is on a shared evaluation process that will capture what we each do as different best practice models of school based violence prevention work and that will demonstrate effectiveness.
- CWF Conference Call:  
The first conference call since our January meeting was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> with the four grantees and CWF representatives with Leslie Tutty, researcher. The discussion focused on the time line for the evaluation process, which will start with site visits by Leslie between April and October/November (SWOVA - April, summer - Fourth R, October - Healthy Relationships for Youth and Making Waves in November) A draft Interview Guide for these site visits was reviewed and discussed. A literature review will also be conducted during this time and the development of a portrait on each program. The second year work will start the process of the planned longitudinal study. A second meeting will be planned for participants to meet again in Toronto in mid-January/08.

## CURRICULUM:

- Sarah MacVicar, retired teacher, volunteered her time to review the curriculum and provided recommendations for revision.
- In February, the curriculum and workbook had some additions/revisions to adapt it to use by facilitators who were less familiar with some of the diversity material. Supplemental information was prepared for schools to accompany the curriculum.

## EVALUATION:

- Meeting with Peggy Mahon to review internal evaluation needs for this year. Will continue classroom evaluations and student surveys with some modifications.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES:

### Closure of Rural Youth Education Project:

A fair amount of time was required in the first few months on the final reporting components for the National Crime Prevention Centre which were delivered in November.

- Final Activities Report
- Final Evaluation Report
- Auditor's Statement

Receipt of this reporting will generate payment of the 5% hold back from this project.

- Peggy Mahon's final Internal Evaluation Report draft was completed and distributed in November.

### Staffing:

Krista DeCoste was hired on a part-time basis to assist with preparation of curriculum materials, training for the adult and youth facilitators, and ongoing support for facilitators.

### Youth Health Centre Policy:

- In December, the Co-ordinator prepared and circulated information to AWRC staff, board and membership on the ongoing process of the Strait Regional School Board in their deliberations about the proposed policy for Youth Health Centre.
- In January, Co-ordinator distributed an update on this issue to staff and community members and on behalf of the AWRC - submitted a request for a presentation to the Board. This presentation was made at the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the School Board. Daphne MacLean, Physician for Wellness Centre at JH Gillis and Meghan Mulcahy, AWRC Outreach Worker, spoke from their direct experiences working with youth, and in support of YHC and youth autonomy in decision making.
- The policy was approved without the requirement for parental permission at the March School Board Meeting.

### St. Andrew Junior School:

In December, Co-ordinator met with Guidance Counselor, Theresa MacNeil regarding PDR supports for Grades 7 & 8. Discussed incorporating the HRY curriculum/resources.

### RBC Funding Application:

A funding application was submitted in January to the Royal Bank of Canada for supplemental funding for youth facilitator support. This application was selected for a second stage submission and the deadline for this is April 30.

### Staff Planning:

Co-ordinator attended this one day meeting with other AWRC staff to discuss programs and activities of the Centre.

### Department of Education:

A financial grant has been confirmed to cover expenses related to the school staff training.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Five schools in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties engaged for 06/07 school year:
  - J. H. Gillis High School
  - East Antigonish Academy
  - Canso Academy
  - Guysborough Academy
  - St. Mary's Academy
- Department of Education providing support in the following areas;
  - School staff training
  - Youth Team training
  - development of program information resources
  - development of a credit for Youth Facilitators
- Adult Facilitator teams established in each school. These teams reflect a male/female dynamic and consist of the Grade 9 PDR teacher working with a second Adult Facilitator who is either another school staff person or a community agency staff person.
- Youth teams engaged at all five schools with a total of 18 youth participating.
- Two days of education sessions completed with both Adult Facilitator and the Youth Facilitators.
- Sessions underway in all five schools in eight Grade 9 PDR classes.

### NEXT STEPS:

- To complete evaluation and curriculum review once sessions completed.
- To engage an additional five schools in Inverness and Richmond Counties.

## Appendix A

### Program Facilitators 06/07

Schools	9 PDR Classes	9PDR Teachers	Adult Co-Facilitators	Youth Facilitators
Canso Academy	1	<u>Diane Raoul</u>	<u>Paul Landry</u> , Guidance/Student Services	Jennifer O’Handley Matt Geddes Hailey Richardson Kendra Myatt
Chedabucto Place	2	<u>Monica MacIsaac</u>	<u>Leona Purcell</u> , PHN <u>Keith Torey</u> , SPA	Kyle Splane Kathleen Taylor Emily Armstrong Catherine MacDonald
Dr. J.H.Gillis	2/8	1/6 <u>Mary Beth MacCarron</u>	<u>Chris Spencer</u> , SPA	Darren Bogle Dayna VanGostal Monica MacDonald Janessa Hart
East Antigonish	2	<u>Corey Hayne</u>	<u>Megan MacGrath</u> , Naomi Society	Crystal Peters Jennifer Delorey Paige DeCoste
St. Mary’s Academy	1/2	<u>Terry Chisholm</u>	<u>Megan Fogerty</u> , Naomi Society	Serena Bhanot Katherine Thompson Ashley Walsh



# Appendix B

## Map of Schools

