

**Réseau canadien pour la prévention des mauvais
traitements envers les aîné(e)s
Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse**

**Report of the Board to the Members
– for December 15, 2011 AGM**

“CNPEA is a force for connection, communication, and sharing. CNPEA has an overview of what is happening countrywide through its members and a sole focus on abuse and neglect of older adults. It plays an important role internationally by raising awareness from a Canadian point of view. It examines issues at a national level, aiming for national representation while having an understanding, too, of issues at regional and community levels.”¹

The Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse- Réseau canadien pour la prévention des mauvais traitements envers les aînés (“the Network”) has had another very productive and maybe a bit exhausting year. There continues to be growing interest at the federal level as well as on local, regional, provincial/ territorial levels about abuse and neglect issues affecting older adults. Communities are looking for ways to be able to work together to help address abuse and neglect in later life, along with the factors that underlie it.

Increasingly Canadians in many parts of the country are demonstrating dedicated and collaborative efforts to prevent the harms to older adults from happening. People are looking for ways to appropriately support and assist older adults who may be experiencing abuse or neglect. We are seeing the development of new and exciting ways of looking at this issue.

At the same time, some people and organizations are becoming aware of the issues for the first time. It is easy to want to find simple answers for what are actually complex issues. As a Network that been involved in the issues for two decades, we recognize that the most successful approaches are those that respect the people most affected and involve many partners working closely with each other to find approaches and answers that help and make sense.

The Network has been very proud to be part of that process. As the only national organization whose work focuses exclusively on abuse and neglect issues affecting older adults, we are uniquely positioned to carry out this work. We look forward to the range of opportunities we have coming into 2012, as we continue to emphasize the need to share information, ideas and knowledge and to work together.

¹ Quote from Snapshot 2009

A. The 2011 Year's Highlights

The abuse and neglect of older women and older men has continued to gain a fair amount of attention this year. This was the third year of the federal government's Elder Abuse Initiative. A number of our member organizations have been beneficiaries of the funding from that initiative and it has been making an important difference on many fronts. Yet it is still a fragmented approach. Many actors in government, business and community often do not know what others are doing or have already done in the area. As a result there can be unnecessary duplication of effort, or worse --working at cross purposes.

Increasingly, our Network Board members and supporters are being recognized for their special knowledge in this area. We continued to participate on the Advisory Committees of several national projects.

The Network has made several presentations to federal government in the past year, including to Status of Women Canada on systemic issues affecting abused older women, to Minister of State (Seniors) Alice Wong's Roundtable on Elder Abuse, and last year to the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care. In our submissions we stressed the complexity of the issue, its many diverse faces, and the progress being made in many parts of the country. We tried to counter the stereotypes and common misconceptions. We also emphasized the need for a funded national network to share information on Canadian developments on an ongoing basis. Obviously we hope that will be CNPEA~RCPMTA.

The Network was expressly recognized in the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care report *Not to be Forgotten-Care of Vulnerable Canadians*. Our thanks to Jean Guy St. Gelais for representing the Network so well at the November launch of the report in Ottawa. The Committee stated

“We recommend that the federal government provide core funding to:...”The Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA), so as to enable CNPEA to promote and coordinate networks for the prevention and detection of and response to elder abuse across Canada.”

The Committee also recommended care funding to the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) to continue its work of the Elder Abuse Theme Team to identify, pilot, and train diverse responders across Canada on evidence based tools for preventing, detecting and intervening in situations of abuse of older adults.

In late October, New Horizons for Seniors Program issued a call for Pan Canadian proposals on abuse. It would provide up to three years of funding and represents one of the largest funding available in a long time. In addition to widely sharing information on the call, helping to link organizations and encouraging them to apply, our Network submitted its own proposal, titled *“Discovery: Promising practices and successful strategies to prevent and address elder abuse in Canada”*.

If funded, the Discovery project will help keep seniors' organizations and service providers informed on promising practices, key services and resources in their jurisdiction and throughout Canada. This project is intended to be a collaborative effort that involves working with established and emerging provincial/territorial networks and committees along with other key organizations across the country to help highlight the many promising practices and the progress being made in prevention and assistance in Canada in this important area. We proposed to create a national hub to share ongoing developments and emerging knowledge about abuse, plus provide in-depth information on the underlying factors for abuse and neglect, the dynamics and ways communities are addressing these. It will also help people locate available abuse related materials in diverse languages.

We know that there will be many good applicants for this New Horizons call and we sincerely wish them the best. But we also hope that our proposal is sufficiently strong to warrant careful consideration and even better yet, to be funded. The glowing letters of support from Networks and organizations we have worked with in the past were extremely heartening. We offer a special thanks to each of them.

B. Presence at Forums and Conferences

CNPEA~RCPMTA was pleased to attend the International Forum on Sexual Safety of Older Women - A Human Rights Approach held in Toronto by the International Federation on Aging as a special World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event. Among other things, it was great to hear Board member Jamie Howie present with Advocacy Centre for the Elderly lawyer Judith Wahl on *Who's Protecting Older Women in Canada Against Sexual Abuse?*, drawing from the insights drawn from adult protection cases in New Brunswick.

Some of our Board Members and supporters were able to participate in the joint Canadian Association on Gerontology - Pan American Congress, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Conference in Ottawa, presenting on our Network, plus other Canadian and international developments in the area of abuse and neglect in later life.

It is a small step, but this was the first year that our Network actually had its own (donated) exhibit display banner which we can now use in many more workshops, conferences and venues, including future World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events.

We try wherever possible to promote the activities of others. In the future, we hope to formally plan for various local, regional, and national conferences and major events that occur throughout the year, and use these as opportunities to raise awareness of CNPEA~RCPMTA even further, as well as continue to build the Network's membership.

C. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2011 and Other Associated Events

Once again this year, CNPEA~RCPMTA promoted local WEAAD activities by posting them on our website. In the forthcoming year, we will look at ways of doing that much earlier and more comprehensively.

We are pleased by the continued WEAAD and other awareness efforts in many jurisdictions. Nova Scotia for example provided 14 community grants to help communities in their awareness efforts in and around June 15th events.

Over the years we have found that communities and organizations are looking for a special theme they can use in their local planning, as well as new materials to generate fresh interest. They need those materials well in advance of events. There is a role for the CNPEA ~RCMPTA in helping to create a pan Canadian theme for upcoming WEAADs, especially if we can create special materials to support the identified theme. With careful planning, this work can support provincial or territorial awareness efforts, not compete with them.

D. Expanding Networks

New Horizons funding 2008-2011 made it possible for regional networks to begin in several provinces and territories, and to be further strengthened in others. As a result there was a considerable amount of growth happening in many provincial networks and committees in 2011. Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories for example are in different stages of building formal networks in their jurisdictions. Each has really taken big strides in 2011 and each is developing in a unique way. We have also witnessed the growth at the Committee level in Prince Edward Island.

Core funding is key to ongoing regional development. We are bolstered by the wonderful example in Quebec of government funding to go along with its provincial action plan. We hope other governments will also see the value in strengthening networks with funding. We are pleased to learn that past Board member Lori Therrien has been appointed the provincial coordinator for the provincial elder abuse strategy in Alberta.

We look forward to working with community organizations, agencies, committees, networks, private organizations, and different levels of government throughout Canada in 2012.

E. Funding Updates

We would like to thank all those who made financial and in kind donations to the Network this year. We want to offer a special thanks to the Public Health Agency of Canada for teleconferencing. Without teleconferencing, we wouldn't have a functioning organization. That in kind support ends March 31, 2012, but we now have resources in place to help carry through that function for at least a few years with prudent financial management.

As noted in our Treasurer's report, CNPEA~RCMPTA receives several other in kind donations. These include

- Annual fee for incorporation
- Registration and hosting of the website www.cnpea.ca
- Printing and production costs for Network materials distributed at conferences,

- Special promotional items (e.g. CNPEA~RCMPTA's ever so popular "Abuse Hurts at Any Age" stress balls, which have been distributed at conferences and other venues)
- Long distance communication
- Subsidized transportation costs to distant meetings
- Postage for distributing materials across Canada
- The new portable display
- Financial administration by the Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador (subsidized).

Together, these personal, in kind contributions are conservatively valued at \$27,500 annually. The Board members and supporters contributed well in excess of 2200 hours of volunteer time in total.

F. Organizational Update

In 2011, we continued linking with other national organizations to learn what one another is doing and how we might work more collaboratively. Whether it is disseminating information, sharing resources, or linking people, we are very happy to help support regional and national work wherever possible. In the fall, when the New Horizons call for proposals came out, we had the pleasure of linking up with a number of organizations who have been working in the area, but whose work is often not as visible.

CNPEA~RCPMTA is a federally incorporated non profit. On October 17, 2011, the long awaited *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* (NFP Act) came into force. It makes important changes to federal laws for non-profits like ours. This should make the formal requirements simpler and hopefully more tailored to the needs of the organization. As a result of the new law, all federal non-profit corporations will need to revisit their mission statements, values and by laws to develop new ones that fit in with the new regime. This involves a lot of planning and visioning by the Board and membership that needs to be started in 2012. Fortunately key provisions are now standard in the law and no longer need to be included in the by-laws. However the work must be completed and submitted to Corporations Canada by 2014.

As a volunteer based Network, we have been blessed by the support of others. That especially includes the Seniors Resource Centre, which only charges us 15% of disbursements for administrative overhead. In 2012, we will need to take the next natural step in our own development and set up our own banking. We thank the Seniors Resource Centre for the invaluable support it has given us these past years.

G. The Year Ahead

As we have noted in previous years, network development, especially at the national level, requires time, energy, passion and people resources to do it properly. It will be important for CNPEA~RCPMTA to continue to show and explain the value of networks to potential funders in concrete ways in the future. We will continue to stress the need for a funded national network to share information on Canadian developments on an ongoing basis.

We continue to see an increasing number of complex inquiries coming to the attention of the Network. We have begun strategizing on how best to meet those individual and global information needs across the country, whether that is through Frequently Asked Questions, or other strategies.

One of the most pressing information requests we get as a national Network, is where to get help in specific communities. There is a major gap in the information that we and others provide. It is often not easy to find- because different situations often need different resources. In 2011 the Network started developing a directory of information programs and direct services with summary information on what specific organizations do to help people. New Brunswick was the first province to be covered this year. We hope to roll out similar directories for each of the other jurisdictions in 2012, so that people in any part of Canada can find the information and resources they need more easily.

In recent years, we have seen more provinces and territories developing action plans and strategies in this area. It is very clear there is a need to take that work further, looking at the issues from a cross-Canada perspective (coast to coast to coast) in the context of guiding principles, vision, goals, and setting priorities to advance prevention and helping work in this area, and monitoring the progress being made. It is an area in which we will need to work with many stakeholders and strive for consensus.

H. Special Notes of Thanks

Those Who Served on the Board This Past Year – (listed in reverse alphabetical order)

1. Jocelyn Yerxa- Nova Scotia
2. Mark Yaffe – Quebec
3. Charmaine Spencer – BC
4. Jean-Guy Saint-Gelais – Quebec
5. Raeann Rideout - Ontario
6. Pat Power- Alberta
7. Elliot Paus-Jennsen- Saskatchewan
8. Elizabeth Podnieks – Ontario
9. Rosemary Lester – Newfoundland and Labrador
10. Shannon Kohler- Manitoba
11. Jamie Howie – New Brunswick
12. Sister Norma Gallant
13. Bonnie Guy -Yukon
14. Susan Crichton - Manitoba
15. Leah Cohen- Ontario
16. Bea Campbell – Northwest Territories
17. Bernice Bell—Prince Edward Island
18. Marie Beaulieu – Quebec
19. Sherry Baker – British Columbia

We would like to offer a special thanks to Board members and supporters for stepping in for their colleagues when they have had to be away due to personal or family illness, work responsibilities, or other commitments. You have helped assure continuity in regional representation to the Board.

Those Who Served This Year Who Are Leaving the Board

Four current Board members are stepping into supporter roles in 2012: Bonnie Guy, Sister Norma Gallant, Bernice Bell, and Charmaine Spencer. We thank them for their many wonderful contributions this year and we value their continued involvement as supporters.

Other Special People

We would also like to thank the following Supporters for their many wonderful and enduring contributions to the Board over the years. These include Susan Crichton – Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors & the Public Health Agency of Canada (Susan has moved back on to the Board), Alison Leaney – BC & NICE; Barbara Hood- Northwest Territories, and Kelly Heisz- Newfoundland and Labrador. We have made a number of good friends along the way, including Sharon Mackenzie of i2i (Across the Generations) and Margaret MacPherson of Neighbours, Friends and Family.

To Our New Board

We warmly welcome the new Board members who will be joining us in the upcoming year as well. We value the knowledge, skills, experience and perspectives that you each bring.

We are proud of our regional representation and the diversity of our Board which is comprised of seniors, regional network representatives, service providers, government representatives, and academics. This is a uniquely Canadian approach to national work in this area. They are very dedicated persons who are actively involved in promoting abuse prevention and intervention efforts in their respective jurisdictions. We know it is often very challenging to split time between the various levels of organizations especially when working on such a complex and multifaceted issue.

On a Personal Note

I have always been extremely proud of this Board and our Network supporters. I know I have said it on more than one occasion - all of them are amazing individuals. Each brings to the organization a unique perspective and set of talents as well as a heart-felt dedication to positive social change. It has been a sincere pleasure working with you these past years. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by Charmaine Spencer –Co-Chair