



Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies™
Association canadienne des sociétés Elizabeth Fry
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Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

Annual General Meeting - 2013

President's Report

Many thanks to all of you for the work you do with and on behalf of marginalized, victimized, criminalized and institutionalized women and girls. This was another full year for CAEFS and saw us involved in the following initiatives:

- Intervention in the inquest into the death of Ashley Smith;
- Application to intervene in the inquest into the death of Kinew James, who died at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon, on January 20, 2013;
- Preparation for hearings before the tribunal, regarding complaints to the Canadian Human Rights Commission regarding CSC's classification process, especially for Indigenous women and women with mental health issues, in addition to CSC's discriminatory treatment of Indigenous women vis-à-vis their access to relevant and appropriate religious/cultural services and programs;
- Assessing cases for potential conviction reviews;
- Assisting defence counsel to challenge the charging and prosecuting of women who use force to defend themselves and/or their children;
- Intervention and follow-up to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Ryan case, a case that raised fundamental questions about the availability of defences to abused women who take action to protect themselves and their children;

- Preparation for intervention at the Supreme Court of Canada in support of women's substantive equality and the decriminalization of women who are prostituted, in the Bedford case;
- Presenting evidence to counter the regressive law and order agenda outlined in successive new legislative reforms tabled in Parliament;
- Preparing for the update of CAEFS' articles of incorporation, in accordance with changes to federal legislation regarding charities and not-for-profit corporations.

On behalf of the entire network, we thank all of the members of the Board of Directors and our membership for your continued work for the women and girls with and on behalf of whom we work.

Sue Dunlop
President
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies



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Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year: April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013

It is with pleasure that I am able to report to our membership that Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) remains fiscally stable and the membership continues to be well represented by our national office. Fiscal constraints have not diminished our efforts on behalf of the victimized, marginalized, criminalized and institutionalized women with and on behalf of whom we exist. Our Executive Director has continued to offset some of these expenses by donating to CAEFS the resources she raises via her speaking engagements, awards and her teaching at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law.

This year, we received a donation of \$20,000 to be designated to the women's defence fund. The donors have indicated that they would like the resources to be earmarked for the struggles of Indigenous women. They will be participate in decision making regarding the allocation of those funds.

We look forward to continuing to fulfill the mandate of CAEFS. A detailed accounting of our expenditures is available in our audited financial statements. All financial commitments have been met and CAEFS has operated in accordance with the direction of the Board throughout the past year. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank all of the membership for your continued efforts to maintain CAEFS' fiscal stability.

Cathie Penny
Treasurer
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies



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Executive Director's Report

...may I be directed what to do and what to leave undone - Elizabeth Fry

Despite increasingly challenging legislative reforms, this year has provided many wonderful opportunities for strengthening old and building new coalitions. It continues to be an honour and profound privilege to working with all of you, especially our membership, Board of Directors, and the women whose lived experience drives and informs our work. Thank you once again to each and every one of you for your ongoing commitment, care, compassion, strength, resilience and tenacity.

In terms of our activities, during the past year, we were invited by individual Members of Parliament, Senators, Parliamentary and Senate Committees to meet with and/or appear before them to comment on current legislative and policy reform issues on 39 occasions. Furthermore, we had 310 meetings with political staff and bureaucrats.

We spoke at 206 individual events, from public talks, recognition ceremonies, conference presentations to media events. I also attended regional meetings, either in person or via teleconference, and provided accompanied Regional Advocates to the federal prisons, in addition to having the opportunity to meet with Board members, staff and/or volunteers and clientele of 18 of our 24 members.

We contributed to media stories on 378 occasions and wrote 8 reports, articles or papers for presentation or publication, as well as 390 letters. This does not include the volume of additional information influx that the CAEFS office receives. For instance, we also dealt with 72,116 emails, 5,120 telephone calls, and 107 faxes.

The figures I just listed do not reflect the additional work contributed by our amazingly enthusiastic and creative membership across Canada. Regardless of resource limitations, our

network of local Elizabeth Fry Society offices make a significant and enduring impact in their respective communities, regions, and for the country as a whole.

The remainder of this report will provide an overview of our work to promote the rights and entitlements of women with the lived experience of marginalization, victimization, criminalization and/or institutionalization. We continue to learn and grow via our collective and collaborative efforts, and we celebrate the strength, flexibility, tenacity and evolution of the network and the amazingly courageous, resilient women and girls with whom we walk and work.

Priority Issues and Law Reform Initiatives

Canadians are being increasingly reminded of the government's disdain for the rule of law and accountability. Numerous examples of questionable, too often abusive, exercise of discretion by police, corrections and crown authorities abound. Mounting calls for legal, fiscal and moral/ethical accountability extend well beyond justice spheres. Indeed, this reality was underscored by the clear and courageous comments of Kevin Page, as he completed his term as the government-appointed Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The Regional Advocate Teams in each of the regions continue to be a tremendous credit to CAEFS. Access to women in their institutional living units, segregation and maximum security units, continues to be an issue on occasion, but the Advocates continue to do an excellent job of ensuring that they are as accessible as possible to all imprisoned federally sentenced women. They give voice to the women inside and facilitate linkages between women and our membership, as well as other community supports and resources. Overcrowding and the current legislative and policy climate, as well as the myriad issues related to these growing problems, continue to pose the most significant obstacles to their work.

Our work continues with the International Human Rights Program, University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, regarding international human rights protections and enforcement mechanisms for prisoners with disabling mental health issues. While we were all saddened by the January 20, 2013 death of one of the women profiled last year in their report, *Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading? Canada's treatment of federally-sentenced women with mental health issues*, her experiences continue to inform our advocacy efforts. The report will also no doubt assist us as we pursue involvement in the inquest into her death.

In addition, the report forms the evidentiary basis for the IHRP's submission to the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to assist in its review of Canada, 16th Session (April 22-May 3, 2013), a submission which CAEFS has endorsed. CAEFS also provided input into and supported the UPR submissions developed by the Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and Amnesty International.

As a member of the Advocacy Committee of Human Rights Watch International (HRW), on February 13, 2013, we collaborated with HRW, NWAC, FAFIA, and Justice for Girls to launch their report into the issues of police and correctional mistreatment of women and girls and the manner in which this intersects with the increasing concerns regarding the situation of missing and murdered Indigenous women, particularly those in northern

British Columbia. *Those Who Take Us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada*, may be accessed at <http://hrw.org/reports/2013/02/13/those-who-take-us-away-0>.

We also contributed to a shadow report on Canada's record in relation to the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And, in March, at the invitation of Rashida Manjoo, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, we participated in a presentation on violence against women in detention, at the Commission on the Status of Women meetings in New York.

We also continued our work, in coalition and collaboration with other equality seeking groups, to approach the United Nations with concerns about the manner in which Canada is increasingly making legislative, policy and fiscal decisions that are exacerbating the marginalization, victimization, criminalization and imprisonment of women, poor people, racialized people – especially our Indigenous sisters, and those with disabling mental health issues. We have also reiterated our requests to the UN to call upon Canada to establish external, independent correctional oversight and redress mechanisms that are comprehensive and accessible.

Committees examining Canada's record with respect to human rights, women's rights, prisoners' rights, civil and political rights, as well as disability, torture and children's rights, have already voiced their clear and cogent denunciation of the policies and procedures in the federal and youth prison systems which results in the over-classification, segregation and disciplining of women and girls, as well as the discriminatory treatment of racialized and disabled women.

Canada used to have an enviable reputation when it came to protecting and promoting human rights throughout the world. We will continue to encourage the Canadian public to ensure that our Government works to regain that reputation, starting with a renewed commitment to respecting and upholding human and Charter protected rights for all Canadians, regardless of their sex, race, ability, sexual orientation or politics.

Concluding Comments

The introduction of the *Idle No More* movement by an amazing group of Indigenous women was a highlight of this past year. It was inspirational to witness the manner in which young people, utilizing social media and global connections, embraced and expanded this initiative. The resulting worldwide solidarity continues to inspire great hope.

We remain in awe of the courage, tenacity and resilience of the marginalized, victimized, criminalized and institutionalized women with and on behalf of whom we work. In addition, despite the many challenges of these times, we continue to enjoy what must be some of the most committed, creative and amazingly enthusiastic staff, volunteers and Boards of Directors amongst our membership.

We are also most appreciative of the wonderful team of women from across the country, who volunteer their valuable expertise, energy and time to lead this organization and form the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. Your opinions, expertise and experience are invaluable; and you provide visionary, compassionate and intelligent leadership for our organization.

Thank you for continuing to enliven my interest and enthusiasm for this work. Your incredible compassion, energy and resourcefulness make our work easier. Thank you for the tremendous privilege I enjoy working with and for all of you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Pate".

Kim Pate
Executive Director
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies