



March On Vancouver Women's March

Members of the STA proudly stood in solidarity with hundreds of others at the March On Vancouver Women's March on Saturday, January 19. The march started at the Vancouver Art Gallery and made its way to the Law Courts. This year, there was an amplification of youth voices and indigenous voices, as well as protecting reproductive rights, acknowledging issues faced by LGBTQ2S+ community, immigrants, and people with disabilities. It is crucial to lift up communities that have been historically marginalized in order to really achieve women's rights. LA Matheson Secondary Teacher Annie Ohana and her Mustang Justice leadership team volunteered at the event. Annie pointed out that, "opportunities like this give our youth a chance to actually practice active citizenship, actively get involved in their community, and to empower themselves as well." One of the student volunteers, Janne Byukusenge, explained the need to stand up to female inequality. "We can't wait for things to happen. You have to actually go outside and make them happen and make sure that you're heard." We all left feeling empowered to continue to create transformative social change.

CELEBRATING **WOMEN** IN LEADERSHIP

It is important to recognize and celebrate women in leadership, so I asked some of our powerful union leaders some questions to give us all a glimpse into what got them into the positions they are in today. I am very fortunate to have connections with all of these inspiring women, and appreciate their contributions to our profession, their dedication to the membership, and their contagious passion in all that they do.



Teri Mooring
BCTF, 1st Vice President

"My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world." - Jack Layton

Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

I began my union leadership very early on, in my first year of teaching. I grew up in a union-oriented family. My father was the president of the union at Cariboo Pulp and Paper in Quesnel, where I also worked when I was in high school and college. I had been involved in a number of 'wild cat strikes' and political conversations around the dinner table were a daily occurrence. As a result, I became the staff representative the year the BCTF became a union. This was quite a volatile time with a lot of member engagement. I then went on to hold almost every position on QDTA executive.

Who inspires you and why?

There are so many inspirational people in my life. I am especially inspired by the women in my life who truly live their values. I'm inspired by women who have been through difficult times and are able to maintain a positive orientation in their lives. And I am inspired by women who are giving up their time and energy to nurture and mentor other women.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

My greatest accomplishments are embodied in my children and grandchildren. My children have grown into adults who I admire, am inspired by, and love spending time with. One of my greatest joys is spending time with my two young granddaughters.

What are the barriers you see to women achieving more leadership roles?

I would say one of the primary barriers for women taking on positions of leadership is time. Women still have the bulk of the responsibility when it comes to caregiving in their families. I believe society also questions women's choices more than their male counterparts, especially when it involves career choices that take time away from family.

What strategies do you use to balance work and life responsibilities? Are you able to?

It is so important to have a balanced life but that doesn't mean it happens all the time. There are definitely times that it is simply aspirational. I try to find those quieter times when I can have downtime to recharge, even

if it's for a short time. I'm quite aware that if I feel overly stressed or tired I'm probably not making good decisions. As a result, I have been endeavoring to make this balance more of a priority.

Do you think that women are achieving equality? What do you suggest the next generation of women focus on?

I think equality is happening but it is taking a very long time. In Europe, there are legislative initiatives in place to speed up the process. According to the World Economic Forum in their Gender Gap report, current trends indicate that the overall global gender gap can be closed anywhere from exactly 100 years to 217 years, depending on the country. This is not acceptable to me, particularly as a mother of a daughter and two granddaughters. This is why I am in favour of putting measures in place to speed up the process. There will be an opportunity at our AGM in March to have this conversation.

DID YOU KNOW?

30% of single mothers are raising their children in poverty



Jatinder Bir
Surrey Teachers' Association, 2nd Vice President

"We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free."
- Kavita Ramdas

Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

I am a sister, wife, mom, aunt, a teacher, a colleague, and a friend.

I attended public school from K-12 in the Surrey School District. My post-secondary education includes a Master of Education-Educational Practice (SFU) Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education (SFU); Bachelor of Education (UBC); and Bachelor of Arts (SFU).

My training/specialization is as a secondary Social Studies/History teacher. My teaching experiences include Kindergarten to grade 12 as a Special Education Teacher, Learner Support Teacher, Integration Support Teacher, and a short time served as a Teacher Teaching on Call.

I think what helped me become the leader I am evolving to be is my endless grit in volunteering and taking chances to learn and grow along with my conviction and passion for my profession and union solidarity.

Who inspires you and why?

My parents, Dilbag and Bakhshish Kaur Badh are most definitely my inspiration. Their challenges and hardships as new immigrants in Canada, isolation from Canadian society, and the ferment generated by a strange life far from home, all had a transforming effect on me. My folks taught me to engage this life with passion, compassion, empathy and gratitude - they are the reason I am the person I am today, and for that, I am so thankful.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

My greatest accomplishment was going back to university as a young mom of two children under the age of five to finally complete my undergraduate academic degrees. That was huge for me!

What are the barriers you see to women achieving more leadership roles?

I see many barriers for women achieving more leadership roles including structural barriers – lack of access, lack of equity, gender barriers and family responsibilities.

What strategies do you use to balance work and life responsibilities? Are you able to?

To be honest, I preach work-life balance to

others but certainly don't practice it myself – it is non-existent. However, work-life balance is definitely a goal of mine and I am working towards achieving it slowly.

Do you think that women are achieving equality? What do you suggest the next generation of women focus on?

No, not really, and yet I am hopeful. I believe we are slowly working towards achieving equality, however, equal rights are not enough because for now, inequality exists in our minds, in our biases and prejudices, and that remains to be fixed.

Too often, discussions of gender equality have focused on what women need to do differently:

but driving real change is going to take the best thinking of our men and women—to share stories, to understand, and to act united.

I think our next generation of women should most definitely continue to fight for equal rights and access to opportunities. Together, they should empower, advocate, and raise each other up at every chance.

DID YOU KNOW?

Women are **60% less likely** than men to move from middle management to executive ranks.

**Violette Baillargeon**

Secondary French and Spanish Teacher - IB

“The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.” - Martin Luther King

Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

My background is made-up of a range of experiences that have contributed to making me both stronger at handling adversity and kinder when engaging with those who struggle most. Originally born in Oaxaca, Mexico, to a free spirit and a dreamer, I spent the first 6 years of my life in Central and South America and attended kindergarten with the local indigenous children on Isla Providencia, in Colombia. When I turned 7, my mother and I returned to Canada and settled in Montreal, where I spent the next 5 years until a series of tragically common events resulted in me being placed in Ministry care, where I remained until I ‘aged out.’

The rest is pretty typical: a number of adolescent mistakes, some successes, a great many ‘questionable choices’ but an equal amount of good judgments, luck and some bad luck, some people who dismissed me but more who believed and encouraged me, and love.

As is the case for many who encounter adversity, I think my life's experiences have taught me empathy. Now I understand that when a child is dysfunctional, it is only because they have had to learn to survive dysfunction in their homes. When an adult is unkind, it is because they come from fear. When people are aggressive, it is because they have faced attack. Now I see myself in others and others in me, and this gives me the perspective to withhold judgement.

Who inspires you and why?

Honestly, most people around me seem to be doing something inspiring in some way or another. Some have the logistical skills to

plan a conference while I struggle to write a workshop, others are creative and risk-takers in ways that awe me, some are good at confronting a problem head on, and others have the tech know-how that I feel I lack.

I have come to understand that there is always something to learn from someone and that no one can be characterized in terms of binaries (i.e., helpful or not, friendly or not, warm or not). Some of my harshest critics have driven me think deeper about something, others who have seemed unsupportive have said the perfect thing at the perfect moment to encourage me to do something I feared. So, who has inspired me? My colleagues, mothers I have mothered with, teachers who have taught me, my friends and acquaintances, and people who take something on bravely and with determination because there are a billion reasons not to follow through.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Graduating from high school (there was such a pull not to), going to university (no one in my family had gone), and becoming a teacher (it seemed so unlikely, I was not a stellar student). I am proud that I continue to challenge myself despite my fear and I routinely remind myself that what scares me is small in comparison to what most people in the world must face.

What are the barriers you see to women achieving more leadership roles?

The barriers that exist for women are around their (often disproportionate) responsibilities in the home. Having to balance an after-school meeting with a doctor's appointment or a Convention with a music concert can be difficult and unless both parents (or caregivers) have agreed to be equally as impacted by such conflicts, it can be impossible.

What strategies do you use to balance work and life responsibilities? Are you able to?

I barely achieve it and, on some days, I am not sure I do. My partner and I began our relationship on the assumption that we were equal contributors to the household. For example, we are both responsible for an equal number of dinners and we take turns putting the kids to bed. We approach the weekends similarly. Some of the other strategies that work for me include working out with the kids (we do TKD together and I swim lanes when they take lessons), doing yoga early in the mornings, and cultivating a mindful practice (like meditation). I am truly present when at home, not taking school-work from school, and not checking my work email in the evenings.

Do you think that women are achieving equality? What do you suggest the next generation of women focus on?

Women are certainly moving towards equality but there is still so much work ahead. Having access to affordable child care would enable women to return to the work force if they choose and not risk losing career opportunities. A wage increase in areas that are traditionally considered ‘women's work’ such as teaching, nursing, and child-care would also help. It is not so much that the pay gap still exists in those careers (although they can), but it is more the fact that that work typically considered ‘male dominated’ pays so much better despite requiring comparable credentials/experience/education. The two examples above also tend to conflate; in most households, as was the case in mine, the person who took four years off to stay at home with kids also happened to be the person who earned less in the relationship, so one condition compounds another.



Anne McNamee

Teacher-Librarian at Fraser Wood Elementary, Member of the STA Executive, Grievance, Pro-d Committees, Mentorship Advisory Team, and Mediation Service

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." – Alice Walker

Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

I have been a social justice activist since my early adulthood, and I have family members who were committed and active in the BCTF when I was younger, so politics and public education were often a topic of conversation when I was growing up. Stepping forward as a leader in the STA, however, didn't happen for me until I was encouraged by other women to first become a staff rep and then become involved in some of our committees and STA services. I am also the kind of person who likes to say yes to any opportunities that are offered to me. Gioia Breda and I like to laugh about our start in union leadership when we both said "yes" to live interviews on CKNW in 2012. Bill Good was looking for responses from regular classroom teachers, little did he know we spent hours together being prepared with all the facts and arguments by Laura Barker!

Who inspires you and why?

I am very inspired by the emerging young women social justice activists, like Greta Thunberg, 15-year-old environmental activist from Sweden, Emma Gonzalez, Parkland student activist and gun control advocate, and the young outspoken political women leaders who just won seats in the US congress. For me and my work at the STA, my inspiration has been and continues to be Jennifer Wadge. Jen was the president when I first started as an STA officer in 2012. I remember a conversation that I had with her when I had only been in the office for about a month, and I was preparing to take a firm position in a negotiation with

an HR district principal. I did not feel ready yet! Jen just looked at me and said, "Anne, you are tougher than you think you are." I have repeated those words to myself often. Her confidence in me was so encouraging as a new union activist. As I continue my work with the STA, I will often find myself channelling Jennifer Wadge, remembering her strong commitment and sense of responsibility and accountability to our members.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

In my time as the Professional Issues Officer and Professional Support Officer at the STA office, I am most proud of the transformation of our STA/SD36 Mentorship Program. We have grown the program from serving 50 – 60 teachers per year, to over 300, while maintaining a strong union voice in the initiative. I see it as a work in progress, but I believe that the foundation that we have put in place in our partnership with the district in mentorship is strong. Another accomplishment I feel proud of is the fact that during my time at the STA office, the STA mediation service has become a program that teachers know they can rely on when communication at their school gets difficult.

What are the barriers you see to women achieving more leadership roles?

From what I have seen in the STA, our leadership, for the most part, has been made up of strong powerful women for the last several years. In fact, for a few years, we were all women in the STA office. So, I don't particularly see barriers in our local union. In other areas, yes, there are barriers. One of

the barriers some women face is the fact that we are often the primary caregivers in our families, including bearing the majority of the emotional and mental labour. When a woman is considering moving on in leadership, they are often considering the impact that may have in their family, perhaps in ways that men do not consider. We still have a lot of work to do in this area!

What strategies do you use to balance work and life responsibilities? Are you able to?

As much as possible, I like to integrate my work and my life. Anyone who has attended a meeting at the Bombay Banquet Hall will see that I attend those meetings with my family! My husband, Brian, is also an STA member, and he and my children really value that work that I do. I take my son to the STA general meetings because it's good for him to see his mother in a leadership role. Because we are a family, we make space for everybody's interests, and my commitment to my union is one of mine.

Do you think that women are achieving equality? What do you suggest the next generation of women focus on?

We are on the road to achieving equality when we look at where we have come from. I think, however, if we consider this globally, we have a very long way to go. We need to focus on equity and recognize that although as individuals we may feel equal, that feeling of equality is a privilege that many women around the world do not have access to. As a society, there are many things we could do to lift barriers and create equity. Universal childcare is one simple example of that.



Annie Ohana

Chair of AntiPoverty, Indigenous Department Head, and Mustang Justice Founder

"My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world." – Jack Layton

Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

Degrees in Criminology and Political Science, Masters in Equity Studies, a lifelong knowledge of oppressive realities due to my family's socioeconomic and heritage realities. Hate, violence, economic marginalization and troubles with the system treating my family like liars ...made me realize before I even turned 10 that social justice was very important.

Who inspires you and why?

I am inspired by those who fought for but never got to see justice, I am emboldened by those that sacrifice so much for people they will never meet, I am motivated by my students who believe they can make a difference.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Establishing a Social Justice Program that has both academic arms but also youth leadership components focused on justice over charity and being a union activist pushing government to do better. I am proud of doing community organization work because working in

solidarity is what life should be about

What are the barriers you see to women achieving more leadership roles?

Patriarchal views that still dominate our society and build systems of inequity. A male gaze that forces women to forego who they are in the name of power. And obviously the compounding factors of white supremacist Eurocentric heteronormative thinking mean BIPOC folk and LGBTQ2SI+ face layers on top of layers of barriers.

What strategies do you use to balance work and life responsibilities? Are you able to?

Sadly, not able to when I consider the amount of time I use to work on goals related to social justice and activism. That being said...for myself, an oppressed life is one we must work to overthrow and so my love is in my work, my life is in justice therefore life and justice are balanced because I believe it is a fight we must never let go off, especially if we have privilege and power which allow us to make space for others.

Do you think that women are achieving equality? What do you suggest the next generation of women focus on?

Equality and equity are two different things, as women we must make space for racialized women and women of the LGBTQ2SI+ community, the barriers facing those women are all too real in every facet of life. I also believe that movement forward can go backwards, from control over our bodies (rape culture to menstrual equality to family planning to protection of sex workers) to workplaces and economic structures that value a woman as not just a labourer but a parent as well. We have a long way to go yet, but women are rising up and that is the best thing to focus on, developing effective mechanisms to fight any and all oppression.

DID YOU KNOW?



75 cents

The average amount earned by full-time working women in Canada for every dollar earned by men, according to Statistics Canada. The wage gap widens for women who are Indigenous, living with a disability, racialized or newcomers.

15.5 months vs. 12 months

On average, it takes women 15.5 months to earn what a man earns in 12, according to the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition.

\$7,200 less

Women with the same experience, socio-economic and demographic background earn approximately \$7,200 less than their male counterparts per year.

RESOURCES

Notice a common theme? Many countries and the province of Quebec have effective day care programs. There is a need for such a program in Canada. Go to CCCABC for more information.

Women in Politics Today

By Niovi Patsicakis, Surrey TTOC
and member of the STA Status of Women Committee

There are many reasons why we need to encourage women to become political leaders aside from the fact that we make up half of the human population. Historically, the feminist movement came into being to promote equality for every human being, regardless of sex and gender identification. Yet today, not only are we trailing behind men in equal pay, but also in executive and political positions. Women are just as smart, our decision making and problem-solving skills just as sharp, and our linguistic and verbal skills are in general superior, as shown in testing. As teachers, we need to provide leadership opportunities to our female students by creating lessons which allow them to practice skills, instill confidence, and encourage them to serve in community projects.

People may enter politics for money, family expectation, and/or self-aggrandizement, but these are the wrong reasons. Today, when 28 of the richest men in the world own most of the wealth, and the majority of the world is not doing well, we need motivated and passionate people who want to improve community, province or country. I've been fortunate to meet many such women. They inspire and mentor me, and I have learned a lot from them. We as teachers must instill respect, fairness, empathy, the skills of cooperation and teamwork. I would like to believe that true leaders last because their honesty and caring for others shines through. Charisma on its own does not a good leader make, but honesty, openness, bringing people together, working towards a vision to improve lives, those are the leaders that can and do change the world. Those are the values we must pass on

to the upcoming generation of young women.

One stumbling block that discourages women from entering politics is time. Women are busy working, studying, raising families or looking after older parents. However, times are changing, and women have proven that with passion and commitment, they do become politicians, they do better others' lives, and political life is attainable. Women are learning to hold their own and then some, demanding respect and pushing on, and our society is better for it.

Elections are a very interesting and intense time and every job is important. They are an opportunity to get involved and to learn as much as possible by keen observation, working with others, and asking questions. We can encourage our high school students to engage by holding mock elections. Another option for our youth is joining a party association where policies are discussed and planned. Women must enter and have a place in the world of politics, despite the ups, downs, successes and setbacks. We as teachers must continue to treasure and prepare our young women for participation in the democratic process. Let's do it, for a brighter future!

Niovi Patsicakis has run twice for School Board Trustee, and once for Member of the Legislature. She has been President of two Provincial Associations, President and Secretary of a Federal Association, and a Campaign Manager federally. She is presently the Surrey, Delta and Langley Regional Representative of the Women's Rights Committee of her party.



Joint Social Justice Dinner with Status of Women, T.I.M.E. and Labour Affairs Committees on December 6, 2018, anniversary of Montreal Massacre

STA Status of Women Committee

The Surrey Status of Women Committee has been an active standing committee since 1972. The committee was formed as part of a network of Status of Women Committees within the BCTF and the CTF (Canadian Teachers Federation). While the main goals of the committee are to eliminate sexism and to promote the participation of females in all areas of education, the committee was active in many areas of the STA and our community. Members of the Status of Women Committee have taken leadership roles in our federation

as executive members, bargainers, staff people and presidents. Many of the “wins” we were able to get into contract were won by the coordination of campaigns started by the network of Status of Women committees around the province. Job sharing, benefits for part time teachers, employment rights for TOCs, maternity and paternity benefits, improved pensions and benefits for women are some of the campaigns that the Surrey Status of Women Committee contributed too.

Chair: Angela Marcakis

Members: Lorene De Silva, Helen Kelsey, Karen Kilbride, Kelly MacDosen, Phyllis Minsky, Velma Moore, Annie Ohana, Niovi Patsicakis, Jas Sidhu, Pauline Veto, Maire Walker



Grade 7 Girls' Leadership Conference

By Karen Kilbride and Angela Marcakis, STA Status of Women

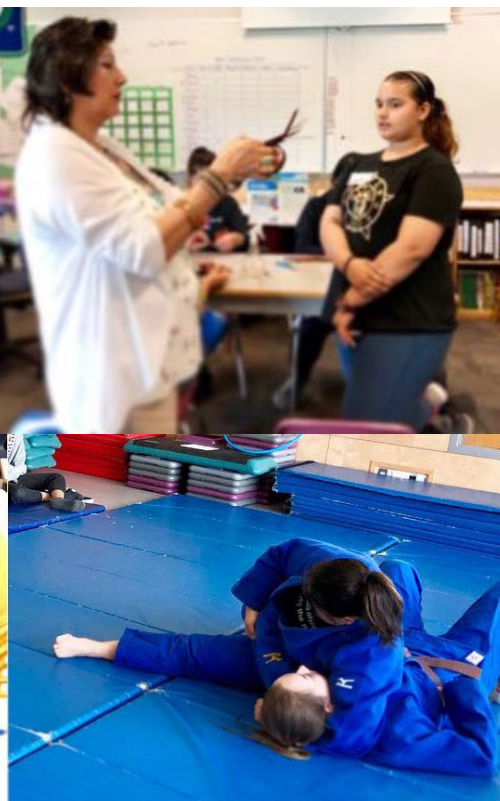
Why is the transition to secondary school a problem for 12- and 13-year-old girls? How do we support and build confidence in the next generation of women to seek more leadership roles?

Every May, about 500 Grade 7 girls meet at a Surrey secondary school in answer of those questions. Research has shown that young girls leave elementary school confident of their abilities and secure in their school environment, but when they arrive at secondary school, their self-confidence diminishes quickly. Peer pressure, the size of the school, and feelings of isolation are overwhelming stressors.

A Grade 7 girls' conference is a method to bridge this transition more successfully

and build confidence in tomorrow's leaders. Support is given to the girls at the conference by teachers and conference presenters from a variety of careers and backgrounds.

There is always an inspiring keynote to start the day. Last year's keynote was Tara Teng, Miss World Canada 2012 and human trafficking advocate, whose work has helped to pass new laws in Canada that protect victims of human trafficking and she has established Canada's first Municipal Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. This year, we have invited Shilpa Narayan, 23-year-old award winning mental health and social justice activist and Surrey alumni. In April 2018, Shilpa was awarded the Surrey Board of Trade's Top 25 under 25 award for her mental health and social justice work in the Surrey community. In November 2018,



Shilpa was a speaker at WE Day, sharing her story with 20,000 youth at Rogers Arena.

About 30 workshops are offered every year on girls' issues, sports, science, performing arts, robotics, poetry, self-defence, self-improvement, fine arts, and consent. The girls are able to attend three workshops.

The girls and the presenters were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the success of a Grade 7 girls' conference. Every year the feedback from the girls is the wish to attend more than three sessions, wishing to come for more than one day to cover more workshops, and wishing to come back again the next year. They enjoy having a whole secondary school to themselves, and even though they always have difficulty finding their way to the sessions, "The Big House" doesn't seem so frightening at the end of the day.

The [Grade 7 Girls' Conference](#) is organized by the Surrey Teachers' Status of Women Committee. For further information on the Surrey conference, or if you would like to fill out a workshop application form, contact Angela Marcakis at communications@surreyteachers.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

36% to 14%
15X
2X

The drop in the percentage of girls who say they feel confident between Grades 6 and 10.
Girls are 15 times more likely than boys to be hospitalized for eating disorders
Boys are twice as likely as girls to pursue careers in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math)



The Status of Women Committee is an STA Committee chaired by Angela Marcakis, who comes to us with a history of participation in events and committees that advocate for change and we are lucky to have her. She is the Communications Coordinator for the STA, a grade 7 teacher and staff rep, one of six Local Representatives to the BCTF, and on many, many committees. An impressive list for a very impressive woman, and yet that is not how I came to be a member. I learned all about her and this amazing committee through a wellness event.

I was invited to attend a wellness event by Karen Kilbride, a retired Surrey teacher. She

continues to be an active member of this committee and others that promote social justice and change. I have attended several wellness events put on by this committee, held most often at Beecher Place, in Crescent Beach. These events often include a physical aspect, either restful and contemplative like yoga, or active and sweaty like Zumba, a speaker, and a meal. We enjoy these offers, while overlooking the most scenic view. It is truly worth coming out just to enjoy the camaraderie and conversation, though there are often great freebies too. Get there early if you can and enjoy a stroll on the beach or a coffee on the deck. Despite all the fun and food, I have learned so much at these wellness events, and

My Journey Into Wellness

By Velma Moore, Member of the STA Status of Women Committee and Teacher at Princess Margaret Secondary

obtained access to many excellent resources related to advocating for women, promoting women's wellness, and self-care. Their choice of speakers has been diverse and remarkably useful. In addition, they are an action committee and you can become as active as you like in promoting change, or simply come out to Wellness events and enjoy the fruits of their passion and their labour of love. Save the date for the next wellness event on June 13.

We Can Teach An Old Dog New Tricks

By Lorene De Silva, Retired Surrey Teacher and member of the STA Status of Women Committee



There is this old saying that we cannot teach an old dog new tricks. I think it depends on the trainer's methodology, their love and encouragement of the trainee, the trust of the trainee for the trainer, the dog's background and DNA, plus the time frame allowed. If all of the above are favourable, then we can teach an old dog new tricks.

I am a retired elementary music teacher. I have worked in the district for over 30 years and had worked in other districts outside of BC for a number of years before I moved to Surrey. The longer I live, the more I find out how little I know and how much more there is out there to learn.

However, knowledge is for the head, and kindness is for the heart. Not only do I need to learn new knowledge, but also need to re-evaluate my attitude of communication with others I come in contact with daily: e.g. my husband, my family and friends, my neighbour in the complex I live in. I heard over and over again from psychologists that how we view the world around us is 90% attitude and 10% the situation. I am learning to be more open to

differences in perceptions; slow to judge and quick to forgive. I also am learning to agree to disagree.

I have been a member of the Status of Women Committee for a number of years before I retired and I am still welcomed to participate in the Committee where I sense a lot of love and respect. In turn, I learn to grow in love and respect.

I would like to conclude my sharing with Surrey teachers a simple acrostic for LOVE

L is for learning, not only knowledge for the head but also kindness for the heart.

O is for openness to differences in perceptions, learn to agree to disagree, and maintain an attitude of acceptance.

V is for victory in celebration of initial failure, never give up and be defeated. Keep on doing one's best. Failure is the mother of success.

E is for excellent not to outdo others but put out one's best effort to better oneself.

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

We Will Defend Each Other

By Annie Ohana, Social Justice Teacher, LA Matheson, Founder of Mustang Justice, Chair of STA Anti-Poverty Committee, and Local Representative to the BCTF

One billion rising, women's march, women's memorial march...

What happens when what you are trying to teach has a bad rap, is still considered controversial, and people even deny it is needed?

What does the word feminism conjure up in your mind? Now be honest, gut-wrenching honest. I've seen teachers and students reject the notion, male and female teachers who reject or don't want to be affiliated with free resources I procure for them, students who define it as man-hating, only about women, and having a negative impact on one's dating life.

So, with all that baggage, how do I allow students to soar and explore the incredibly powerful and system changing world of feminism?

What we teach and how we teach is never value neutral, does not simply exist in the hypothetical, and in fact is already known by our students at some level of experiential knowledge.

It is crucial therefore, that we as teachers teach through lenses that affirm and lead to growth.

Intersectional feminism is one of those lenses. And the tactic I use to overcome a world that normalizes the violence of patriarchy and misogyny (and to be clear, as bell hooks states, women and men both enforce the psychological violence of patriarchy) is to focus on real people, real life, and the real world.

Narratives that counter a system that denies women equal rights exist

all around us, and can be accessed by educators. As a teacher who wants to focus on the multitudes of meanings one experience can have, I choose to teach students through direct action, on the front lines of those fighting for justice. In comes events like the Women's March, One Billion Rising (NEVR), and the Downtown Eastside Women's Center Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Memorial March on February 14th.

Through MustangJustice, a youth leadership program that focuses on justice over charity, our students have not just attended, but are also helping to organize such events, their voices, their privilege as students, becoming a conduit for change and helping women fight for their rights.

From making banners, leading activities, performing and speaking, but at times simply marching alongside thousands, my students both engage and learn about intersectional feminism at the same time. They get to hear from marginalized perspectives of people who are BIPOC, LGBTQ2SI+, those who have been exploited at work, who have survived sexual violence and more. Through the experiences of thousands of women, my students learn why the fight for gender equity and women's rights is so very important.

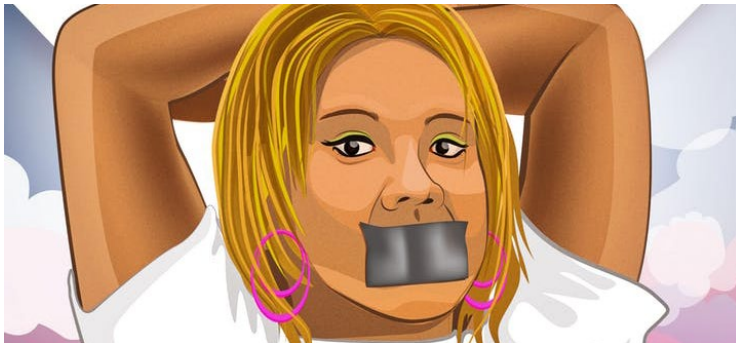
The goal is to approach the topic of feminism from as many angles as possible, when planning events for the international One Billion People Rising alongside the Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships, we join a network of 100+ other organizations that include front line workers and first responders to investigate and fight against the Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual violence that takes place all

around us.

The MMIW Memorial March is of particular importance for all of us as settlers. By interrogating the problems of multiculturalism and the history of violent genocidal colonization that created Canada, we look at the continuing erasure of Indigenous Women. The march created by a powerhouse group of Indigenous Women and now in its 29th year, makes visible those made invisible by the steamroller of white supremacist Eurocentric narratives that still define Canada. Marching in the DTES, one of the most marginalized communities in Canada, alongside some of the most marginalized people, hearing their voices, listening to harsh truths, and engaging in the hard, hard work of reconciliation, my students are introduced to why it is important to stand in solidarity and to ACT in solidarity with those facing oppression.

There is of course much more, but at the end, the goal is to introduce students to different realities they themselves have never experienced, turn their unearned privileges into superpowers that help lift the burden of pain off the shoulders of others through the self-empowerment of those same people. Feminism stops being a dirty word when you realize how many obstacles women face, when you are face-to-face with survivors; feminism thrives when you are put to work in analyzing systems that still deny gender equity.

The fight for justice is never dirty, I encourage you to help your students see and take part in solidarity actions such as these. Justice and the pursuit of human rights lifts all boats.



My Name was January - See this film!

“January Marie Lapuz was a transgender woman of colour who was murdered in September 2012 in New Westminster, British Columbia. She was an advocate for trans rights and was known as the “bright light” among Vancouver’s LGBTQ community. This documentary feature film is a celebration of January’s life, among other trans women of colour.

This film is about remembering the impact that January had on the lives of everyone she encountered.”

<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>The right to equal opportunities and education</p>	<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>The right to expect a harassment-free workplace</p>	<p>DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>21% of visible minority women and girls live in poverty</p> <p>23% of women with disabilities live in poverty</p> <p>16% of senior women live in poverty.</p>	
<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>Parental leave</p>	<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>Reproductive choice</p>		<p>RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank a Feminist stickers can be ordered for free through the BCTF by emailing socialjustice@bctf.ca A guide to women in Canadian history, includes lesson plans, information, and activities. Media Smarts: Body image section has lessons about how the media constructs our perceptions of healthy and attractive bodies. Media Smarts: Gender representation section has lessons examining how our assigned gender at birth carries a lot of social and cultural meanings and expectations, and unpacks some of the media’s baggage around what it means to be a boy or girl, man or women.
<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>The right to be considered a person</p>	<p>Thank a feminist for:</p> <p>The right to vote</p>		



Intersectionality and the Urgency of Supporting Black Girls

By Cicely Belle Blain, Poet, Artist and Co-founder of Black Lives Matter – Vancouver, www.cicelyblainconsulting.com

Education is evolving right before our eyes; it wasn't long ago that we had classes segregated by gender and schools segregated by race (yes, even here in [Canada](#)). Now, for the most part, we understand the necessity and importance of diversity and inclusion in our schools (and so many other areas of society). We recognize, especially here in Canada, the urgency of multicultural education. There is so much to be learned from sharing space with people who are different from us.

Unfortunately, though, no matter how hard we try to prepare young minds for the world outside, sometimes larger systems of oppression and discrimination seep into our spaces, manifesting in microcosms of exclusion.

It should be no surprise that Black folks in Canada experience among the highest rates of incarceration, racial profiling, police violence and discrimination. And while these seem like tragedies of adulthood, similar forms of discrimination, unnecessary punishment, exclusion and profiling occur inside the walls of Canadian schools. [Black students in Canada](#) (and many [other places](#)) are consistently being funneled into streams below their abilities; behavioural issues often a result of intergenerational trauma and oppression are mistaken for lack of intelligence and greater expulsion rates fuel the [school-to-prison pipeline](#). It's not rocket science that this puts Black students at an extreme disadvantage and fails to set them up for a life of success.

There are two big things I'm passionate about; Black liberation and gender equality. But the chances of achieving either of those seem slim... Just as with the racial discrimination I've described above, sexism, misogyny and gender-based discrimination still exist within Canada. Canada has the [eighth highest gender pay gap](#) in the world. Indeed a result of patriarchal and male-dominated hiring practises and workplaces, but also undeniably a result of the opportunities for girls in schools. Girls are often socialized to believe they won't do well in science and math (of course these binary gender dynamics also impact boys - they are taught that subjects like art or literature require emotional vulnerability that they don't possess - not to mention how they impact students who don't identify within the gender binary).

Alone, these two issues are stark. However, applying an intersectional lens reveals even graver outcomes. **What does all this mean for students who are both Black and girls?**

First, let's unpack intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw is a Black legal scholar

who wanted to speak to her specific experience of being a Black woman when the feminist movement seemed to ignore her racialized experiences and the Black rights movement seemed to ignore her gendered experiences. Intersectionality draws our attention to the compounding effects of different forms of systemic oppression - in Crenshaw's case, racism compounding with sexism. Crenshaw's term (alongside the work of many other feminists of colour and people in the disability and LGBTQ+ movements) helped radically shift third wave feminism into a more inclusive understanding of gender equality as many of us see it today.

As a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Vancouver, I see this manifesting so prominently in my work. The three co-founders of Black Lives Matter are women, and the majority are queer. In Black history, the existence and contributions of Black queer women has been significantly erased and overlooked - until now. Black Lives Matter represents a movement that is a living embodiment of intersectionality; presenting a keen awareness of the ways systems of oppression overlap and compound in an individual's lived experience.

For example, many devastating murders of Black people by police officers in the US and Canada that have made it to mainstream media are men. Yet, there are also women and non-binary folks who experience police brutality. In fact, [trans women of colour](#) experience among the highest rates of violence in North America. So where are their stories? In recognizing this, the #SayHerName campaign was born; a way to remember and highlight the stories of women whose lives were lost to anti-Black violence. This signifies a clear and concise shift in the Black Lives Matter movement - without an intersectional framework, the experiences of those Black women would be lost, just as many were throughout history.

Intersectionality allows us to see the connection between issues we once saw as separate. It allows us to understand what it might be like to exist as a victim of multiple forms of oppression. For Black girls, it's racism and sexism. (and potentially many other things like classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism...). Kimberlé Crenshaw spoke of how she saw the feminist movement as a movement that uplifted and supported white women and the Black rights movement as one that fought for Black men. So, where did that leave her, a Black woman? We see the same shortcomings occurring in our inclusion initiatives in schools.

For example, it has recently been noted how so many schools in the

Lower Mainland are severely lacking in thorough, relevant and accurate [Black History Month curriculum](#). In fact, I think it's fair to say that many BC schools lack in Black history education in general. Yet when they do, the representations are often tokenistic, simplistic and American male-centric. We talk of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Obama - but how many young BC children can name 10 Black Canadian women leaders? Can you?

Similarly, when we think of the growing diversity of curriculum that explains the importance and contributions of women to our world, how many of those women are Black? Our curriculums are centred around the contributions of white men - Shakespeare, World War Two, Christopher Columbus, Charles Darwin - which upholds these systems of power and simultaneously tells Black children and especially Black girls, they don't matter.

It's part of our society (built on stolen Indigenous land, by slaves and indentured labourers) that Black folks are among those kept at the bottom. It is not the fault of educators that these systems of oppression trickle through education; rather it's an intentional way that all of the systems in Canadian society (education, healthcare, law, media etc.) were built. In the 21st century, many of us are not to blame. But as inheritors of these systems, we must act with urgency in recognizing our complicity in them and our responsibility to change them.

The intergenerational impacts of historical violences like slavery and colonialism are present in the minds and bodies of young Black girls.

Before you go... consider these:

If Black girls in your class talk back, maybe they're not 'sassy'; maybe they're tired of being ignored.

If Black girls in your class never speak up, maybe they've been socialized to believe their voices don't matter.

If Black girls in your class always sit together, maybe they've developed a mistrust for others or feel safer with people who look like them.

If Black girls don't participate in 'Meet the Police Day', maybe they've seen too many people who look like them get hurt by law enforcement.

If Black girls seem anxious, maybe they don't know how to talk about their mental health because so many psychologists and counsellors are white.

If Black girls struggle with careers or choosing subjects, maybe they haven't been presented with many Black role models.

If Black girls don't like to read aloud, maybe they've had people make fun of their accents or appropriate African American Vernacular English.

If Black girls think they're not beautiful/capable/clever enough, maybe it's because they've never been told they are.



Wonder Woman

By Spillious, aka, Trevana Spilchen, Delta teacher, District SOGI Coordinator, and BCTF CASJ LGBTQ2S+ member.

- You can watch them [perform this piece on YouTube](#).

I am wonder woman,
By which I mean
People look at me & wonder...
Woman?
Or man?
Most accurately I'm trans,
The in-between stuff
The oh so queer stuff

And while I do not have a magic lasso
That makes people tell the truth
I do have the magical ability
To make people stare at me awkwardly
Which in turn reveals
The truth of their feelings about me

Because 1 of 2 things inevitably happens
When I stare back at them
They either give me that
Oh shit I was staring at you
& now I feel like a douche bag kinda
smile
And I am relieved & know they are
basically ok
Or they give me that
You are a disgusting human
That shouldn't even exist in this world
kinda scowl
And I tense up ready for an argument or
maybe even something worse.

As super powers go,
Making people stare at me awkwardly
Would not be my first choice

It does keep me safe sometimes &
Gives me hilarious stories to tell my
friends
But it also amplifies people's transphobic
hatred
Which often makes me feel like a
disgusting human being
That shouldn't even exist in this world

Maybe if William Marston had created me
I'd have the same bullet proof bracelets
he gave Wonder woman
& I could simply raise them up
Bouncing the searing sneers back at the
perpetrators
Maybe if I had super human strength of
character
I could just carry the weight of their
hatred without noticing
But what people think weighs on me,

And so some days
I can't bear to twirl into the super hero
suit
I wish I could just be a woman
Without the wonder
Without the fear
Without the questions
I just don't have the strength to answer
today

I hate myself for hiding her
& often feel I haven't earned the term

woman
That I am only the wonder, the other
That I've fallen short of being she
Fallen short of being me

The other day I threw on a hoodie, shorts &
flip-flops with no bra
To go to the grocery store
Hoping to hide within the binary
Only to quickly realize
my legs were still silky smooth shaven
& my toes still wore the pretty purple shine
From my first ever pedicure
A birthday present from my daughters
No trouble to tell I was lying
To the world & to myself
No need to even use that lie detector test
You also created William Marston
You know I'm guilty
You & I both know no matter what I put on
There is a wonder woman underneath
Just like Diana Prince,
Does she hate herself for hiding?
Are there days when she wishes
She was just a woman?
Just one of the girls
In this patriarchal world
Simply trying to be normal
Whatever that means
Me, I'm just waiting for the day
When I can say
I am wonder woman
& actually believe it's true

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

At the BCTF Winter 2018 Representative Assembly, Local Representatives passed the following motion:

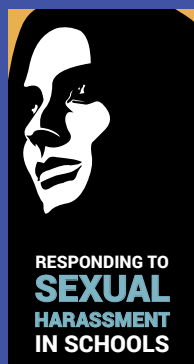
#MeToo movement

That the Federation:

1. endorse the #MeToo movement and support the courage and conviction of the women and girls who speak out about the sexual abuse, harassment, and assault they have experienced and the many more who silently live with the trauma.
2. encourage all members to speak out against misogyny, sexual harassment, and abuse of power, and to serve as effective and supportive allies for those who are experiencing or have experienced such treatment.
3. call on the provincial government to restore the funding to women's centres province-wide and support the agencies and collectives that advocate for and support the rights, safety, health, and well-being of all women.
4. call on the federal and provincial government to follow the lead of Iceland in enforcing pay-equity by making it illegal for employers to pay women less than men in the same or equivalent positions.

– Winter RA, January 26–27, 2018

As teachers, we have a great influence on the next generation and can help to construct a society that is free of sexual harassment and abuse. We can begin by demonstrating and fostering positive attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls in our classrooms, as well as teaching our students the skills to act as allies for victims of gender-based violence. Teachers also have the legal obligation to identify and report students who may be victims of sexual abuse and can help these students by connecting them to necessary resources and services.



RESOURCES

- A new [BCTF brochure](#) was created in response to the 2018 BCTF AGM decision on the Culture of Consent. It provides targets and witnesses of sexual harassment with strategies to recognize, respond to, and report harassment.
- Media Smarts: [Advertising and male violence](#) is a lesson you can use to foster awareness about the ways in which male violence is used and promoted in advertising, helping to deconstruct the prescriptive gender identities that reinforce patriarchy.
- Media Smarts: [Female action heroes](#) is a lesson that uses heroes from pop culture and current TV programs to help students explore and debunk gender stereotypes and myths.

16 Days of Activism

The 16 Days of Action is an international campaign that starts on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and finishes December 10, United Nations Human Rights Day. The [We Can coalition](#) sponsors 16 Days of Activism and the BCTF signed on as a partner in 2007. Since then, the BCTF has created [posters](#) and [resources](#) free for teachers to use in their classrooms during the campaign.

In Our Schools

By Leigh Husieff, Teacher-Librarian, Clayton Heights Secondary

I have five committed students who volunteer their time in the library at lunch, on their spares and after school. I told them that I wanted to do something around the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence. I gave them free reign over what it looked like. They threw around several ideas, including the red shoe project (which resulted in several pairs of origami red shoes), but they settled on doing silhouettes. There are 100 silhouettes. The pink ones represent the 1 in 3 women who are victims of gender-based violence. The blue ones are the 1 in 6 men who are victimized. There are 2 rainbow silhouettes representing LGBTQ+ victims of gender violence. Each coloured silhouette includes a statement of shame, self-blame, or excuses except for the one that states, "I reported my assault to the police" to represent the low numbers of people who report Gender Based Violence to police. The students accompanied the visual display with definitions, facts and statistics about gender-based violence. The display ends with QR codes linking to places that can support victims of GBV. I am very proud of the work these students put into this display.





In Our Union

December 6 is a national day of remembrance in Canada, reflecting the anniversary of the massacre of female students at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. This year, the STA Executive Committee passed a motion to donate \$250 to the [White Ribbon Campaign](#), a campaign organized by men working to end men's violence against women and promote gender equity, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity.

Thank you to everyone who donated shoes for the shoe memorial - the STA Status of Women Committee ended up sending about 80 pairs of shoes to the memorial, which were then donated to women in need. After school, the STA Status of Women committee hosted a facilitated discussion about violence against women in Canada. Afterwards, the attendants braved the chilly night to pay homage to the slain women of Montreal in the candlelight vigil at Holland Park. The speakers' words moved us all and we are reminded once again that we must continue to work for change.

NEVR: a community committee that advocates for change

By Velma Moore, STA Rep for NEVR, Music and Humanities Teacher, Princess Margaret Secondary

NEVR stands for Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships. Through becoming a member of Status of Women, I learned about this community committee and became the STA rep. I like what this committee stood for. Part of their mission is to "create a forum for the coordination of open and efficient service delivery and public policy" (NEVR: Mission). They work to "establish a resource repository for service providers, community leaders, educators and government bodies" (NEVR: Mission). Having worked in the Ministry of Child and Family for years as a Social Worker and a Foster Parent before becoming a teacher, it became clear to me that violence against women was not the only situation needing attention. What I liked most about the NEVR mission is that they focused on ending violence in all relationships. Their scope focuses "on all aspects of relationship violence; physical, sexual, emotional and financial, and its effects on all members of the family and the community" (NEVR: Scope). I had the pleasure to attend the NEVR Conference in November, held at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. It was very informative and offered a variety of workshops. I went to 2 days of the conference and found workshops of interest on each day.

Taking this education into our schools

When I attended the NEVR Conference in November, I learned a great deal about the progress they have made in achieving their goals and the work left to do. I made good connections with people who were willing to come into the schools to present information to the students about prevention. Some of these presenters were already in place in our school. Princess Margaret Secondary staff have been utilizing speakers to come and inform students about internet safety and how to stay safe. "Children of the Street", have shared their "TCO2: Taking Care of Ourselves, Taking Care of Others" Presentation at our high school for the past few of years. The response to their presentation has been excellent from students and teachers.



Taking action into our schools

The Surrey Women's Centre operates a "[Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team Van](#)", [which] help[s] women who need medical treatment after a sexual assault. The stigma of sex work makes women 'easy targets' for rape. The "Smart Van" was on display at the NEVR conference and we were able to get a close look at the inside and the comforts and protection they offer. They showed me the personal care crisis bags that they give out, which are simple cloth drawstring bags filled with travel size personal care products: baby wipes, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand warmers, toques, gloves, socks, gauze swabs, bandages, individual packs of tissues, cotton balls, hand lotion, tampons, and shampoos. I wanted my two Humanities classes to get involved in a community action plan, and I thought this would be a good one. Our Home Economics teacher, Ingrid Callaghan, was quick to respond and offered to have her students make 24 (9 by 13 in.) bags, using up extra fabric pieces.



I am asking everyone to save the travel size personal care items they collect when travelling (shampoos, conditioners, soap, shavers, etc.) and donate them to Princess Margaret Secondary school so that we can fill the bags. I will have my students fill the bags with the donated items and give the bags to the Smart Van program. If you can spare a few dollars then you can purchase the one-dollar toques, socks or mittens sometimes sold at the box stores/or donate the money to us and we will buy the needed items on your behalf. These items make a huge difference when the weather is bad. They also accept donations of warm blankets. I have received permission from my principal to have the Smart Van come to our school in Semester 2, so the kids can see where their donations are going. This van responds to women in crisis every night. If there is a good response from the community to support this initiative, I will carry this on. It is important that students know we can make a difference.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Their Voices Will Guide Us

At the BCTF AGM last year, many teachers signed up for the Aboriginal Education Dinner: “[Their Voices Will Guide Us](#)”. Their Voices Will Guide Us is also a new educational guide for K-12 teachers created by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Women and Girls. The goal is to engage teachers and students in meaningful learning about the important roles of Indigenous women and girls in their families, communities, and nations, to highlight the strength, agency, and traditional responsibilities of women and girls, and to show how violence has undermined these strengths and inherent treaty, constitutional, and human rights. The guide includes information, resources, activities based on inquiry and critical thinking, and ideas for inspiring change and sharing the message. In a time of reconciliation and decolonization, we urge everyone to fulfill their roles and responsibilities by ensuring that Indigenous women and girls are respected, valued, loved, and protected.



DID YOU KNOW?

6x Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women.
34% of First Nations women and girls live in poverty

ReDress

Jamie Black, a metis artist from Winnipeg, was also present at the meeting and educated us on her [ReDress project](#), which highlights the issues around the missing and murdered Indigenous women by displaying hundreds of red dresses in public spaces across Canada to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women. We then had the opportunity to participate in a powerful demonstration outside the Vancouver Art Gallery in honour of the missing and murdered Indigenous women.



RESOURCES

- [Project Of Heart and Justice for Indigenous Women Teacher's Resource Guide](#)

The Moose Hide Campaign

The [Moose Hide Campaign](#) is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Wearing a piece of moose hide on your lapel signifies a person's commitment to honour, respect, and protect the women and children in their life and to work together to end violence against women and children. The BCTF is proud to financially support this campaign. Here's the link to their [online learning platform](#) which includes 5 lesson plans with classroom resources.

Teachers and their classes were invited earlier this month to participate in the first Moose Hide Campaign Gathering and Day of Fasting in Victoria on February 13, 2019. Beginning with sharing circles led by students, the participants walked to the Legislature, where youth speakers shared their commitment to the campaign.



**MOOSE HIDE
CAMPAIGN**

**CAMPAGNE
MOOSE HIDE**

Women's Memorial March

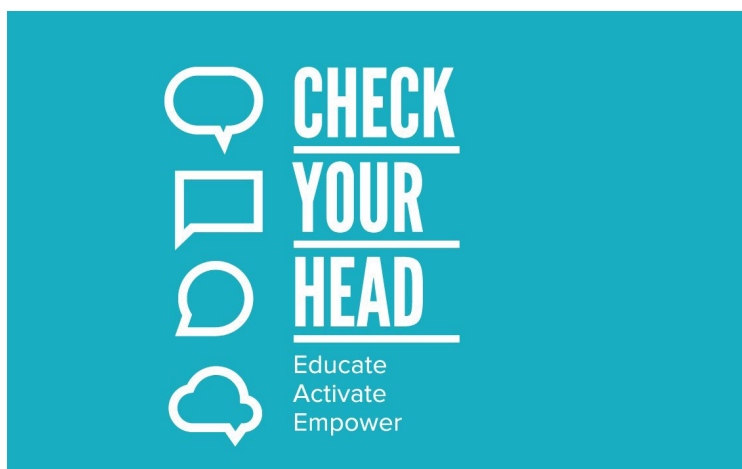
The [Women's Memorial March](#) is an annual event held on Valentine's Day to call attention to missing and murdered women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Family members gather to speak in remembrance at 10:30 am at the Carnegie Community Centre Theatre, at the corner of Main and Hastings. At noon, the public is invited to join in the march that proceeds through the Downtown Eastside, stopping to commemorate where women were last seen or found. The event concludes with a healing circle at Oppenheimer Park at 2:30 pm and a community feast at the Japanese Language Hall.

The first women's memorial march was held in 1992 and the death toll of many vulnerable women from the DTES continues to rise today, leaving many families, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Indigenous women disproportionately continue to go missing or be murdered with minimal to no action to address these tragedies or the systemic nature of gendered violence, poverty, racism, or colonialism. We come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice.



Anti-Violence Training

Did you know that the STA Status of Women Committee puts on an annual anti-violence training session for Surrey teachers in June? This is an interactive, multi-media session on the reality of violence experienced by women and girls in Canada today, the ways to end it, and the tools available to engage youth in violence prevention. The workshop "Let's Talk About Gender-based Violence" is presented by Anastasia Gaisenok, Executive Director of [Check Your Head](#), a youth-driven not-for-profit organization that provides education, resources, training and support for youth to live as engaged, independent and active citizens within our local and global communities. Teachers receive an excellent unit ready to use in the classroom or workplace. This year's anti-violence training session will take place on June 13, 2019. Mark your calendar if you are interested!



RESOURCES

- [National Day of Remembrance and Action Against Violence Against Women](#) lesson plan
- [Resource list for violence against women](#)

Violence Against Women is a Men's Issue: So Let's Do Something About It

By Isaac Louie, Grade 5/6 Teacher, Hall's Prairie Elementary

I remember coming across the concept for the first time. I had just finished my first year at SFU since transferring from Douglas College and was deep into topics of racial justice. I was following any blog that spoke about the racism that was becoming so salient and tangible I could feel it with my hands and in my bones. I was so preoccupied with unpacking the racism I had - and continue to - face daily that I was caught off guard. Male privilege. Wait, I also have unearned advantages in this society?

My first reaction was defensiveness and denial: okay, maybe some things are better for me as a man but it can't compare to the racism I and my community has faced, can it? It took many years, tea conversations, personal research, and education to realize that, yes, I had gotten things in my life simply by being a man. It took - and continues to take - the

unequal and sometimes unreciprocated labour of women and non-binary folks in my life to help me understand that I, too, benefit from a system that privileges masculinity over femininity.

Male privilege is not chosen, but the opportunity for us men is to decide what we do with it is entirely our choice. Will we continue to reap the benefits of an inequitable system or will we seek to change the system?

While many of us men are not violent, we must accept that, in a patriarchal society, we embody the capacity for violence. It is true that we are not all aggressive, but we are socially conditioned to solve problems with aggression. We may not be Donald Trump, but we have friends or family who act like him. If we are not violent in the primary, we are adjacent to it. I mean, if you had to choose to walk down a



sidewalk at night and there was a man walking towards you on one side and a non-binary person or woman of equal stature on the other, we know which side would feel safer to us. As Terry Crews says, it is us men who need to hold other men accountable.

So, we must take responsibility for our actions. To truly support femmes, non-binary folks, and women, we need to account for our body size in our every interaction. An elephant does not get to choose its size, but it is still accountable for the space it takes up, and the potential a misstep can cause. So, too, must we become aware of the space we take up with

our bodies, voices, and actions. Because we are so conditioned to take the lead, we must seek to change our habits so that we can learn to follow and support.

We need to take it upon ourselves to intervene in other men's actions, especially when we realize it poses a threat to others around us. We need to value the feminine on par with the masculine: taking more initiative in organizing events including set-up, takedown, clean-up and childcare. As male educators, I think we should be especially open to this notion. We know what it means to be undervalued by society and not have our essential work invisibilized. But we must remember that it is a society built on the superiority of men that we must work to dismantle. It is patriarchy's feminization of education who is our foe.

On this coming March 8th, millions will celebrate International Women's Day. I ask every man to not just support this feminist initiative, but to also think about how we can leverage the advantages we get every day to support women, femmes, and non-binary folks. Male privilege is having the choice to think about this or not. I ask that we leverage that into action.

Isaac Louie has created a free resource for young men to explore healthier versions of masculinity called ["How To Be An Accountable Man: Handbook for Preventing Violence"](#). This handbook discusses ways young men can navigate dating ethically, how they can support survivors of sexual assault/abuse, and provides practical tips they can be responsible guardians of safety in public spaces.

Once and for all

By Isaac Louie, Grade 5/6 Teacher, Hall's Prairie Elementary

& patterns die slow...	(from nails your legacy dangles like vertical paper diaries folded into knuckles and teeth..
(because) you didn't know	
that when you grabbed him by the scruff of HIS neck 1, 2, 9, 25 years old you reached into the present day and left your red hands on mine	your work, a porcelain bowl's glaze dripping and crackling, reaching perfection long after the artist has died...)
you didn't know	you didn't know that your scolding, frustrated strikes
that your one-time abuse your temper thrown tone (scraping in my ears like heavy metal screams)	would become the things on the dresser my dad pushed to the ground, burning holes in the carpet like a coal left on wax:
would be the angry echoed yell	
banging on walls adorned with family photos, printed monet paintings, & good luck fortune scrolls	grandfather-shaped depressions i fell into..

you didn't know that

the bruise
on my
soul

would become
the pain in my girlfriend's smile
the shaken ground upon which i walk
long days of occasional parent fights
going to sleep
with a twisted stomach

4 generations ago,
one carried abuse
passed down
from father to son to son to son

a
pattern
that bleeds
into my present
the history that speaks
and repeats
and repeats
and repeats

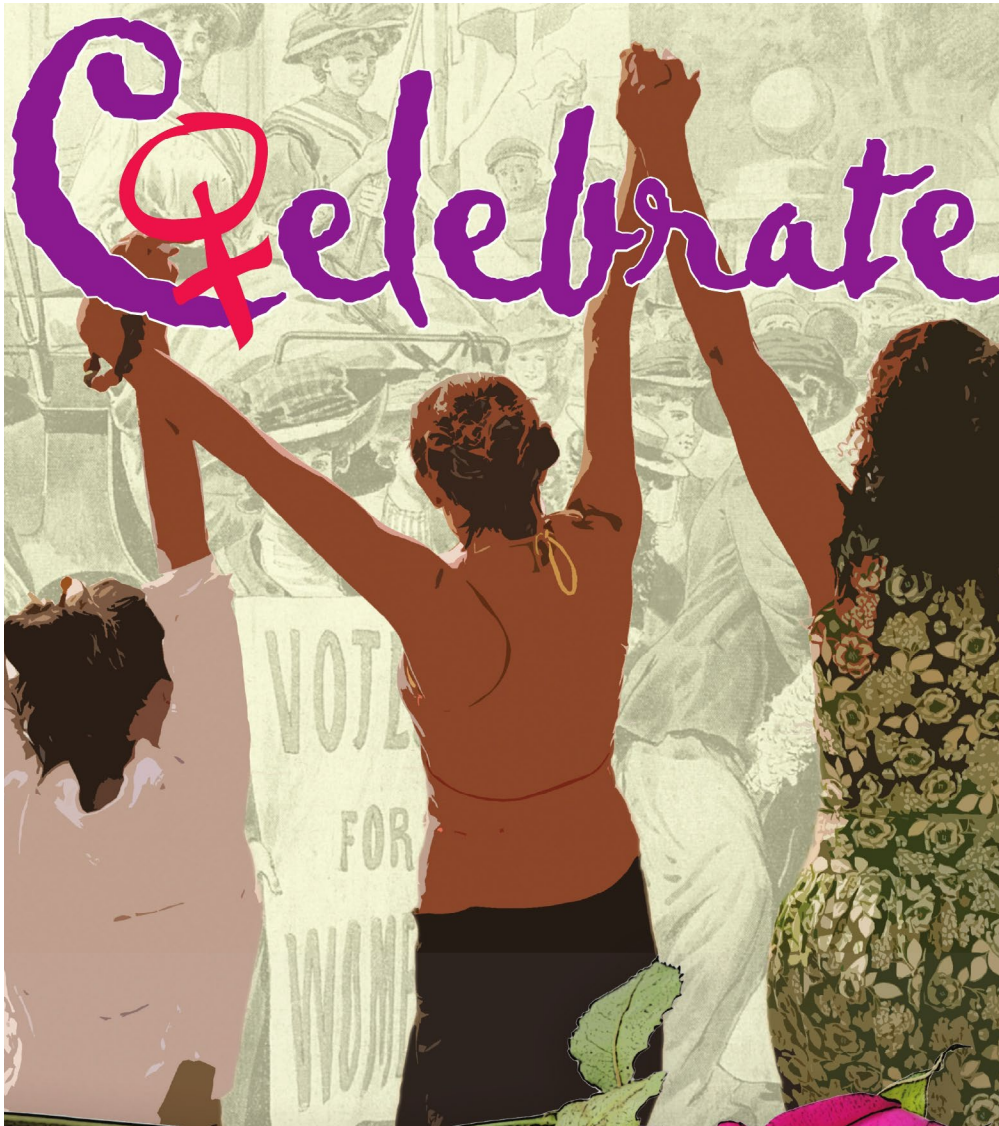
until it is heard

once
and for all

DID YOU KNOW?

- 82% The percentage of those under age 18 who experience sexual assault that are girls.
- 4X Girls are four times as likely as boys to be sexually assaulted by a family member
- 67% The percentage of Canadians who know a woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse.
- 5% The percentage of sexual assaults that were reported to police in 2014.
- 6,000+ The number of women and children who sleep in shelters on any given night because it isn't safe at home.
- 300 women and children are turned away from shelters on any given night in Canada because they're full.
- 1 in 3 The ratio of Canadians who understand what it means to give consent in sexual situations.
- 80% of Canadians believe the next generation of women is just as or more likely to experience sexual assault.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK IS MARCH 3-9



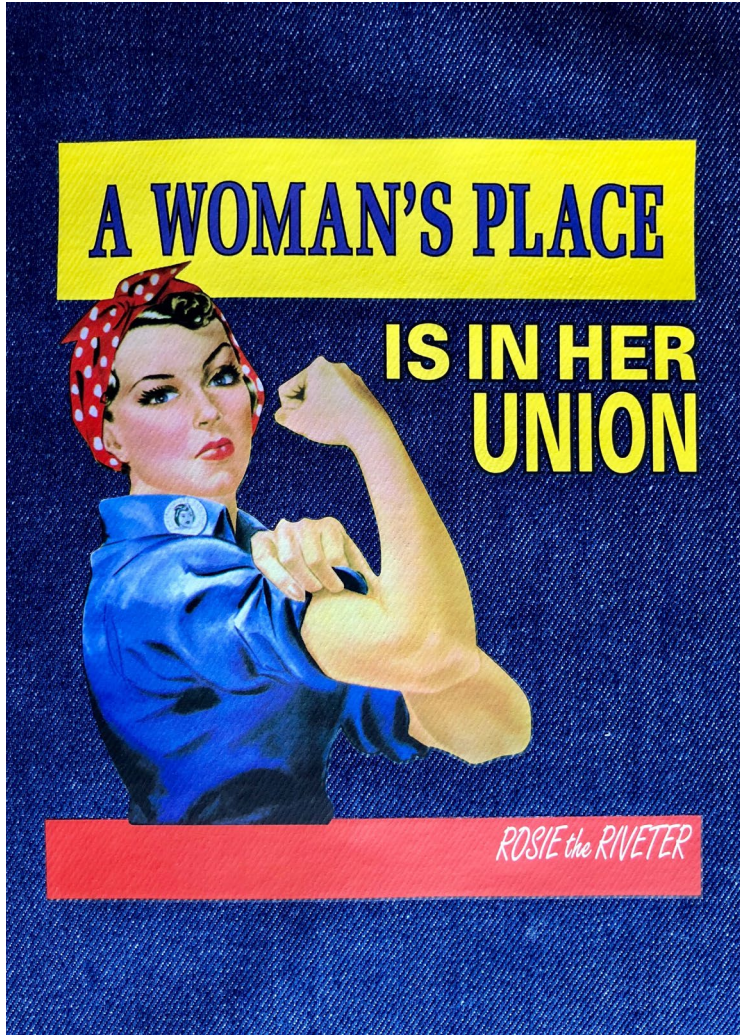
International Women's Day is March 8

Since 1911, March 8 is known as [International Women's Day](http://www.internationalwomensday.com), a celebration of women's achievements - social, cultural, legal, economic, and beyond. Celebrate International Women's Day by having your students research its origins and history.

For more information, go to www.internationalwomensday.com.

Bread and Roses

By Angela Marcakis, Chair of the STA Status of Women Committee, Local Representative to the BCTF, and Communications for Surrey Teachers' Association



Something magical, something powerful, something transformative happened over the 42 hours I spent at last year's BCTF First Women's Institute: Bread and Roses. Almost a year has flown by since then, and as I sit here reflecting back at that time, I can still remember it all so clearly.

It was a dark and stormy drive over to the Pacific Gateway Hotel. I remember feeling exhausted from having worked all day, but I was excited and energized for what this opportunity would bring. I felt so honoured to be one of the few chosen to go, yet as I entered the hotel, I suddenly felt nervous... I was new to union work and wasn't sure if I would be the least experienced person there. What if people questioned why I was chosen to represent Surrey?! Surrey that is so full of powerful and inspiring women - I would not have been my first choice! Eek! Later in the conference, I would quickly learn that I was not the only one to feel this "imposter syndrome", which is defined as someone who doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud". In fact, the conversation evolved and this topic organically emerged into its very own session.

The first person I met was Marsha Roberts, and teacher from Arrow Lakes School District. She instantly helped me to feel at ease. Little did I know at the time that that moment would be the beginning of a true friendship. This pattern repeated itself over the whole conference. I connected with so many inspiring and compassionate women from all over BC who I now feel honoured to be able to call my friends. Teachers

from North Okanagan-Shuswap, teachers from Burnaby, teachers from the Sunshine Coast... I would have never met some of them had it not been for this conference! The strength and energy I channel from them (little to their knowledge) helps me to continue with the important work of the union.

Over the days, we worked together to deepen our understanding of women's issues through interactive workshops using stories and songs. We participated in a human library and created a wall sized timeline of the herstory of the BCTF Status of Women Committee. We had a live panel discussion on feminism and activism, with an empty seat for anyone brave enough to join in. As this was at the tail end of the conference, the strength from all the other women inspired me to gather the courage to sit in that spot and share.

This conference sparked a fire within me. I began to apply for various leadership opportunities, hushing that "imposter syndrome" critic in my head. As they say, "If not me, then who?" I put my name forward as a Local Representative to the BCTF for my local, and won the election. I applied for my dream job as Communications, Campaigns, and Events Coordinator, and I got the job. My biggest achievement of all was completing my Master's Degree and graduating last fall from SFU. Most significant of all, my confidence is growing, and my passion to fight for the next generation of young women continues to grow stronger as well. It was the perfect way to celebrate International Women's Day. WE can do this!

Canadian Women for Women Afghanistan

By Lauryn Oates, human rights activist whose work concentrates on international development, women's rights and education in conflict zones.



Afghan women and girls celebrate the 8th of March with a ferocity and enthusiasm that is incomparable to anywhere else I have seen International Women's Day celebrated. Each year, women march in the streets of Kabul and other Afghan cities on March 8th. Women's organizations and activist groups use the occasion to voice demands for better protection of their rights, to highlight the persistent and tragic problem of violence against women, and to issue calls to action from their government, the UN, donor countries, and from their fellow citizens. The day is widely covered in the media, and there is always a full schedule of events going on throughout the week leading up to International Women's Day. In our office in Kabul, the Afghanistan country office of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, the staff celebrate with a huge cake and roses for all the female staff. It's common for women to be recognized by their family members, friends and co-workers with roses and other gifts on this day.

The function of International Women's Day of galvanizing action for improving the status of women is something sadly still necessarily globally. But in Afghanistan, the stakes are especially high, and Afghan women and girls don't miss an opportunity to put a spotlight on their agenda for change. The struggle for equality in the context of their activism is often a life-and-death matter, as the country still contends with high maternal mortality, high rates of child marriage and forced marriage, disproportionately high poverty among women, femicide, and pervasive gender-based violence. At the same time, there is great hope as so much change has washed over the country since the end of Taliban rule in late 2001, and women have relentlessly worked to seize their rights, making incremental progress slowly but surely.

This March I will be in Canada for International Women's Day, attending a full schedule of events and celebrations, glad for the unity and solidarity around this cause among so many Canadians. But I will be thinking about those fearless and hardy women marching down the streets of Kabul with their chants and placards, on the other side of the world, and saluting their great courage.

RESOURCES

[Understanding Human Rights in Afghanistan](#) focuses on Afghan women and their families, with activities challenging students to recognize their roles and responsibilities for securing and protecting the rights of women and children worldwide. The teacher's resource kit includes lesson plans for Grades 4-12, an interactive character, a card game, and actions.

**Surrey's 25th
Annual
International
Women's Day
Celebration**

**TIME'S UP!!
WOMEN MAKE IT
HAPPEN**

**A
CELEBRATION
FOR WOMEN**

**Saturday,
March 9, 2019**

NEW LOCATION!

WHERE:

**Johnston Heights
Secondary
15350 99 Avenue**

**12:30 PM
to
4:00 PM**



FREE EVENT

DOORS OPEN 12:20

SNACKS*

(12:30 - 1:00)

***WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!!**

FOR MORE

INFO CONTACT

Sandra 604-597-4358

OR

Shannon 604-588-8008

**WOMEN ARE INVITED TO CELEBRATE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH AN
AFTERNOON OF FUN, ENTERTAINMENT,
SNACKS, REFRESHMENTS AND
DOOR PRIZES**

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME.

**PLEASE CHECK US
OUT AND LIKE US
ON FACEBOOK!!**

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS
REQUIRED FOR
TRANSPORTATION
PURPOSES ONLY**

**Produced by volunteer
labour**

CUPE Local 728 - Surrey School District, CUPW Fraser Valley West Local, CUPW Pacific Region,
CUPE Local 402 - Surrey City Workers, Surrey Teacher's Association, Westminster Savings
Credit Union, BCGEU, PSAC West Fraser Valley Area Council, Compensation Employees Union,
CUPE National, Move UP, Fraser Valley Labour Council, New Westminster and District Labour
Council, Union Worker's Union, Starbucks Cedar Hills, Sanroy Services, Bear Creek Market,
CFM Marketing Services Ltd., All Tymes Florist, Margo Nielsen Reflexology and
Ronnie's Cupcake's.

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