Putting Women in the Picture
Choice, Challenge, Change

“Call to Action”
Putting Women in the Picture
Choice, challenge, Change

Change
In 1943, companies were beginning to hire women in response to labour shortages and the draft. An article written for the Transportation Industry, provided male supervisors with, “Eleven Tips on Getting More Efficiency Out of Women Employees”. The tips suggested that employers
- hire young, married women as they were more responsible than single women were, and less cantankerous than older women.
- hire women on the “husky” side as they were more even tempered than those that were thin.
- Request women to undergo physical exams to ensure “women’s problems” were not an issue
- Give females a full day-long schedule of duties so that they won’t bother the “management” – as women lack initiative to find work themselves

We’ve come a long way! More women are working than ever before. More women are achieving high levels of education. More women are pursuing professional careers in management, the sciences and the professions...but women continue to face significant challenges as they struggle to break the glass ceiling.

Women in Today’s Workforce
The increasing participation level of women in Canada’s workforce is the country’s most significant social trend in the past quarter century. The percentage of women, aged 15+, working in paid employment has risen from just 42% in 1976 to more than 58% in 2004. This dramatic growth has contributed to tremendous achievements and challenges for women.
In 2006, Statistics Canada released *Women In Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*¹ that highlighted several important trends.

- Women represent more than half of Canada’s population. Women make up 53% of Canadian’s aged 65-74.
- The number of females completing university degrees has increased dramatically (1971-3%; 2001-15%).
- Women now make up the majority of full-time students in most university departments (except mathematics and science).
- The number of working women with young children (0-3) has more than doubled since 1976.
- The number of female lone-parents with jobs rose substantially (over 7,000 single mothers are raising families alone in Grand Erie).
- Women are far more likely to lose time from their jobs because of family responsibilities.
- The number of females working part-time is double the rate than it is for males (27%:11%, 2004).
- The majority of women continue to work in traditional jobs (teaching, nursing, clerical, sales & service). There has been little change over the past decade.
- The number of women represented in professional fields and managerial positions has increased. However, women in management appear to be unable to crack the glass ceiling and reach higher-level positions.
- Wage disparities between women and men continue. The average earnings of women equal approximately 71% of men’s.
- Women make up a disproportionate share of the population with low incomes.

CHALLENGE

Putting Women in the Picture in Grand Erie

A thriving economy, good job opportunities, pay equity...all of these have created a rosy employment picture for residents of Grand Erie over the past 10-15 years. But have women fared as well as they should be?

In 2007, ACTEW, A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women asked Betty Anne Jackson, GETAB’s Women Director, what services for women existed in Grand Erie. The answer astounded us, “none”. During the same period, a number of serious domestic violence situations occurred highlighting the need for greater attention and support to women. A decision to host a two-day forum focused on “creating change” was born.

On Oct. 30-31, 2007, 32 women from across Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk joined together to celebrate women’s growth and success, identify challenges, and to create a plan of action.

The Conference

Oct. 30, 2007
A panel of “community experts” provided insight into the strengths and challenges women experience across the region. Our sincere thanks go to Jane Scheel, Executive Director of Haldimand & Norfolk Women’s Services, Karen Williamson, Director, Immigrant Settlement Services, Linda Helmer, Human Resource Manager, Holstein Association of Canada, and Colleen E. Miller of Colleen E. Miller Enterprises. Their knowledge and work with women in the areas of community, immigration, personal growth, and business provided a strong foundation for discussion and planning.

Oct. 31, 2007
Keynote speaker, Laura Babcock, President and Owner of Powergroup Communications offered a humorous look at women, the challenges they face, and how their strength and determination can overcome any obstacle. Laura's message, “Don't carry the donkey when you can ride it” hit home the point that we (women) often carry burdens that we do not need to.

Putting Women In the Picture, Deanna Yerichuk, Senior Program Manager with A Commitment to Employment and Training for Women (ACTEW) provided a recap of the key issues and challenges identified by the panel. Deanna highlighted changes in government services to women during the past decade and provided an overview of current changes on the Labour Market Development Agreement.
Employment Ontario – Sherree Mahood, Director of Western Region provided an update on the many changes taking place through the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. While still in transition, Ms. Mahood stressed the need to hear from communities about the employment services they need.

Planning and Facilitation, Facilitation Inc. led the group through a planning session to identify strategies and solutions to the issues and challenges.

The Findings

Celebrating achievements, building on success...these will be the secrets to solving issues that continue to challenge women in Grand Erie. We need to look to our accomplishments over the past ten years as encouragement for continued growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supports/Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Education levels increasing</td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
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<td>• Access to education (Literacy, ESL, GED)</td>
<td>• Daycare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing Education through community colleges &amp; universities</td>
<td>• Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Day cares in school settings</td>
<td>• Low level jobs</td>
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<td>• Licenses Day Care Centres</td>
<td>• Pay equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strong Community Partnerships</td>
<td>• Access to nontraditional jobs</td>
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<td>• Large network system</td>
<td>• Greater dependency on part time work</td>
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<td>• Women’s networking groups</td>
<td>• Cultural differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Doors opening to non-traditional training and apprenticeship</td>
<td>• Gender differences</td>
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<td>• Government committed to Settlement programs for Immigrants</td>
<td>• Lack of services for women</td>
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<td>• Interested community members</td>
<td>• Lack of information</td>
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<td>• Strong economy</td>
<td>• Work related expenses</td>
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<td>• Legislative supports e.g. compassionate care, parental leave</td>
<td>• Lack of flexible training options</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Family responsibilities – children and aging parents</td>
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<td>• Domestic violence and abuse</td>
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The conference participants put the following recommendations forward.

**Child and Family Care**
- Create opportunities for flexible daycare
- Increase supports for senior/family care
- Create daycare bees/networks
- Look at incentives to create partnerships between business, education and municipalities

**Education and Training**
Work with industry and education to stress the importance of flexible training and workplace learning
Connect women's "skills" with employment opportunities
Investigate improvements in prior learning assessments and transport of credits

**Self Image and Employment Readiness**
- Identify services and gaps through local service mapping
- Provide "Women's Only" employment/wellness workshops
- Create a women's mentoring/sharing network
- Recognize and Celebrate outstanding women in Grand Erie
- Create a "caring community" for women in crisis

**Business and Industry**
- Create, support and sustain Business Networking Groups for Women
- Increase industry participation in planning process
- Celebrate the contributions of women in the workplace

**Funding**
- Seek out funding opportunities for women's programs
- Seek community and industry support and resources
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We live in a fabulous community of “movers and shakers”. Here are just some of the activities underway since the conference.

**Dressing for Success**
Angela Doyle of Training Visions decided to take action after hearing about women’s issues at *Putting Women in the Picture*. Angela created the service, Dress for Success, a program that helps low-income women prepare for the workforce. The women have access to professional clothing, make-up consultation, hair styling, and a one-hour job consultation session. Angela draws two names per month from client referrals from local agencies. Kudos, Angela. You are a great role model. For more information about Dressing for Success or if you would like to contribute clothing or services when needed, contact Angela at 519 756 5577 or angie@training-visions.com

**Teen Esteem**
The well-established Teen Esteem program, first developed in Brantford by conference presenter Colleen E. Miller and community partners, received a revamp before this year’s presentations. All segments of the program received a fresh message and look before being presented to Gr. 7 and Gr. 8 girls across Brant County. Many new faces participated as workshop facilitators this year. Congratulations to all. Your dedication of time and service is truly appreciated. Many women have expressed an interest in making this program happen in Haldimand and Norfolk. This will take a strong team of dedicated women to step forward and provide leadership and time (volunteer) to make it happen!

**Women Welcoming Diversity**
The Y Immigrant Settlement Services, working with community volunteers are hosting *Women Welcoming Diversity*. This group provides an opportunity for Newcomer women to meet with women from the community for the purpose of practicing English and creating a network where they can make employment and social contacts. They learn about Canadian culture, customs and ways of life, and most importantly interact with other women as friends. Women Newcomer’s often live in isolation because of their financial situation and/or young children. Women attending the meetings are provided with free childcare so that they can freely participate in the workshops addressing personal and professional issues. * If you know of someone who would benefit from being part of this program or if you would like to be a friend, contact Azra Chaudhry at azrachaudhry@ybrantford.com*
Supporting Survivors/Supporting Employment

The Grand Erie Training & Adjustment Board and ACTEW – A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women are pleased to host a one-day “train-the-trainer” session for front-line Employment Practitioners (Employment Counsellors, Job Developers, Resource Centre Coordinators, and Workshop Facilitators) on how to support women who have experienced intimate partner abuse, make appropriate referrals, remove barriers, and find employment.

DATE: April 28, 2008
TIME: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
LOCATION: 1100 Clarence Street S., Brantford, ON
For more information or to register contact
T: 519 756 1116
E: j.halyk@on.aibn.com

We Need You...

The power of women is evident. Listening, talking, sharing ideas...all resulted in the actions and progress noted above.

The issues are many. The challenges are great. Problems continue to exist. What is most striking, however, is the strength and leadership women from across Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk exhibit each and every day.

We would like to see women coming together at least once a year in a spirit of growth and celebration.

If you would be interested in planning an annual “Celebration of Women” for 2008-2009, please forward your name to j.halyk@on.aibn.com