



Sistering

www.sistering.org

A Woman's Place

Co-Chair Message

This has been a year of change, innovation, creativity and planning.

This year we said goodbye to our beloved Executive Director of over 10 years, Angela Robertson. Angela led Sistering to become the dynamic, responsive, respected agency it is today. I was privileged to host the celebration honouring Angela's contributions and witnessed dozens of women sing, cry, laugh and appreciate her dedication. We miss you Angela and wish you well with your important work at Women's College Hospital continuing your work to improve women's lives and health.

Sistering is lucky to have hired Sheryl Lindsay as our Executive Director. Sheryl started in January 2010 and has hit the ground running! Sheryl comes with a strong social justice background working for over 20 years with women struggling with poverty, mental health and addictions. Welcome Sheryl!

Sistering will be undertaking its Strategic planning in the Fall of 2010 for the upcoming 3 years.



Amanda Martinez performing at *Funny Girls and Dynamic Divas*.
Photographer credit: Rainer Soegtrop.

This planning will include feedback from our valued participants, volunteers, community partners, staff and Board. The strategic planning for Inspirations and Spun studios has already been completed and those programs are growing in vibrant ways.

Thank you also to the donors, staff, and volunteers who continue to bring their commitment, hard work, and generosity to the women and the organization. It is their collective effort that enables the organization to respond to the ordinary and extraordinary needs of women.

Heather McDonald (co-chair)

annual report 2009-2010

Sistering is a women's organization that offers practical and emotional support to women through programs which enable them to take greater control over their lives. Guided by the principles of Anti-Racism/Anti-
Oppression, Sistering works to change social conditions which endanger women's welfare.

Executive Director's Message

Greetings everyone! It is great to be here at Sistering, an organization I have long admired and respected for its excellent work. I have been working in the community doing outreach, support and advocacy work with women whose lives have been impacted by poverty, homelessness, trauma, mental health and addictions issues for over twenty years. That work has put me in contact with Sistering from the days when it was located in the Scadding Court Community Centre. I have watched Sistering grow to be a leader in both direct service and advocacy for better housing, income, health care, employment, and social inclusion for the women it serves.

This has been a year of great transition for the organization. The departure of the dynamic Angela Robertson, after 11 years as Sistering's amazing Executive Director, was a major event for the agency. Angela brought so much to Sistering in her time as Executive Director. The solid foundations she laid for the work of the organization based on the principals of social justice and anti-oppression will carry Sistering well into the future. Her legacy will leave a lasting impact. We give a heartfelt thanks Angela for her tireless commitment and dedication to Sistering.

Sistering also said goodbye to long time office manager Elsa Sulit who retired in December 2009. A sincere thanks to Elsa for all her years of service and warm wishes for the future.

We have seen our numbers continue to steadily increase as more women are affected by poverty, hunger, homelessness and lack of access to basic needs and resources. In particular our food program has doubled the number of meals served daily from 100-200 on average at the Bloor St. site. The women coming are in need of a wide array of supports and resources. As we approach our 30th Anniversary it is clear that Sistering's services are still much in demand and that we need to continue our direct work and our efforts to create social change.

I would like to extend thanks to all of our funders and donors for their ongoing support. It is critical to have the necessary resources to allow us to continue to provide the essential



Sheryl Lindsay with former executive director, Angela Robertson

Photo credit: Rainer Soegtrop Photography

services at Sistering. Much appreciation as well to our fantastic volunteers who give of their time and energy and are such a vital part of what makes Sistering work so well.

Thanks to the board members for their guidance and support. Thank you to staff for their commitment, dedication, hard work and for so warmly welcoming me to Sistering!

Finally to the incredible participants of Sistering a big thank you. You have given me a wonderful welcome and I feel privileged getting to know each of you and hearing your stories. You are full of courage, resilience and strength.

Sheryl Lindsay

Sistering Services

Drop In & Outreach

2010 saw both Drop In sites experiencing a growth in numbers of women needing to use our services. We have risen to the many challenges both great and not-so-great which comes along with growth. Both participants and staff recognize the urgency in providing a welcoming and supportive space to women who may not have had the “Sistering” experience before. We want to thank and praise our participants for welcoming and showing care for each new woman who walks through our doors.

We have been fortunate in being able to expand some of our programmes due to our excellent roster of volunteers. In keeping with our mandate to assist women in accessing health care, we are now partnered with **Inner City Health Associates** in providing, on a weekly basis, a **Primary Health Care Physician and Psychiatrist**. The use of both these clinical services has been steadily increasing due to the unavailability of basic health care provision through Family Physicians. We are also partnered with **CCAC (Community Care Access Centre)** who provides us with a weekly **Community Nurse**. She is able to complement our basic medical services by providing education to women, referrals to the wider community, monitoring of chronic illnesses that many marginalized women suffer from as well as being here to answer questions from the women. **Chiropody (foot care)** services is also a new and exciting addition to the list of services, and this is brought to us through one of our community volunteers. She came just in time as many participants suffer the affects of diabetes, hypertension, ill health and the general effects of poverty.

Housing and Case Support Services

There is a marked increase in requests for Case Management/ Support Services. Many women come to us with complex issues which require focused individual work on a longer term basis. We have a dedicated staff team of two who provides this support and service to women. Unfortunately, we have so many requests and referrals from external agencies that the team has had to close their client lists for the time being. Rest assured that participants are not turned away as case management is also provided through our Drop In but for shorter periods of time.

Lack of affordable housing in the city continues to be a serious issue. We continue with our partnerships as a viable way to safely and securely house women but most of these options are for shared living. Staff continues to support women with finding and stabilizing their housing and more often than not, support women in other areas of their lives.

A special thanks to our Drop In, Case Support, Housing Supports and Services, and Outreach staff teams for their provision of services and programs that support, encourage and are judgment-free. Staff makes sure that the participants are always first and foremost and treat each and every woman with dignity and respect.

Program Updates

Social Purpose Enterprise – Inspirations and Spun Studio

Inspirations, our ceramic studio and Sistering’s textile studio, newly named *Spun Studio*, continue to work towards a vision of integrated art/craft based social purpose enterprise programming at Sistering in order to strengthen women’s capacity to earn additional income and enhance their livelihoods.

Through funds from The Co-operators this past year, we were able to invest in marketing consultation and additional training opportunities for women in order to increase production and improve the quality of the work.

For Inspirations this investment supported an increase of revenue by 25% – our highest earning year yet. Yet, spacing continues to be an issue as we crowd up to 15 women daily in a studio space that comfortably holds 5. We are currently seeking the necessary resources to relocate to a larger space that could potentially hold both the ceramic and textile studios as we continue to move towards a new “vision” for holistic social enterprise and self employment programming at Sistering.

Social Action Group

This year Sistering re-launched our Social Action Group using an adult education model - women have been involved in planning and facilitating educational workshops for women in the Drop In on issues pertinent to them. Topics have included: introduction to social action/

Sistering Scholarship Fund

Through a financial donation this past year from the Rotary Club of Toronto, Sistering was able to offer scholarship funds for women who use our services. Women secured funds for educational upgrading, technical training and computer skills development. It is our hope to grow this fund in order to offer more women the opportunity to access training and educational opportunities.



Sister Writes

Through a grant from the Toronto Arts Council and The Lawrence Foundation – with the enthusiasm and talent of local writer/educator, Lauren Kirshner, Sistering began Sister Writes which launched its first magazine of women’s creative writing this past spring called *Roots to Branches*

Sister Writes has become a transformative experience for women who have been given the tools and support in order to tell their stories through creative writing.

activism; housing; health and mental health; income support; immigration and rights for sex workers.

Currently the group is focused on education around the impact of the G8/G20 Summit and working with other community grass roots groups who are mobilizing community responses. In particular The Toronto Community Mobilization Network is supporting mobilizations for:

- self-determination for indigenous peoples
- climate and environmental justice
- income equity and community control over resources
- migrant justice and an end to war and occupation
- gender justice, queer and disAbility rights.

Sistering supports the ***Don’t Ask Don’t Tell Campaign*** that was launched by No One Is Illegal in Toronto in 2004. Currently in Toronto, city residents without full legal status face significant barriers to accessing essential services. Sistering is committed to providing services to all women, regardless of immigration status. We also support the ***Shelter/Sanctuary/Status*** campaign that seeks safety and security for all women fleeing violence, and supports safe sanctuaries where Immigration and Canadian Border Services cannot enter. As part of the campaign Sistering works towards ensuring access to services and full immigration status for all women and their families.

Harm Reduction and Outreach

Our harm reduction program has grown from 5 women in 2007, to over 40 women who are involved in the program. Women are involved in creating kits (safer sex kits, safer injection kits and safer inhalation kits), participating in shifts on the Sherbourne Health bus, organizing and distributing the *bad date booklet*, as well as attending city wide coalitions such as the *Needle Exchange Network*, *The*

Bad Date Coalition and the *Safer Crack Use Coalition*. Women were also involved in fundraising initiatives in the spring and summer 2009 with our partner the Women’s Roller Derby.

Recently Sistering began an outreach program which takes place two times a month. Staff and peer workers walk the neighbourhood with essential supplies such as the harm reduction kits, nutritious snacks, socks and hats, as well as educational information about our services and other community agency supports.

This spring we received funds from the City through their AIDS Prevention Community Investment Program. We will be hiring a *Peer Support Coordinator* and six *Peer Workers* to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention in the Drop In and in the community through outreach.

Advocacy – Access to TTC Campaign

Due to financial constraints Sistering was forced to change our TTC allocation practices. We currently offer TTC tokens to women only in specific circumstances (housing appointments, medical emergencies and extenuating circumstances).

We are aware of the enormous challenges of transportation that women face daily who live on a fixed and limited income. We are aware of the difficult choices women have to make in order to access even basic supports. Many cannot attend Sistering regularly because they cannot afford to get here.

In response Sistering has launched a city-wide campaign which includes women participants, other agencies, community groups, coalitions and individuals. We are currently organizing in order to draw attention to this crisis and put demands on our governments to make transportation possible for people with very little income.

We have created a *No Fair Box* which replicates a TTC fare box and is being used to collect comments and stories about access to travel in the City, the barriers and the impact on people’s lives. The *No Fair Box* is currently in the Sistering Drop In but has been located at South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Fred Victor Centre and the Ralph Thornton Centre. The box will continue to travel to agencies across the City collecting comments and stories and will be used at a forum in the fall/early winter as a tool to challenge the City and the Province to create a transportation system that is fair and accessible.

Volunteer Update

How lucky Sistering is to have the talented group of Volunteers we have seen in 2009! Thousands of hours have been generously donated to Sistering by literally hundreds of enthusiastic, smart, funny, encouraging, and skilled volunteers who contributed their valuable time, energy, and ideas to Sistering's many programs, events, Board and committees.

This past November, Sistering held a Volunteer Tea Party at the Gladstone Hotel to honor and thank the many program, event and Board and Committee volunteers who donated countless hours to the organization.

Sistering sees dozens of committed volunteers on a weekly basis who provide high quality and vital programs which continue to meet the social and health needs of the hundreds of women who participate in these activities. Programs such as manicures, art projects, beading groups, dancercise, yoga, esl and singing esl classes, shiatsu massage, chiropody, quilting and knitting, just to name a few.

Many dedicated volunteers have helped prepare and serve hot meals to the over 200 women who attend Sistering's Drop In.

We recognize, value and thank all of these incredibly talented and committed volunteers who donate time every week to support Sistering's vital in-house programs.

Sistering also thanks our

countless corporate friends for volunteering at least one day during the past year. Sistering's Drop In will often see up to eight of these teams a month. We are thankful for these tremendous, positive and on-going partnerships.

A special thanks to all the volunteers who helped coordinate details and "broker" sponsorships for this year's *Funny Girls and Dynamic Diva's* event. The team of 50 volunteers who met every month to prepare and organize every detail of the event, as well as the many volunteers who helped the night of the event, not only made the event a success, but made the event *possible*.

We are so fortunate to have an incredible group of volunteers steer Sistering, and consult with us on many important governance issues. Sistering has a brilliant group of members who sit on our Board of Directors. These women work tirelessly to ensure that Sistering's mission, vision, and funding are supported.

To all the volunteers, over the past year, who have donated their time, sweat, tears, and laughter, we couldn't have done all this without you.



DONOR RECOGNITION

Sistering gratefully acknowledges the generosity of many individuals and the following supporters:

Government

City of Toronto
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Toronto Central LHIN
Ontario Women's Directorate
Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative
Toronto Enterprise Fund
United Way of Greater Toronto

Bequests

Estate of Helen Arthurs
Estate of Lucille Owen
Estate of Helen Stacey

Foundations

CHUM Charitable Foundation
MAZON Canada
The Azrieli Foundation
The Derick Brennkemeyer Charitable Foundation
The EJLB Foundation
The Hermant Family Foundation
The Lawrence Foundation
The Rainbow Foundation
Toronto Community Foundation

Service Clubs

The Rotary Club of Toronto

Companies

360 Health Care
97.3 EZ Rock
Alterna Savings & Alterna Bank
Annie Thompson Design
Bank of America United Way Campaign
Banwell Financial Inc.
Beesting Lingerie de Femme
Best Secretarial Services
Betsy Aziz
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Cam's Auto Service
Canadian Stage
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Flowers by Nature
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Imperial Floor Covering
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Jivamukti Yoga Toronto
Judy Brase Research Inc.
Kula Yoga Studio Annex

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Link Charity Canada Inc.
Lola & Gigi
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre
Made You Look
McIntyre & Cornish LLP
Middlefield Management
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Motion Clothing
Nick Porretta, Broker
Noisette Pastry Works
Northbound Leather
Nova Era Bakery
Octopus Garden Yoga Centre Inc.
Ontario Power Generation
Opera Atelier
Pain Perdu
Preloved
Premier Fitness – Rogers Centre
Price Waterhouse Coopers
Royal Caribbean Restaurant
Sanson Law Office
Secrets from your Sister
Sienna Films
Sigrid Natural Skincare
Soulpepper Theatre
South Klein Marketing
Speakers Spotlight
Strategisense
Stratford Festival
Summer Hill Market
Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra & Chamber Choir
The Angel Works Inc.
The Beaconsfield Bistro
The China Path
The Co-operators
The Rivoli
The Urban Athlete
Threads Outdoor Clothing
TIFF, Sprockets Festival
Tula Yoga Studio
Usability Matters
Yannis Italian Restaurant
VIA Rail Canada
Vineyard Estates Wines
Want Boutique
Westin Harbour Castle Hotel
Westmount Gallery
Wholefoods Market
Wise Daughters
WonderWorks
Zuccarini Importing Company

Churches and Religious Organizations

Beaver Bible Class
Bellefair United Church Women
Church of Our Saviour ACW
Congregation of Notre Dam
Grace Church on the Hill
Humbervale United Church Women
Knox United Church
Rosedale United Church Women
Sisters of Service Canada
Temple Emmanuel
The Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus

Unions Community Groups & Schools

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
Elementary Teachers of Toronto
Greenwood College School
Toronto Roller Derby League
The Toronto Business and Professional Women
The Society of Energy Professionals
Urban Charity Ball



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and Drop In**

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Layout and Design

Heather Guylar

**Sistering
Board of Directors
2009-10**

- Margaret Hancock, Co-chair *
- Susan Nwosu, Co-chair**
- Heather McDonald, Co-Chair
- Angela Nolan, Treasurer
- Shelley Seabra, Secretary
- Mhetts (Myrtel) Saltat
- Edith Kettle
- Joanna Gertler
- Bridget Sinclair
- Shaun Sanderson
- Vicky Black
- Sharon McLeod
- Lisha Van Leeuwen*
- Anne Chappelle
- Zoe Dille
- Shabnum Durrani

* resigned during the year
** on leave

**SISTERING - A WOMAN'S PLACE
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
Year Ended March 31, 2010**

	2010	2009
REVENUE		
Ontario Ministry of Health/Local Health Integration Network		
- Mental health Programs and Services	1,323,131	1,225,556
- Long Term Care	52,538	52,538
United Way of Greater Toronto	429,324	429,424
City of Toronto	276,627	242,808
Donations	241,005	237,756
Ontario Women's Directorate	90,000	90,000
Bequests	85,150	105,000
Fundraising	63,397	62,614
Foundations	32,974	36,359
Youth Challenge Fund	18,683	14,818
Miscellaneous	13,977	4,353
HRDC - Summer Employment	5,048	
Interest	1,001	7,522
Amortization on deferred capital contributions	<u>111,389</u>	<u>111,691</u>
	2,744,244	2,620,439
EXPENSES		
Wages and Benefits	1,709,459	1,688,843
Programs	293,159	358,288
Building Occupancy	195,326	189,609
Purchased Services	179,822	120,866
Fundraising	70,064	80,147
Repairs and maintenance	64,276	75,343
Office and general	63,561	66,917
Youth Challenge Project	18,683	8,219
Insurance	11,429	11,232
Volunteer	5,004	4,882
Professional fees	4,920	13,409
Promotion and publicity	2,835	5,747
Amortization	<u>122,075</u>	<u>124,120</u>
	2,740,613	2,747,622
	3,631	(127,183)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>127,908</u>	<u>255,091</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>131,539</u>	<u>127,908</u>



Charitable registration #10798-3009-RR0001
Sistering is a United Way member agency.

