

# The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

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# Annual Report



# 1999

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton  
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# The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

## Mission Statement

*The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton exists to:  
Empower individuals affected by sexual abuse and assault and;  
Empower communities to take action against sexual violence*

## We Believe:

- \* *Sexual violence is an abuse of power and trust;*
  - \* *People can heal;*
  - \* *In valuing diversity and respecting all people;*
- \* *Individuals should be free to make their own life choices;*
- \* *Each person should have the opportunity to learn and grow;*
- \* *In creating a safe environment and maintaining confidentiality;*
  - \* *Inability to pay should not be a barrier to receiving service;*
- \* *In providing support and advocacy for people who have been affected by sexual violence;*
  - \* *Services must be accessible to children, adolescents, women and men;*
- \* *Communities must take action to protect vulnerable people and to become free from violence;*
  - \* *Offenders, not victims, must take responsibility for violence;*
    - \* *Teamwork is essential;*
- \* *Volunteers are crucial to our agency and provide a link to the community;*
  - \* *In working with other agencies to further common goals.*



# Board of Directors

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## **Chair**

Elaine Betchinski

## **Vice Chair**

Karen Schiltroth

## **Treasurer**

Heather Stephens

## **Secretary**

Ruth Montgomery

## **Members**

Katrina Haymond   Robert Lee  
Rosa Rudelich   Karen Schiltroth  
Sara Farkas   Erin Demko  
Karen Smith   Deborah Peters

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# Staff

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<b>Executive Director</b>	Karen L. Smith
<b>Receptionist</b>	Rainy Goulet
<b>Development Administrator</b>	Kimberly Green
<b>Bookkeeper</b>	Deb Gouchey
<b>Director of Public Education</b>	Del Marlow
<b>Director of Volunteer Services</b>	Marty Oliver-McBride
<b>Director of Counselling Services</b>	Barb McKenzie
<b>Counsellor</b>	Shirley Howarth
<b>Counsellor</b>	Jennifer Thomson
<b>Child and Adolescent Therapist</b>	Tansel Erdem
<b>Child and Adolescent Therapist</b>	Louise MacKay
<b>Director of Volunteer Services</b>	Bree Claude*

\* resigned



# Treasurer

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1999 was another great year for the Centre. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the SACE staff, volunteers and fundraisers, the Centre has been able to operate on a balanced budget and increase the pool of available funds with a modest surplus. Continued support from the United Way and the City of Edmonton's Family and Community Support Services, has allowed SACE to continue to provide necessary services to its clients.

Fiscal 1999 saw a substantial amount of contributions in the form of special grants. The development of a Volunteer Training Program which improves access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to SACE, new computers and SACE office improvements are some of the significant projects undertaken

in the current year with the designated funds. A combination of positive publicity and the great fundraising abilities of the staff and fundraisers, as well as donations have made a noticeable impact on overall Revenue this year.

I look forward to the new Millennium and my first year as a Board Member and as Treasurer of SACE. Thanks again to all of the individuals and organizations whose time, effort and financial support help to make the Centre a continued success.

*Heather Stephens*

## Strategic Planning Committee

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The Strategic Planning Committee has been operating under proposed terms of reference for one year. The Committee's key responsibility is to recommend and arrange for strategic planning sessions for the Board in areas of Board development. These include short and long term goals for the Board, its Committees and the Society; a mission statement; client, program and service priorities; and policies as to how the Board conducts its business and governs the affairs of the Society.

In 1999 the Strategic Planning Committee directed a steering committee involving staff, board members and volunteers, to proceed with plans for celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. Many thanks to Karen Smith, Deb Gouche, Shirley Howarth, Candace Kinnee, Marty Oliver-McBride, Bree Claude, Glynis Thomas, and Sue Orlecki for their early involvement in this project.

In accordance with the committee's terms of reference, much of the spring involved planning for the fall Board Development Workshop. Tracy Geyer facilitated the all-day workshop in St. Albert. Board members gave careful consideration to the commitment expected of members, the possibility of drafting annual goals for board members and the range of expertise currently offered by Board members and which might be garnered from future members. Focus groups in the afternoon examined three key challenges/opportunities for the Centre.

\* Competition - While competition for funding dollars from key agencies remains a challenge, SACE has a history of partnerships with community agencies. To

ensure continuing support from the community, SACE needs to evaluate the degree to which relationships exist in community health, justice, police, and school systems. SACE also needs to develop guidelines for developing new partnerships in the community whether individuals, collaborating services, or funding agencies.

- \* Funding - The Board identified a number of opportunities to cultivate existing and new revenue sources. They committed to further researching professional fundraisers, sliding scale fees for service, Friends of SACE, and accepting child welfare referrals, to name a few.
- \* Profile - Members agreed to continue the discussion of developing a comprehensive marketing plan and media strategy at a future Board meeting.

Notes of the day's efforts were distributed to members including next steps to be followed by relevant committees or the Board itself.

Much discussion was given over the course of the year to the need for a crisp, concise message for potential funders that is separate from information developed for clients. A short notice was developed requesting employee support for the Safe and Happy program. Unfortunately, we have not yet found an organization willing to participate in this pilot project.

The Strategic Planning Committee rounded out the year by drafting a set of guidelines for staff and Board members to review when evaluating new or continuing partnerships.



'Partnership' can range from teaming up with others to provide services, train volunteers, organize fundraising events,

or even accept donated gifts. These guidelines will be forwarded to the Board for approval.

*Karen Schiltroth*

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## Public Awareness and Fundraising Committee

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The Public Awareness and Fundraising committee, along with the Board members, SACE staff, and volunteers strove once again this year to generate funding for the Centre and to increase public awareness of our initiatives in the community. Our Executive Director, Karen L. Smith, was an integral and valued contributor to our successes.

The committee invited guest speakers with a public relations and fundraising background to two Board meetings this year. These speakers were able to give us sound advice on researching new fundraising and public awareness initiatives.

The Great Human Race, Gala on Whyte, and the sale of Edmonton Value books are examples of fundraising events that we participated in this year. Monthly bingos brought in funds to the Centre, and as well we received a substantial amount of revenue from working at the ABS Casino.

In the final quarter of 1999, the fundraising committee members were enthusiastically making plans for the 25<sup>th</sup> SACE Anniversary and Fundraiser to be held March 11, 2000.

*Deborah Peters*

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## Advocacy Committee

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1999 was a very successful year for the Advocacy Committee. In 1998, the Advocacy Committee was working on two cases at the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). The SCC agreed with many of the arguments that SACE advocated and we won both cases.

In *R. v. Ewanchuk*, a sex offender was acquitted in a very controversial case. The decisions of two Justices on the Alberta Court of Appeal were based shockingly on myths and stereotypes regarding both gender roles and sexual assault victims. In a unanimous decision, the SCC overturned the acquittal and replaced it with a conviction for sexual assault. Three of the Justices on the Supreme Court of Canada harshly criticized the Alberta Justices for their reliance on outdated and biased opinions.

The SACE Advocacy Committee was extremely pleased with the SCC decision for the benefit that its legacy will provide to sexual assault survivors involved in future cases. Hopefully this precedent will assist Judges and lawyers to apply proper principles in order to determine whether or not consent has been given freely; consent as determined by the victim, not by the offender.

The Advocacy Committee expresses its deepest appreciation for the excellent work that was done on behalf of Paul

Moreau, one of the lawyers that argued the case at the Supreme Court of Canada.

In *R. v. Mills*, the SCC upheld the new laws regarding the protection of a sexual assault survivor's medical and counselling records. As it stands, this decision provides rigorous criteria in order for the offender's Defense to be granted access to this sensitive information. Although this law is far from perfect for victims, we are hopeful that it will reduce the re-victimization of victims who press criminal charges against their offenders.

The Mills case has now returned to the Court of Queen's Bench where Justice Bevil refused to disclose the complainant's records, upholding the new legislation. The SCC decision was very important as well because it acknowledges that the victims in a criminal proceeding have rights under the Charter. The SCC agreed with SACE's argument that the patient – counsellor relationship was extremely important and deserving of the Court's protection.

When the Mills decision was announced, Karen Smith and the Advocacy Committee were instrumental in organizing a Press Conference at SACE to explain the decision and celebrate our success. There was excellent media coverage at this event.



The SACE Advocacy Committee would also like to thank Dale Gibson and Ritu Khullar for their wonderful work in arguing this case at the SCC. We were extremely proud to be represented by Mr. Gibson, one of our country's foremost Constitutional experts.

The Advocacy Committee also attempted to participate in the case of R. v. Sharpe, the child pornography case from B.C. Unfortunately, because the case did not originate from Edmonton, we were extremely disappointed in our unsuccessful attempts at participating in the case at either the B.C. Court of Appeal or at the SCC.

We were, however, very appreciative of Renee Couchard and Mary Marshall for their hard work in applying for intervenor status in the Sharpe case.

SACE was also involved in the case of "Amy" from Morinville. Amy was a high school student who was sexually assaulted by a fellow classmate. With the tremendous hard work by Karen Smith and Amy's counsellor, Tracy Cook, a massive media blitz resulted and enough public pressure was placed on Amy's school that they expelled her offender.

This case has had a huge impact because it reinforces our message that the victim did nothing wrong and should not have to endure continued contact with her offender. Because

of the publicity that this case generated, sexual assault victims in schools across the province are being given greater protection from their offenders. Police are seeking "no contact" conditions against the offender, they are reporting the cases to the schools and the schools are taking actions to protect the innocent victim.

SACE and the Advocacy Committee have the greatest admiration and respect for Amy for her courage in standing up for herself and fighting back against her offender and her school. In doing this, Amy has helped to increase awareness around these issues, ensuring a very different consequence for other future survivors in this situation.

This case was important to be involved in because it gave the public a glimpse at the barriers that victims of sexual assault encounter. With greater awareness we hope to create a better understanding. With a better understanding of the issues that survivors face, we hope to reduce the incidents of abuse as well as ensure a greater network to support survivors of sexual violence in their healing process.

We are pleased with all of the efforts of this committee over the past year, and would like to extend many thanks for their contributions.

*Robert P. Lee and Katrina Haymond*

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## Executive Director

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As we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, it seems appropriate to reflect on where we have come from and where we are going. We take pride in our accomplishments that could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of many people along the way. This includes the Board of Directors, community supporters, donors, volunteers, students, and staff.

In 1975, SACE was incorporated as a not-for-profit society known as the Rape Crisis Centre of Edmonton. A coalition of Edmontonians from the YWCA, hospitals, and social service agencies initiated the organization. They were concerned about the amount of sexual violence in our community and the lack of services available to the survivors of this violence. The doors of the agency first opened with a part-time coordinator and a number of dedicated volunteers to provide a crisis telephone line to offer victims access to a

trained listener. In 1981, Federal legislation removed the term "rape" from the criminal code, in favor of the term "sexual assault". The agency changed the name to The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton to reflect this change. SACE has evolved into a professional organization now offering a 24-hour Crisis Line as well as counselling, public education, and volunteer programs. However, as SACE developed through the years, the grassroots beginning and the importance of volunteers to the organization has never been forgotten.

SACE sincerely thanks our long-term supporters: the United Way and the City of Edmonton FCSS. Appreciation is genuinely offered to the foundations, organizations, and businesses, individuals and volunteers who support the many programs of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton.



In January 1999, we received a very generous grant from the Muttart Foundation to purchase a new computer system for the office. The computers have been a wonderful addition to the administration of SACE.

For the second time in less than six months, SACE was at the Supreme Court of Canada. Four members of our organization; Ruth Montgomery, Katrina Haymond, Karen Smith (Treasurer), and Shirley Howarth, attended the R. v. Mills case. Our lawyers argued to protect client-counseling records from being released to the accused without meeting a rigorous criterion. Canadians from coast to coast heard the decision that the rights of a sexual assault survivor must be balanced with the rights of the accused. Later in the year, SACE began working on a public campaign criticizing the way sexual assault victims are insufficiently protected from the harassment of their abusers in our school system. This was in response to the teen victim in the Greater St. Albert Catholic School District who was expected to attend school with her offender. A huge bouquet of thanks goes to Robert Lee and Katrina Haymond and the Advocacy Committee for all their hard work.

SACE was proud to be a community partner in two exciting new services that were initiated in Edmonton this year:

- \* The Child and Adolescent Protection Centre at the University Hospital, does specialized medical examinations of children who are suspected of being abused.
- \* SARTE (Sexual Assault Response Team of Edmonton) was launched in November of 1999 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. This group of highly trained nurses and physicians respond to requests from hospital Emergency Rooms in the Capital Health Region when a recent sexual assault victim is admitted.

SACE has been incredibly fortunate to gain the expertise of three Telus employees. Susanne Orlecki, Gary Boisvert and Karin Gilker have contibuted in many ways to our organization, from computer skills to carpentry, painting and volunteer training. We have several incredible documents that have been researched and completed by this group. Thank you very much Sue, Gary and Karin.

A talented group of multi media students from NAIT worked with our Public Education Program to develop a web site for SACE. Look us up at [www.sace.ab.ca](http://www.sace.ab.ca).

There have been a few staffing changes. Some people have moved on, and others have simply changed hats. Bree Claude, Director of Volunteer Services, left in July to work for a child welfare agency. Marty Oliver-McBride stepped from Public Education into the Director of Volunteer Services position. Ruby Serben was hired as a Public Educator. Kimberly Green, Development Administrator, is on leave to spend time with "the most beautiful baby in the world". Summer student Candace Kinnee has very capably stepped in to fill this temporary position. Our staff is multi-talented!

Stephanie Charboneau, Tracy Gibb, Karen Dushinski, Laurie Tate, and Candace Kinnee all worked with us on temporary employment grants during the year. They helped in numerous and immeasurable ways.

Rainy Goulet, Deb Gouchey, Del Marlow, Barb McKenzie, Shirley Howarth, Jennifer Thomson, Tansel Erdem, Louise McKay, Ruby Serben, Kimberly Green and Marty Oliver-McBride are an incredible group of people. Their delightful sense of humor, their patience and their dedication to improve the lives of survivors of sexual violence is truly amazing. It is indeed a privelege to work with such talented, warm and supportive people.

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton looks forward to future years developing new and innovative programs and partnerships, as our community's needs become evident. Funding goals are an ongoing challenge, which is being met by the extended effort of Board members, volunteers, and staff. Human service needs can only be met when an individual's dignity is respected – and the spirit and dedication of our members exemplify this belief!

*Karen L. Smith, Executive Director*

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## Counselling Services

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A direct service to counselling clients was provided through the delivery of several group programs. The AMAC, SASS

and Sexuality Groups were held from January to May, and the AMAC Groups again from September to December. These



group programs are well known to the public and continue to fill quickly. Last year two Process Groups were continued and ran from January to December. These groups both ran at near capacity and provide an ongoing counselling resource to AMAC and SASS Group member "graduates".

Individual counselling was also well attended. Counselling students doing their practicum placements for eight months of the year greatly contribute to counselling, and clients are generally able to book appointments within a week.

The Practicum Program a SACE has continued to develop and we attracted more students than we could take last year.

Last summer, a counselling student was hired to develop a database for old client records. Over half of the old files have been entered, allowing much easier access to old records. Establishing a central file and administrative room for counselling has also facilitated the organization of client records.

*Barbara McKenzie*

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## Child & Adolescent Services

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During the past year, the Child & Adolescent Program has been very busy with Dr. Louise McKay and Tansel Erdem providing counselling services to both children and adolescents. Currently, Louise is available on Monday and Tuesday, with Tansel in the office Wednesday and Thursday.

When Louise and Tansel began the Child & Adolescent therapist position in May of 1998, there was a two to three month wait list for the program. Currently, the waiting list is only two to three weeks with few names. These clients are typically seen within a couple of weeks following their initial telephone contact and are seen sooner if counselling space is available or they are considered an emergency. Thus, the Child & Adolescent Program is meeting the expectations of the Sexual Assault Centre and their clients, by providing services as soon as possible.

In addition to providing individual counselling, Louise ran a support group for adolescent females who were trying to stay off the streets from prostitution. Many of these young women were involved with the program Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP). This group was run with the support of workers from PCHIP and Crossroads.

Throughout the past year, the Child & Adolescent Program has continued to receive support from the community. For example, the Walt Disney store provided clothing for the Child & Adolescent Program, which was given to age-appropriate clients. Also, potential funding was discussed with Capital City Savings and various Martial Arts Programs in the city. As a result of their interests, presentations were given to these organizations by Tansel about the Child & Adolescent Program.

Louise and Tansel were also involved in the following additional presentations throughout the year: SACE Volunteer Training, SACE Professional Training, Case conferences, and presentations to the United Way. Also during the course of 1999, both therapists answered a variety of consultation calls from both professionals and lay people across Alberta.

In 2000, the Child & Adolescent Program at the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton will continue to strive to provide effective services to meet the needs of their clients.

*Tansel Erdem and Dr. Louise McKay*

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## Public Education

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This past year was a year of change and growth for the Public Education Program.

We have continued to move forward and make positive additions to the program.

1999 saw us deliver 353 presentations and workshops to over 13 281 persons. We mailed out 128 information packages to agencies and individuals. As well, many people have accessed information through our new Web Page. The



trend of our presentations has continued from previous years. The presentations to junior high and high schools are still the most frequently requested, but we continue to present to a wide variety of audiences. Presentations included those to volunteers at various agencies, victim services trainees, parent groups, and other community groups.

We continue to revise our printed information on an ongoing basis, adding new information to address changing concerns. We are currently in the process of updating our recommended reading lists.

New initiatives for 1999 included:

- \* Developing our knowledge and resources in the area of Rape Drugs.
- \* Increasing our awareness around the dangers of the Internet, an area that is increasingly important in the prevention of unsafe access by perpetrators to unsuspecting children and adults.

- \* Creating a SACE Web Page with tireless help from 3 NAIT students.
- \* This year we were instrumental in the process of getting a December 6<sup>th</sup> Monument in the City of Edmonton. This was something that had been in the works for a couple of years, and we are extremely proud to have been a part of the process.

1999 was also the year that we began to look at Outcome Measures. This is a way for us to measure our success at meeting the goals of Public Education. Our goals are (1) to increase understanding about the effects of sexual violence on our community, and (2) to increase the understanding about the qualities of healthy relationships among the students that we present to. Overall, we find that we are meeting these goals – students are able to identify the qualities of a healthy relationship and the consequences of violence on the victims. Both students and teachers find the information presented to be of relevance to them and to have had a significant impact on them. This process is ongoing and all of the responses and suggestions can only lead to improvements in the program.

We are entering the new Millennium looking forward to new challenges and opportunities.

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## Volunteer Services

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In 1999, SACE Volunteer Services survived, very well, a few changes in personnel. Bree Claude left us to pursue other work and Candace Kinnee stepped in through Labatt's People In Action Program. Candace's main project through this program was to update the Resource Manual, which she did expediently. She also did a great job with maintaining contact with established volunteers and with interviewing prospective trainees. As well, she arranged speakers for fall training. Although her job was temporary, by the time I came into the program, much was already done. That first training session went very well for me and while the group was not large, they were all quite eager. Also over the summer, Darlene Desjarlais worked on updating our handouts to a cleaner, more modern look.

The Volunteer program benefited from the expertise of Sue Orlecki and Gary Boisvert who came to us from a Telus program. Gary has worked on streamlining our crisis call sheets and organizing the Centre's statistics into various charts and graphs that have been much easier to read and

use. Sue lends her Crisis Line experience to help out new volunteers during the Training Program, and both Sue and Gary helped out at the Casino. Certainly, both of them are involved in many more projects for the Centre. SACE gained other volunteers when the Centre took on Bingos as a fundraiser. Assisting at Bingos is an excellent way for some people to help our Centre if Crisis Line work is not for them. Adding to our excellent pool of talented volunteers were two NAIT students who were not only delightful, but very hardworking and dedicated to their recruitment work. The media contact information that they compiled makes it very easy to repeat the recruitment process prior to each training session. As well, of course, we continue to utilize the expertise offered by the Volunteer Centre of Edmonton, CIVC in St. Albert, and the Volunteer Information Centre in Sherwood Park. Another volunteer donates her time, skill, and sense of humor to putting together the monthly newsletter. She takes on the entire project from writing the articles, typing them into the computer, and then stuffing and sealing the envelopes. She will even take the stamped and



sealed envelopes to the mailbox! The Centre continues to attract a variety of volunteers who help out, not only in the areas mentioned here, but also in Public Education, Group Co-Facilitation, Special Events, and Fundraising. We enjoy the dedication of several long-term volunteers, but feel fortunate to have everyone who participates as part of our team.

Of course, Crisis Line workers continue to make up the majority of our volunteers. Students from the various post secondary schools continue to find our volunteer training and experience of great value to their work and studies. Others who are not in school but wish to help out in a meaningful way are also very satisfied with the work. We receive ongoing feedback from volunteers and various sources that the training we provide is excellent. Centre staff and community agencies are very supportive and generously lend their time and expertise to the training. We rely on this level of involvement and experience in order to maintain this high standard in our training.

Support from the community is still very strong and is reflected in the willingness of agencies and individuals to take part in training and to speak at our volunteer meetings. SARTE, The Support Network, HIV Edmonton, John Howard Society, Edmonton Police Service, Emery Jamieson Law Firm, Family Violence Prevention Centre, and Terra are some of

the agencies who have been involved with our Centre in 1999.

The Volunteer Program continues to be the hub of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. In 1999, we had 152 volunteers providing 10 878 hours of client service through Crisis Line work and group co-facilitation. Twelve Board Members contributed more than 1700 hours through meetings and committee involvement. 98 volunteers donated 2 622 hours to help with fundraising and special events. 75 volunteers provided 7 850 hours in office support, Public Education, computer expertise, volunteer training, and library maintenance.

Volunteers are utilized in all areas of operation at the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. The scope of this department is huge. We receive excellent and much needed assistance for our services, volunteers receive training and experience. The implications of training and supporting volunteers who go back into the community are far reaching for the Centre in terms of recruitment and SACE credibility. Through continued support from staff, the Board, stakeholders and the community, we are able to sustain and build on the solid Volunteer Program that the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton currently maintains.

*Marty Oliver-McBride*

