



Congress-woman, Elaine White.

Photo by Heather Hueston

Chapter one...

By HEATHER HUESTON

The last time the National Congress of Black Women tried to organize a chapter here in Nova Scotia in the 70's, it didn't last. This time, says Elaine White, the mood is different. White, head of the Metro Halifax-Dartmouth chapter (the first in Atlantic Canada) says "They were a different generation then. We're more vocal, we're ready to express ourselves." The group was established in January to fill a gap black women wanted to speak for themselves.

The Congress is a self-help support group that sees education as the top priority. White says committees have been set up by the board to deal with various issues, now they just need to be staffed by interested group members. Some issues that committees will deal with include housing, especially low-income housing — how women can find it and how to take care of it. Having a place of your own builds self-esteem, says White. Employment is another area where the Congress can help by showing career opportunities to women who might otherwise be headed for social assistance. The group can

assist with resume-writing and be a resource for information on a worker's rights and harassment. For example, the group can aid a woman who's faced with an intimidating mass of red tape when she files a complaint of sexual harassment. "Women should be able to come to us and say 'How can you help us with our concern?'" says White.

The Congress' objectives are also to bring black women of Nova Scotia and Canada together, to be a forum to discuss issues which affect the women themselves and their communities and to work with other self-help and black awareness groups.

White says the Congress will work with the Black United Front (BUF). "We have a lot to offer each other," she explains "our aims and objectives are the same."

Unlike BUF, the Congress receives no government money (White herself works full-time for the provincial department of health). The Metro Chapter has approximately 30 members, from professional women to students, and plans to become more visible in the future by launching a fundraising drive and holding workshops.

Gimme shelter

By Erin Goodman

The chairperson of a Dalhousie ad hoc committee wonders if the university is willing to put its money where its mouth is and provide a fourth on-campus child care unit.

Ellen Tancock presented her group's second proposal for daycare space to Dalhousie president Howard Clark and vice-president John Graham recently, and this time around, she's hoping the committee will get an affirmative response.

"We've had a very good response from the president," says Tancock, whose two children are currently in home care due to the drastic shortage of on-campus daycare. The committee's original proposal was turned down in September and meanwhile, the waiting list of over 100 children is not getting any shorter.

Parents can expect to wait almost two years for a vacancy in one of Dalhousie's three daycares, Peter Green Hall, the University Children's Centre, and the Centre for Children's Studies.

The committee's proposal is modest, requesting a facility to house 14 children close to the Tupper Medical Building, where most of the group's women work. 130 people concerned about the lack of adequate daycare recently signed a petition circulated in the Tupper building, and the committee has also received widespread written support from the university community.

While some people are concerned that daycare will become a last priority in a time of severe financial cutbacks and space shortages at Dalhousie, the Tupper parents refuse to be discouraged.

"We're very gung-ho," says Tancock, adding that many people would be willing to pay more than the current Dalhousie rate of \$15.00 per day for quality child care. "You want the best for your kid."

The ten-member committee plans to continue their fight for adequate daycare for the entire Dalhousie community and invites new members to contribute to the group's efforts.



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