

# Bearing Witness to Violence

The fear of sexual violence is a reality for women and children. And, when one is confronted with the statistics, one can understand the basis for this fear: one in four women is sexually assaulted at some point in her life. Violence also takes the form of sexual harassment: 90% of women experience sexual harassment on the job. And, concerning children, one in two girls and one in three boys will receive unwanted sexual attention by the time they reach eighteen.

These statistics say to us that we are facing a serious social problem. And the FREDERICTON RAPE CRISIS CENTRE seeks to tackle this problem.

As one of only two Rape/Sexual Assault Centres in New Brunswick (the other being in Saint John) we receive calls from all over the province with the majority originating here in Fredericton. We have been in existence since 1975 when concerned citizens felt there was a need for a specific resource group to deal with rape crisis situations.

We have as our primary goal the eradication of sexual violence. We strive to meet this goal through two broad activities, namely: 1) public education; and 2) the provision of direct services to those affected by sexual violence. We currently have two main programs. The CRISIS LINE PROGRAM and the PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM are funded by the Department of Health and Community Services (although we recently had our grant cut 50% for this year and 100% next year), the United Ways of Fredericton and Oromocto, donations and fundraising. The funding cut from the Department represents a 45% cut to our overall funding. This action has left us in a tenuous position.

Despite our financial uncertainties, we are determined to remain open. At present, we provide a 24 hour, 7 day a week, confidential phone line staffed by volunteers. Other services include accompaniment to the hospital, police or court for victims of sexual assault; information on medical concerns and legal procedures; referrals to other agencies or private therapists and counsellors; speakers for workshops, seminars; presentations to schools, community agencies, professional groups, etc.; the production of pamphlets and booklets on sexual assault; and the

maintenance of a resource library.

A new program initiated this year is our DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS PROJECT. This project involves presentations to junior high and high school students.

For further information on the Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre, please contact us at the phone numbers and address listed below:

**BUSINESS LINE: 454-0460**

**CRISIS LINE: 454-0437**

**P.O. Box 174**

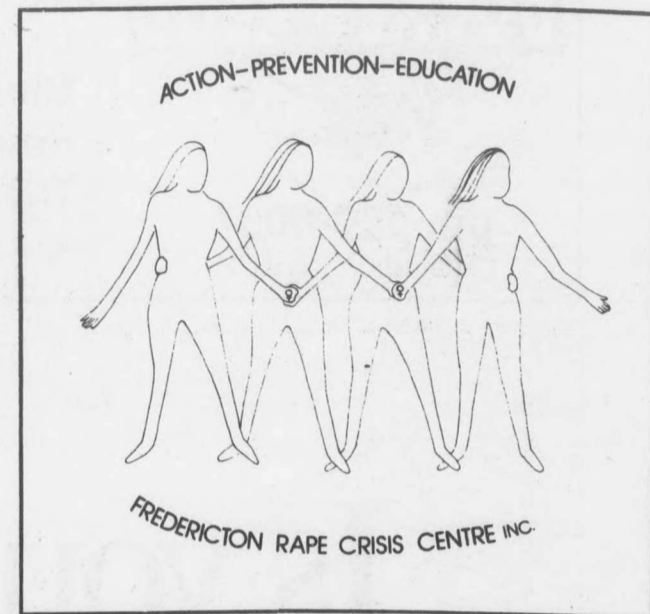
**FREDERICTON, N.B.**

**E3B 4Y9**

The FREDERICTON RAPE CRISIS CENTRE will be sponsoring and organizing this city's ninth annual TAKE BACK THE NIGHT MARCH on Friday, September 24, 1993. Women have been marching through the streets of their hometown all across Canada and the United States since the 1970's in protest of violence against women and children.

The FREDERICTON RAPE CRISIS CENTRE would also like to introduce the Clothesline Project to New Brunswick. A Clothesline of shirts representing women victims and survivors of abuse in our area will be displayed at City Hall, from morning to night on Friday, Sept. 24. Supplies for creating a shirt to hang on the line will be available on Friday at the display and at the RAPE CRISIS CENTRE, 384 Queen St., across from City Hall.

Both the March and the Project are a form of protest against all forms of violence against women and children. By raising our voices and marching in the streets, and by hanging our shirts on the line for the public to see, we are refusing to be silent about the abuse we are suffering. The March and the Project are also a celebration of women's ability to unite in a common goal— to educate the public, help



change attitudes, and to demand the eradication of violence against women and children.

The March begins at 8:00PM at City Hall. We can all play a part. Women and children are welcomed to march. Men are invited to participate by attending the opening rally and closing speeches, or simply by lining the streets and cheering the marching women and children. Everyone is invited to the reception following the March at the RAPE CRISIS CENTRE.

For more information, please call the RAPE CRISIS CENTRE at 454-0460.

## What Is The Clothesline Project?

The Clothesline Project is a visual display of shirts designed by survivors with graphic messages and illustrations to increase awareness of the impact of violence against women. The Clothesline bears witness to the survivors and victims of violence against women, bringing to the public attention the pain and suffering of women who have been abused physically, sexually, and emotionally, and those who have been killed by abuse.

Another purpose of the Clothesline is to help with the healing process for people who have lost a loved one or who are survivors of this violence. The compelling display also celebrates a woman's strength and courage to overcome the past. The Clothesline Project encourages survivors to "break the silence" as the first step in trying to end the vicious cycle of abuse. Women are encouraged to create their own shirts. By hanging their shirt out in the open, women can leave behind some of their pain and begin the healing process.

The Clothesline Project was created by the Cape Cod Women's Agenda and has expanded throughout the United States. The Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre would like to introduce this project of public awareness and healing to New Brunswick and Canada.

## Why A Clothesline?

For decades, women have communicated with each other while hanging clothes, which is why this medium seemed particularly appropriate. The Clothesline offers a back-to-basics approach to displaying the artwork created on these shirts. The line is a way of airing society's "dirty laundry."

