



Canadians for Choice 2010 Annual Report





About Canadians for Choice

Canadians for Choice is a national pro-choice charitable organization that regards sexual and reproductive rights as an integral part of the health and well being of all persons.

At Canadians for Choice, we are committed to protecting the rights of all people in being able to make informed decisions about their bodies. CFC envisages a world where individuals – regardless of age, ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, place of residence, or socio-economic and other status – have access to the information, resources and services required to make and exercise informed choices on all aspects of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

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Message from the Chair of Canadians for Choice, Dr Norman Barwin

We live in exciting and challenging times. As we reflect on the past year, we can take pride in what we have accomplished. At our Board meetings, I am always amazed at how much the office staff achieves each day in promoting education and support so that persons may make informed decisions about reproductive choice despite a vocal anti-choice opposition. This was exemplified through pro-choice volunteers who accompanied women as they gained safe access in and out of clinics during 40 days of protest by the anti-choice movement in Ottawa and Toronto. The 24/7 Information and Referral Line coverage is a prime example of the commitment and dedication of our remarkable Executive Director Patricia LaRue and the Project Manager, Agathe Gramet-Kedzior, who have trained and inspired a fantastic group of volunteers.

I will not reiterate the long list of programs, pamphlets, courses, workshops, media interviews, collaboration with like-minded organizations, universities, hours spent cultivating our volunteer and donor relationships, and on and on... We are fortunate and blessed to have such outstanding staff that are innovative, creative and dedicated to the mission of CFC.

To the Board, I am forever grateful for their support and commitment to CFC. Each Board meeting is an inspirational experience. Each member has so much to contribute in promoting the mission of CFC, and give of themselves with sincerity and conviction.

As the world's population approaches 7 billion, (growing at a rate of 150,000 a day), how can we at CFC in our small way play a role in improving the quality of life for all Canadians, and ultimately, for all humanity? This challenge has never been greater and will require collaboration with many organizations-locally, nationally and internationally. The impact of the government's decision to not support access to safe medical abortions as part of the Maternal Health Initiative will result in an increase in maternal morbidity and maternal mortality. The research and education programs of CFC may have some impact on providing evidence-based facts to illustrate these realities.

With my hopes for a bright future and to all of you we are most grateful,

Dr. Norman Barwin, CM, LLD (Hons)

President, CFC

"He who plants a garden, plants happiness"...Chinese Proverb



Message from Canadians for Choice Executive Director, Patricia LaRue

2010 certainly hasn't been an easy year for reproductive freedom in Canada. We have seen a new anti-choice private members' bill presented in Parliament. We have also seen reproductive health and rights being erased from our country's international development priorities, completely ignoring the fact that many women do not have access to reproductive health supplies they need or die from accessing unsafe abortions.

On our Information and Referral Line, we continue to hear from many women who face tremendous barriers in exercising their reproductive choice. Many women have to travel long distances, sometimes over a few days, in order to access a medically necessary service because abortion is not available in their community. When they travel across provinces, they often have to pay to access services out of pocket. Many women face judgmental attitudes of health professionals and are denied the information they would require to make an informed choice. Others are lied to by anti-choice crisis pregnancy centres who give them inaccurate information in order to trick them into continuing their pregnancy. It is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate through all the information needed to make an informed decision. Through our Information and Referral Line, Canadians for Choice staff and volunteers are able to make a real difference in the lives of women by giving them the unbiased information and the referral they need to make the choice that is best for them.

I am proud of the work Canadians for Choice has been able to accomplish in such a difficult climate. We have been able to produce quality and innovative publications, bring attention to sexual and reproductive health issues to the forefront and have been able to engage many new young women into the movement.

We could never have done this without support from our very generous donors, who make our work possible. Canadians for Choice operates with two staff and many interns and volunteers. Agathe Gramet-Kedzior, CFC's Project Manager, has been a wonderful colleague, transforming countless projects into successes. We are also very lucky to count on the support of many young committed volunteers and interns who are dedicated to improve access to reproductive choice. Thank you for dedicating your free time to protecting choice for all. I also wish to thank CFC's Board of Director for their dedication and active participation. A special thank you goes to our Board President, Dr. Norman Barwin for his constant support and leadership.

I look forward to another very successful year as we start to explore how to work with a reproductive justice framework!

Patricia LaRue



Canadians for Choice Team

Board of Directors

November 2009 – October 2010

- Dr. Norman Barwin, President
- Sandeep Prasad, Vice-President
- Katherine McDonald, Treasurer and Secretary
- Karin Galldin
- Rachel Guin
- Dr. Jean Guimond
- Morag Humble
- Barbara Legowski
- Marilee Nowgesic
- Emily Turk
- Jessica Yee

October 2010 – October 2011

- Dr. Norman Barwin, President
- Sandeep Prasad, Vice-President
- Katherine McDonald, Treasurer and Secretary
- Karin Galldin
- Rachel Guin
- Dr. Jean Guimond
- Morag Humble
- Ainsley Jenicek (resigned November 2010)
- Barbara Legowski
- Emily Turk
- Jessica Yee



Employees

Permanent employees

Agathe Gramet-Kedzior, Project Manager

Patricia LaRue, Executive Director

Contract Staff

Roger Coady, Accountant

Luis Fernando Gonzalez, Web design

Catherine Slatford, Bookkeeper

Brianna Clancy, Summer student

Placement students and volunteers:

Kathryn Beemer, Brianna Clancy, Julie Charbonneau, Sabina Grabowiecka, Julia Horel-O'Brien, Jaime Lenet, Vivian Li, Crystal MacFarlane, Julia McDonald, Justine McNulty, Brittany Neron, Sarah Peek, Vanessa Rydell, Denisse Temin, Rita Valeriano.

Toronto Action Committee:

Adam Benn, Lindsay Sarah Czitron, Sandra Espinoza, Angela Guardiani, Julia Horel-O'Brien, Anna Johnston, Tonya Kent, Robyn Letson, Lisa Mantia, Chelsea Morka, Amanda Warner, Krysta Williams, Jessica Yee.



Activities and Programs

At Canadians for Choice, we are committed to protecting the rights of all people in being able to make informed decisions about their bodies. We do this through four different programs: training, outreach, communications, and knowledge-generation.

Training program

Canadians for Choice aims to train future and current health professionals and the Canadian public on many aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2010, some activities of our training program included:

- Training sessions to Medical Students for Choice chapter members at Queens University and at the University of Ottawa. We have also been asked to return for a fourth time to provide a lecture to 2nd year medical students at the University of Ottawa about the history of abortion and the responsibilities of doctors in offering unbiased information about unplanned pregnancy options.
- In January and June 2010, Canadians for Choice held two online courses entitled *Pro-choice 101* and *Pro choice 102*. *Pro-choice 101* aimed at initiating young women to pro-choice issues. *Pro-choice 102* was a more advanced course dedicated to young women who have already accumulated significant experience in the field. Each course lasted for 8 weeks and brought together 10 to 18 activists from across the country to learn, share and inspire each other to take action on pro-choice issues. Each course was made up of 8 two-hour sessions. Participants joined through conference calls but also logged in to an interactive website, where they could view presentations, post comments and chat amongst each other. Topics covered included sex-positivity and healthy sexuality, the history of abortion politics in Canada and current access issues, intersectionality and oppression, barriers faced by immigrant and undocumented women when attempting to exercise their sexual or reproductive choice, and the relationship between intimate partner violence and choice, to name only a few. The courses closed with presentations about the experiences and reflections of pro-choice activists in organizing counter-protests, working at an abortion clinic and conducting pro-choice research. Participants reported that the courses gave them an understanding of reproductive choice and barriers as well as the tools they needed to concretely take action to change issues. After the courses, many participants organized pro-choice events in their community, provided pro-choice training in their workplace / university, or started working in pro-choice organizations. Many of them continue to be in touch to share information and strategies. Canadians for Choice also continues to be in contact with participants by providing advice and support for their activities, informing them of upcoming events in their communities or asking for their advice and suggestions on



upcoming projects.

- CFC organized a pro-choice presence in response to anti-choice protests in front of abortion clinics in Ottawa and Toronto. In the fall, an anti-choice group organized 40 days of protest in front of the Ottawa Morgentaler Clinic, trying to intimidate women going in and coming out of the clinic. In order to protect women's access to the clinic, Canadians for Choice ensured pro-choice escorts were present on every clinic day. CFC provided clinic defense training to the 50 women and men who volunteered to protect women's access to the clinic. The Toronto Action Committee, in collaboration with the Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics also organized a comprehensive Clinic Defense workshop and planned for a pro-choice presence in front of an abortion clinic in Toronto.

Outreach

Through our outreach program, Canadians for Choices aims at providing easily accessible resources on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights to the public and engaging targeted populations in ensuring that all Canadians have access to the information they need to make informed choices.

Activities of our outreach program included:

- Canadians for Choice staff and a team of 10 trained volunteers operate an information and referral phone line. The line is operating 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, providing unbiased information on sexual health and unplanned pregnancy options and referral to appropriate services. In 2010, the Information and Referral Line provided a compassionate ear to over 270 women. Over the year, Canadians for Choice worked to update its service directory to ensure we were able to support women who needed to obtain a doctor's referral in order to access an abortion in a hospital. We designed Information and Referral Line posters and advertised our services throughout the country to 200 women's shelters and community groups. The phone line was also advertised in a LRT station in Calgary, thanks to the student group Voices for Choice.
- To honor the memory of pro-choice leader Norma Scarborough, Canadians for Choice named its emergency travel fund the Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund. Through this fund, CFC is able to support women who need to travel long distances in order to access an abortion. In 2010, CFC's Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund helped 29 women who had to travel long distances to exercise their reproductive choice, either because abortion was not available in their home community or because they were past the gestational limit of the nearest



provider. The number of requests has tripled since 2009, clearly highlighting the need for this service to be maintained and expanded.

- CFC's website www.canadiansforchoice.ca continues to be a bilingual comprehensive source of information about pregnancy options and other aspects of reproductive choice. The website contains an online directory of sexual health centres and abortion providers as well as detailed information on other reproductive health issues.
- Over 700 people attended presentations by Canadians for Choice staff and volunteers through the Speakers' Bureau. We reached people from a variety of backgrounds including activists, nurses, social workers, doctors, lawyers, retired people, young people, and medical students, to name only a few. Presentations were given in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Communications

Through its communications program, CFC aims to share information on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights nationally. Activities of our communications program include:

- We respond quickly and accurately to national and international media inquiries. In 2010, CFC responded to 40 media requests and was featured in many media outlets including the Toronto Star, the Current, the Globe and Mail, Le Soleil, le Journal de Quebec, La Presse, Rue Frontenac, CPAC, Agence France Presse, CBC and Radio Canada radio and TV shows.
- CFC created a series of three videos entitled "Every day we make choices" in response to the anti-choice campaign 40 days for life. By showing how frustrating it is to have our everyday choices taken away, the videos illustrate the impact of the anti-choice protests on women's reproductive choice.
- Canadians for Choice also created the "Less Stuff More Choice" campaign to raise awareness about reproductive choice and to raise funds to continue our work.
- CFC has also modernized our logo. The logo still maintains our link to our roots but has adapted its color and lines to appeal to a wider public.



Knowledge-generation

Through its knowledge-generation program, CFC aims to produce and encourage good qualitative and quantitative data on choice. Some activities of the knowledge-generation program include:

- CFC partnered with La Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances to launch a new resource entitled Focus on Abortion Services in Quebec. This publication aims at providing an update on the structure and quality of abortion services offered across the province. It begins with a history of the establishment of abortion services in the province, provides an idea of how services are organized, and describes the main barriers limiting access to services. The report, along with relevant recommendations, was presented to the press and some decision-makers in Quebec to improve services offered. The report was also launched outside of Quebec to serve as a model for the organization of services. The publication is also available in French.
- At the request of staff working in shelters for survivors of violence, CFC has designed an information kit on the links between violence against women and abortion. This practical pamphlet includes information on the importance of accessible abortion services for women that are leaving abusive situations, some barriers and myths these women may be faced with, as well as some information on abortion services. The kit has been sent out to over 400 shelters in Canada and has received very positive feedback.
- CFC worked with two pro-bono students to research the legal and policy questions raised by anti-choice activists' use of the freedom of expression argument to defend many of their actions: protesting in front of clinics and doctors' offices and homes, using intimidation tactics, providing inaccurate/misleading information to women facing an unplanned pregnancy, etc. Students presented their findings to key Ottawa activists.
- Shannon Coyle from Queens University received the 2010 Norman Barwin Scholarship for Reproductive Health. For her thesis, Shannon is looking at trans people's needs and fulfillments within Ontario's health care system. She hopes to study what the specific health care needs of trans persons accessing Ontario health care are, but also if they are alienated and / or systemically discriminated against when seeking medical attention.

Finances

A full audited financial statement as prepared by Ouseley Hanvey Clipsham Deep LLP is available at the office upon request.