



MUJER Annual Report

2012-2013



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10 Years Later: Looking Back

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." - Marcus Garvey

The idea of having an organization like MUJER was inspired by the Latin American Coalition to End Violence against Women and Childrens (LACEV) *Encuentros*. Organized in 1995 and 1996, these meetings brought together 550 Latin American women and 150 children to participate in a wide array of workshops, forums, group discussions, panels, artistic exhibitions, cultural presentations and press conferences.

The *Encuentros* recognized that Latin American women have contributed enormously to the economic and social well being of Canadian society, but still a great number of Latin American women were limited in their participation at all levels in Canadian society. Its mandate was to initiate the development of the framework, mission and philosophy for a "dream organization."

In November of 2001, the Committee held a large consultation with women in the community to establish certain priorities around services, programs and activities for the organization. The need for an organization to take the lead in promoting the integral development of Latin American women in Ontario was strongly evident.

MUJER was officially established on January 15, 2002 and it was incorporated as a non-profit organization in February, 2003.

As we celebrate our 10th year anniversary, we take a look back and recognize the hard work and dedication of the women and their allies that have carried on the work of this organization. Without their unwavering dedication, persistence and leadership, MUJER would still only be a dream.

To them we say Thank You!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are pleased to report that this year has been a remarkable year for MUJER. 2011-2012 has brought some amazing changes and new projects, which we are very proud to present to you in this annual report. The most important thing to always remember is that this incredible work is only possible because of the unwavering support we have from the women that make up MUJER. The staff that goes above and beyond the call of duty, the volunteers and placement students that give their time, energy, ideas and passion and the community that we serve. In this year, we want to honour a number of women that were so important to MUJER: *Alejandra Cabezas* past president, and past Board Members *Consuelo Llanos* and *Sayonara Mairena*. In addition, we would like to thank *Lilian Valderde*, the steadfast coordinator of this agency for so many years, who has left us her dream as a legacy. Thank you to all these women who helped the organization become what it is today, for their dedication, their time and their leadership. The first change that MUJER has undertaken is that we have moved to the area of Jane and Wilson. For a long time, MUJER realized that we needed to be closer to our community. We were finally able to fulfill that dream as we found a really nice niche that we share with the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples. We are able to deliver better services and have more direct contact with women who need our assistance, who wish to volunteer for us and who make up the entirety of the organization.

We also continue to achieve outstanding results with regards to the projects we have implemented this fiscal year:

We completed a three-year project with the **Status of Women Canada** that aimed to empower Latina youth in Toronto. This year we finalized our media campaign by creating a Public Service Announcement that tackled bullying. Unfortunately, we are witnessing an increase in violence directed to young people, specifically young women. We developed a message infused with hope and resistance that resonated with Latina youth and their parents. We have been disseminating this message with parents and community members that joined us in a discussion about the effects of bullying in our community. In the spirit of resistance and empowerment MUJER organized a one-day youth retreat for fifteen youth who explored different personal issues through art and movement.

In October 2012, we completed “Tu voz es Tu Fortaleza /

Your Voice is Your Strength” a one-year project, funded by the **Trillium Foundation**. Thirty women of all ages participated in a series of workshops where they acquired the much-needed tools to become active leaders of the community and to represent our voices within Canadian society. The women’s accomplishments were recognized in a Brunch & Salsa Fundraiser they organized, which was the culmination of the project.

In July 2013, we continued to offer the sixth Latina Summer Camp. This year we didn’t get funding from the United Way as we had in years past. This prompted us to organize fundraising events in order to allow us to continue offering this really important program. MUJER organized an online fundraising campaign that raised \$620.

Thank you to all our institutional and individual donors who allowed us to successfully deliver programs and continue to serve the Latina women of Toronto.

We are looking forward to the new fiscal year with new exciting ideas and plans. We have begun a three-year project funded by the **Ontario Women’s Directorate**. This project aims to bring men into the discussion of violence against women. We have been very pleased that the community has responded not only positively to the project but also actively participating and committing to the project. This project is new and innovative within the scope of violence against women and MUJER is receiving recognition for being a thought leader on the issue in the Latino community. This project is Ontario-wide and will bring in five different communities from: Thunder Bay, London, Ottawa and Toronto. The expansion of our activities to these communities has helped us re-establish ties with partner organizations in different cities across the province.

As new women become involved in MUJER, we are talking about carrying forward the dreams of those women who gave so much of themselves to see the organization grow and to also begin to dream anew.

Last but not least, a big thank you to the women who serve on the Board of Directors with us – Maritza Monsalve, Adriana Mendieta Flores, Mery Blanco, Martha Villeda, Susy Alvarez. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to moving MUJER forward and for giving the organization strategic direction and excellent leadership.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Magaly San Martin and Michelle Dupuis
Co-Presidents
MUJER

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING REPORT

As the Director of Programming of MUJER I am very honoured and proud to work with and learn from my colleagues and peers. These talented individuals dedicate their lives to empowering disenfranchised communities; they create and offer services, programs and in-depth research which allows us to continue our work and build up our local communities.

We always strive to create projects and events that are relevant to the community's needs and interests. Whether we're creating programming for youth, women and/or men, the value of being able to reach out to our large network of supporters has enabled the MUJER team to execute our projects with professionalism, dedication and hopefully with a lasting impact.

I would like to extend tremendous gratitude to everyone that has supported and continues to support the work we do at MUJER. As a very small team we often find ourselves stretched to our limit, and without the external support from the Board of Directors, volunteers and contributors, the work we do in the community would not be possible.

Thank You!!!

Sincerely,

Frances Rawlings Quintero



A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

Honourable Mention:

Lilian Valverde
Conseulo Llanos
Sayonara Mairena
Alejandra Cabezas

Board of Directors:

Magaly San Martin, Co-President
Michelle Dupuis, Co-President & Treasurer
Martiza Monsalve, Secretary
Mery Blanco
Susy Alvarez
Adriana Mendieta-Flores
Martha Villeda

Resigned:

Alejandra Cabezas
Daniela Jameson

Staff:

Frances Rawlings Quintero,
Director of Programming
Elsa Rodriguez, Coordinator
Marcia Iglesias, Outreach Worker
Karen Lahura, Project Assistant

Contributors:

Silvia Méndez
Alejandra Bravo
Nylda Lopez
Roxana Zuleta
Sara Cerna
Stephanie Loor
Veronica Diaz
Arminida Dumpierrez

Placement Students:

Claudia Garcia
Paola Aguilera
Luisa Paez

Remarkable Volunteers:

Sandra Vides Martinez
Nylda Lopez
Angela Quintero
Guillermina Núñez Cabrera
Yanet Medrano Turcios
Stephanie Loor
Silvia Leon
Jany Vargas
Stephanie Quezada
Adrián Báez
Stephanie Jara
Josselyn Guevara-Perez

We also recognize and thank all of our community partners, contributors and collaborators that enable MUJER to continue our work in the community. Without your support we would not be able to do the work we do.

PROJECTS / ACHIEVEMENTS

Empower Youth Latina in Toronto

In March 2013 MUJER completed its three-year project with Status of Women Canada, “Empower Youth Latinas in Toronto.” This project was initially conceptualized through the work MUJER had been doing with Latin Youth, particularly marginalized Latin American girls who faced tremendous issues of emotional, physical and sexual violence within their families, in schools and in their communities.



This year we created a second installment of our media campaign, “Your Voice Counts / Tu Voz Cuenta” focusing on bullying, a theme that has become all too relevant and common in the mainstream media. It focused on a youth’s personal journey, and story of survival through bullying. This was a very important aspect of the overall campaign as the media has been heavily focusing on stories of defeat, turmoil and hopelessness. Both youth and parents expressed how impactful the video was to them giving them a more transparent and concise understanding of the issues youth are facing and how they are dealing with those issues.

In December 2012, twenty parents and community members joined us for a community meeting *¿Como se Dice Bullying en Español?* a discussion about the effects of bullying and everyone’s role in supporting Latina youth.

In February 2012, 15 youth participated in *Breakdance for Empowerment*, a one-day youth retreat facilitated to address difficult issues Latina youth face using various expressions of movements, visual arts, music and poetry to help them to be active and express themselves and address difficult issues by expanding the conversation and providing outlets of encouragement.



“My experience working on the videos was very therapeutic. I felt that as the shoot went on, I came to realize how far I had come from the girl that used to hide behind a smile, to the girl that is proud of herself and is open. And I believe it was the best part; especially when letting go of the last cue card because you get a sense of accomplishment, and you know that you have overcome something, and now that story can help many other youths who are going through similar situations.” Stephanie, 18

MUJER believes it has made progress in changing beliefs and behaviours towards young girls, as well as how young girls confront recognize and deal with the impact of gender violence within their families, schools and communities, but much more work needs to be done. MUJER believes the progress this project has made has enlightened many of our stakeholders and changed the course of the paths for many of the participants that did not have access to the resources this project was able to create and connect the young girls, their parents and the community to. Throughout this project we recruited and interacted directly with more than 200 girls and we worked directly with over 90 girls through capacity building and empowering them with tools to deal with issues that affect them, including, coping mechanisms when facing uncomfortable situations via the expressive art workshops that validated their own experiences with violence.





TU VOZ ES TU FORTALEZA

In October 2012 we completed *Tu Voz es Tu Fortaleza / Your Voice is Your Strength* a one-year project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. A series of 6 workshops that confronted and verbalize issues including gender equality, self-esteem, the importance of volunteerism and violence prevention, which provided 30 participants with the tools to be leaders in their communities. Many of the participants had experienced trauma, persecution and/or violence, and a lot of them lacked the language that they need to help ease the transition into Canadian society. The lack of language skills has resulted in lack of information about resources, rights, opportunities and employment- all of which were addressed in the workshop series.

The final stage of the project had the participants work with the Project Coordinator, Elsa Rodriguez, and put on an event so that they could implement the tools and skills learned in the workshops. The *Brunch & Salsa Frundraiser* was a tremendous success that took place at Lula Lounge with over 100 attendees, where each of the thirty women were recognized and celebrated for their achievements.



MUJER'S LATINA SUMMER CAMP 2012

In July of 2012 we wrapped the 6th year of our Art, Leadership and Recreational Summer Camp. Unfortunately, this year we did not receive funding from United Way's Focus on Youth granting program, which could have hindered our ability to deliver the program. The Board of Directors, volunteers and staff came together and brainstormed ways we could fundraise and we decided to create a short video from the previous year's summer camp that we used to hoist an online fundraising campaign on Indiegogo, an online crowd-funding platform. All together MUJER raised \$1200, including contributions from a few community partners, which helped to cover

some of the costs. Although we were still very tight, we still managed to pull off a very successful summer camp, lead by our Outreach Worker, Marcia Iglesias. Workshops on self-esteem, anti-bullying, leadership, self-expression and healthy relationships were delivered from a dynamic group of facilitators from the community.

Funding has and continues to be an issue to support the summer camp and throughout the next year we will look at ways to continue to look at ways we can generate funding for this program as we continue to see the need, value and extremely positive impact of the summer camp.



UPCOMING PROJECTS

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE; WORKING TOWARDS A COMMUNITY SOLUTION

In March of 2013 MUJER began working on a new and exciting project, *Understanding Sexual Violence: Working Towards a Community Solution*, a three-year project funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate. The aim of the project is to understand harassment, stalking, sexual assault and rape as part of the gender inequity in our society perpetuated by patriarchal, cultural norms; specifically, in the context of the Latin American community living in Ontario.

We will broaden the campaign by segmenting our target population and organizing interviews with key stakeholders in the community. We will organize focus groups to engage the community in the discussion of the issues pertaining to sexual violence.

The project will develop and promote two (2) audiovisual resources to be used in a social marketing campaign addressing issues of harassment, stalking, sexual assault, rape and rape prevention through bystander education. This social marketing campaign will be aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours of women and men in the Latin American community that perpetuate sexual violence. MUJER will be using evidence-based research on best practices in public education incorporating experience from our solid trajectory of work around issues of sexual violence and input from experts from the community.



OUR FUNDERS

A very special thank you to:



Status of Women Canada **Condition féminine Canada**



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