

# BREAST CANCER ACTION MONTREAL

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

For presentation at the  
Annual General Meeting, September 29, 2009

The fiscal year starting July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2009 saw a burst of activity and several innovations allowing the organization to advance its mission to get women and men to take positive steps toward the prevention of breast cancer. Throughout the year, BCAM initiatives affected 2,174 individuals.

Our capable President, Carol Sectar, ended her term of office on September 23, '08 at the Annual General Meeting. Although the Nominating Committee was unable to propose a candidate for President, the Board of Directors, fortified by three newly elected members (Beverley Thorpe, Rosanne Cohen, and Maychai Brown), closed ranks and assumed responsibility for the various presidential duties. This transition could not have happened without the assistance and careful oversight of Janice Melanson, the Office Administrator.

### **Safe Cosmetics Campaign**

This year the focus of BCAM's Safe Cosmetics Campaign has been to develop a project to engage a younger audience. The next generation's involvement is critical to address the need to change cosmetic safety. This issue is also particularly relevant to youth since the possible toxicity of chemical ingredients has a much greater effect during adolescence. In September 2008 the Safe Cosmetics Committee presented a proposal to the Board to create a new program by and for youth.

The project began in earnest in January under the name *FemmeToxic*. In keeping with the goal to create an inter-generational campaign, five young women interns were chosen to join the members of the Safe Cosmetics Committee to form a 10 person advisory board for the project. The interns, Madeline Cronin, Karla Ekdom-Delorm, Rosario Gallardo, Emilou Kinsella, and Stéphanie Najjar, have been responsible for researching the current legislation and regulations on cosmetic ingredients in Canada, the U.S. and the European Union. The interns wrote the content for the project. Their input ensures that the perspective of young women is continually voiced throughout the program content and vision. Our Office Administrator has taken on the additional role of coordinator for this project.

A partnership was formed with the national charitable organization Girls Action Foundation. Their expertise in girl's empowerment education, specifically using new media techniques, will ensure the accessibility of the content to our audience. They will promote the program through their network of girls' clubs providing national exposure for the campaign.

One of the first actions of *FemmeToxic* was to collaborate with BCAM in the *Mother's Day March for Safe Cosmetics* of which more will be said later in the report.

Although BCAM's request for a summer employment grant was turned down, we found the funds to create three part-time jobs of 21 hours per week enabling three of the interns to work throughout the summer to develop the program content.

While much was accomplished in the past fiscal year toward planning a *FemmeToxic* website where young women will be able to find information, upload media artworks, and engage in actions on individual and community levels, the launch of the site is planned for September '09 to coincide with initiation week events at universities and CEGEPs. The second phase of the project will focus on creating a curriculum that can be presented through workshops to schools and community groups.

We have made requests for financing to five foundations to date and have so far received \$5,000 from the Solstice Foundation.

### **Annual General Meeting 2008**

The AGM took place on September 23. After the election of Board Members, Terrye Perlman introduced the new Office Administrator Janice Melanson.

Following the business portion of the meeting, the attendees watched a DVD entitled *Toxic Trespass*, an investigation into the health effects of the chemical soup emanating from Sarnia, Ontario, written and directed by Barri Cohen. The film was followed by a discussion ending with refreshments.

### **Canadian Cancer Society's Conference on Non-Cosmetic Use of Pesticides**

In November 2008, Board member Avis Antel attended a two-day conference hosted by the Canadian Cancer Society in Toronto; the goal of the international Conference was to provide a forum in which to discuss the research, precautionary policies, and practices surrounding agricultural and other non-cosmetic uses of pesticides. Conference attendees and speakers ranged across the spectrum from BCAM-minded groups, to proponents of the chemical/pesticide industry. While no decisions were reached by the Society regarding the safety or danger of non-cosmetic pesticide use, it was important that such a discussion was finally taking place, and that it was reported in the media.

### **Annual Workshop for BCAM Members**

The Workshop Committee presented the 2008 volunteer workshop for BCAM members, friends and guests on Saturday, November 15 at the Westmount Library. Our guest speaker Madeleine Bird presented the topic, *Toxic Chemicals in Cosmetics—Avoiding the Beast When Looking for Beauty* to a full house. Through a live hook-up to the internet, Madeleine demonstrated how to research products and ingredients on the Skin Deep Database website. We continue to have the financial support of our MNAs for the workshop.

### **Launch of *L'État des connaissances***

BCAM's collaboration with the Breast Cancer Fund (San Francisco) in translating *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment* (2008 version) into French resulted in our publishing *L'État des connaissances : La relation entre l'environnement et le cancer du sein*. A donation from the Feigelson Foundation paid for the printing.

BCAM's Marketing Committee organized the launch of the French edition in Montreal on January 13 with a press conference. A panel, made up of Nancy Guberman, Professor of Social Work (Université du Québec à Montréal); Michel Gaudet, Allergy and Environmental Health Association; and Dr. Michael Pollak, Professor of Medicine and Oncology (McGill University), gave their perspectives on the report to a crowded room of television, radio and print representatives. Francine Pelletier, Honourary Board member of BCAM, moderated the panel.

The event garnered extensive coverage for the issue of environmental links to breast cancer especially in the French media and provoked many requests for copies of the report.

BCAM sent copies of the report to 20 Federal and Provincial elected representatives.

### **The Fifth Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture**

BCAM's annual Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture, held on April 16, furthered our work for safer cosmetics. Approximately 150 people came to hear Stacy Malkan, a founding member of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. Based on her recent book, her lecture was titled *The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry and Hopeful Solutions for a Healthier Future*. Attendees were invited to sign an updated version of the petition demanding better labelling and safer regulation of cosmetics directed to the Federal Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq. To further BCAM's new youth focus, we were able to arrange lectures both at Westmount High School, and at Villa Maria. The latter was attended by parents and girls from six different secondary schools which regularly participate in the *Girls' for the Cure* march.

Thirty organizations endorsed the lecture (see Appendix B), and there was considerable media coverage during Ms. Malkan's visit thanks to the efforts of Jane Shulman whose improved health enabled her to act as publicist for the event.

### **"Breast Cancer Prevention in Action" / Speakers' Bureau**

Funding from Service Canada's *New Horizons for Seniors* initiative provided the clerical, technical and organizational back-up for the second year of BCAM's "Breast Cancer Prevention in Action" program enabling our team of volunteers to bring the PowerPoint presentation *The Beast of Beauty* to marginalized groups and organizations, minority populations, and to seniors, who are at a higher risk for breast cancer. Between July 1, '08 and June 30, '09 BCAM volunteers gave the presentation to 19 organizations where they shared information about toxic chemicals in beauty and personal care products, introduced the precautionary principle, suggested ways to find safer products, and discussed ways to pressure for better labelling and tighter regulation of products. (See

Annex C for the list of organizations.) Using feedback from the volunteers, acting consultant Christine Kupka and volunteer Carol Sexter revised the text of the presentation to make it more accessible to audiences.

Although our volunteers were restricted to the greater Montreal area, we were able to accommodate requests from nine organizations in rural areas by sending the PowerPoint electronically.

An important aspect of the presentation was the easy-to-read written information that accompanied the PowerPoint. In the course of the year volunteers gave out 1,425 pamphlets on cosmetics, breast cancer myths, and environmental links to cancer. (The pamphlets were developed previously in collaboration with the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women).

We received requests from groups throughout Quebec, Ontario and as far as Manitoba for English and French copies of the pamphlets. In response we mailed 973 copies. (See Annex D for a list of the requests.)

Due to the high demand for two of the pamphlets—*The Beast of Beauty and Myth Busters*—BCAM reprinted both with revisions and up-dates to *The Beast of Beauty* by volunteers Carol Sexter and Gerry Goodfriend.

Although the *New Horizons for Seniors* funding ended in January, it had provided an organizational and technical framework enabling the project to continue. We have bookings for several more presentations through the summer and fall of 2009.

Donnie Frank, a BCAM member, has agreed to take over the position of coordinator from Christine Kupka and will continue to solicit new engagements and coordinate speakers.

### ***Mother's Day March for Safe Cosmetics***

On May 9 a small but passionate band of BCAM members and friends marched with a police escort down St. Catherine Street from Guy Street to Square Victoria. Marchers handed out more than 850 bi-lingual flyers on Canadian cosmetic regulation in addition to material from the U.S.-based Campaign For Safe Cosmetics. By coordinating the Mother's Day initiative with BCAM's national partner, Prevent Cancer Now, signatures were gathered from across Canada for our petition demanding safer cosmetics and were forwarded to Federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq.

### **World Environmental Education Congress**

The 5<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Education Congress was held in Montreal this year from May 10<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup>, with the theme of "Earth-Our Common Home". It was a wide-ranging, international conference bringing together educators, students, civil servants, museum and park managers and researchers, representatives of NGOs and many others involved in environmental education, in the hope that through education we can teach people about their relationship with each other and the environment.

Two BCAM members made presentations at different venues during the busy event under the theme of "Environmental Health." Deena Dlusy-Apel, board member, headed a round

table discussion on *Breast Cancer As We See It*, and Fiona Hanley took part in a panel to deliver the PowerPoint presentation *The Beast of Beauty*.

### **BCAM in the Press**

Breast Cancer Action Montreal has become the go-to source for issues concerning breast cancer and safe cosmetics in the press. This year, BCAM received dozens of interview requests in all media forms— television, radio and print. Articles appeared in the fall '08 issue of *Women and the Environment* magazine and we were interviewed in June '09 for *Clin d'Oeil's* October issue for breast cancer month. The Press Conference on *L'État des connaissances* resulted in reports in *The Gazette*, *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*. Television coverage of the launch was part of Radio Canada's evening, late, and morning news, RDI's noon show, and TVA's evening and late news. Panelists were interviewed by Paul Arcand and Benoit Dutrizac of *L'après-midi* on Radio 98.5, and reports were aired by CBL Radio Centre Ville and Radio Montreal. BCAM was consulted for an upcoming documentary on Cause Marketing and our annual workshop *Toxic Chemicals in Cosmetics—Avoiding the Beast When Looking for Beauty* was filmed for another documentary to be released later in 2009 on toxic chemicals in cosmetics. BCAM will be highlighted on the French language program, "*Une pilule- une petite granule*" and a request has been made for a future edition of the Global National news magazine program, *16:9*. In May, Radio Canada broke the story of failed pathology tests for breast cancer in Quebec on Radio Canada's program *Enquête*. BCAM had been contacted by CBC Radio for the first English response before the Radio Canada program even aired. This report resulted in a flurry of requests for interviews – too many to be able to fulfill. We would especially like to thank Nancy Guberman and Fiona Hanley for their response to French media particularly, but moreover for often acting as our spokespersons to the press.

### **BCAM Bulletin**

The Newsletter Committee under the chairmanship of Chris Kupka, along with graphics designer Sarah Cobb, *Bulletin* editor Janine O'Leary Cobb and a team of volunteer translators produced three editions of the *BCAM Bulletin* — Fall '08, Winter '09 and Spring '09. Articles covered BCAM events as well as items such as green chemistry, Vitamin D, Gardasil, the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Breast Cancer and the status of Canadian research on environmental links to breast cancer. BCAM encouraged its members to receive their issues electronically in order to save on office expenses and manpower.

### **WWW.BCAM.QC.CA**

Our website keeps growing! Gerry Goodfriend, volunteer webmaster, continued to update it, and has undertaken a re-design to accommodate all the new information in a format that is clear to users. We anticipate the results of this painstaking job in 2009-10.

## **Fundraising**

Despite the economically challenging times we live in, several groups and individuals continued to show their support by making BCAM the recipient of their fundraising efforts and generous donations— Jeffrey Blatt, the Beaconsfield Golf Club Ladies, the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 94), the Student Stock Exchange Project at St. George's School, Perspectives II students, the Bishop's University Gender Equity Centre, Curves (Beaconsfield), and the Greenfield Park Girl Guides to name a few.

The fundraising committee's deliberations between July 1, '08 and June 30 '09 focused on setting directions for the annual membership campaign with particular focus on increasing and broadening BCAM's membership; reviewing BCAM's third-party fundraising policies in order to clarify the policy and encourage people to go back into their own communities to fundraise for BCAM; and the need to develop a more comprehensive annual fundraising strategy, including goals and timelines.

Committee members met with professional fundraising consultants who have volunteered their time to provide BCAM with valuable information on contacts of potential supporters and strategies for BCAM fundraising drives including on-line campaigns to support the on-going work BCAM undertakes.

## **BCAM Office**

The office responded to 71 email requests and 128 phone requests for information about breast cancer, a 25% increase over the preceding year. Office Administrator Janice Melanson continued to up-grade office software and equipment to make the office run more efficiently. In addition, Janice and her husband repainted the office making it a more attractive environment for our interns and Office Assistant who often find themselves working elbow-to-elbow in the small space.

## **Board of Directors**

Prior to the AGM in September '08, Christine Kupka tendered her resignation from the Board in order to serve as a paid consultant to the "Breast Cancer Prevention in Action" project. Three new board members were officially elected at the AGM: Beverley Thorpe, Rosanne Cohen and Maychai Brown.

As the year progressed, Susan Hertzberg, Vice President, chaired the Board meetings with monthly agendas provided by Office Administrator Janice Melanson. At the February Board meeting, Christine Kupka re-joined the Board having completed her tenure as consultant to BCAM.

Terrye Perlman and Carole Summers developed a document "Guidelines for Current and Potential Board Members" to better inform prospective board members of board expectations should they decide to join.

In April the Board regretfully accepted Carole Summers' request for a leave of absence. Carole continues to serve on the Workshop Committee.

## **BCAM's Networking**

- Beverley Thorpe served as the BCAM liaison with the national organization Prevent Cancer Now.
- BCAM established a working partnership with Girls' Action Foundation to implement the project *FemmeToxic*.
- We were approached by Environmental Defence Canada to partner on a Canadian National Safe Cosmetics Campaign and are working towards creating a Memorandum of Understanding and partnership plan to that end.
- Maychai Brown attended the open house of the Organisation Multiressources pour les Personnes Atteintes de Cancer (OMPAC) on Sept. 9, '08 and the AGM of the Régroupement provincial des organismes et groupes d'entraide communautaires en oncologie (RPOGECO) Oct. 24, '08.
- Carol Selter served as BCAM Representative on the Community Consultation Group for the *Éco-santé tous ensemble!* project, a joint initiative of the South Asian Women's Community Centre and McGill University.
- BCAM continues a close relationship with three organizations based in the U.S.— the Breast Cancer Fund, the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, and the Environmental Working Group.
- We have continued our association with the Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Quebec (AEHAQ).
- On April 29, '09, Deena Dlusy-Apel and Rosanne Cohen presented *The Beast of Beauty* to a group of third-year medical students of McGill University Medical School.

## **Acknowledgements**

During National Volunteer Week in April, BCAM individually thanked the many volunteers who enabled us to carry out our mission. At this time, the Board wishes to publicly acknowledge individuals whose contribution of time and talent may have gone unnoticed: BCAM member Donnie Frank who assumed the responsibility for the Speakers' Bureau; Gerry Goodfriend who maintained our website and designed our posters; Christine Kupka who responded to BCAM's temporary need of a paid consultant for the "Breast Cancer Prevention in Action" program while continuing to volunteer on two other BCAM committees; Honourary Board Members Janine O'Leary Cobb who edited the *BCAM Bulletin* and Francine Pelletier who acted as moderator for two public events; interns Madeline Cronin, Karla Ekdorn-Delorm, Rosario Gallardo, Emilou Kinsella and Stphanie Najja who made time for BCAM while maintaining their studies; staff members Janice Melanson who shepherded the development of *FemmeToxic* while ensuring that the office and Board functioned efficiently and Office Assistant Stephanie O'Hanley; and all the generous volunteer translators who enabled us to produce information in both languages.

*Report compiled by Maychai Brown with input from Janice Melanson, Christine Kupka, Avis Antel, Deena Dlusy-Apel, Rosanne Cohen, Susan Hertzberg, and Carol Selter*

## Annex A

### BCAM Committees

#### **Workshop Committee**

Chair: Chris Kupka,

Members: Terrye Perlman, Carol Sector, Carole Summers

#### **Newsletter Committee**

Chair : Chris Kupka

Members: Rose Alper, Deborah Bonney, Maureen Lafrenière, Avis Antel, Vivia Chow, and Maychai Brown

#### **Marketing Committee**

Chair: Susan Hertzberg

Members: Bev Thorpe, Carol Sector, Deena Dlusy-Apel, Maychai Brown, and Rose Alper,

#### **Website Committee**

Carol Sector and Gerry Goodfriend

#### **Safe Cosmetics Committee**

Chair: Deena Dlusy-Apel

Members: Janice Melanson, Carol Sector, Joanne Sherwin, Rosanne Cohen

#### **Fundraising Committee**

Chair: Rosanne Cohen

Members: Chris Kupka, Rose Alper, Terrye Perlman and Maychai Brown

#### **Speakers Bureau**

Coordinator: Donnie Frank

Presenters: Carol Sector, Janice Melanson, Myra Heyman, Maychai Brown, Rosanne Cohen, Fiona Hanley, Deena Dlusy Apel, Nancy Guberman, and Alice Chautard

#### ***FemmeToxic* Advisory Board**

Chair: Janice Melanson

Members: Deena Dlusy-Apel, Carol Sector, Joanne Sherwin, Rosanne Cohen, Madeline Cronin, Karla Ekdorm-Delorm, Rosario Gallardo, Emilou Kinsella and Stphanie Najja

## **Annex B**

### **Endorsers of the Fifth Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture**

Association des mères lesbiennes  
Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Quebec / Association pour la santé  
environnementale, les hypersensibilités et les allergies du Québec  
Breast Cancer Fund  
Canadian Women's Health Network / Réseau canadien pour la santé des femmes  
Urban Ecology Centre / Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal  
CKUT 90.3 FM  
Conseil communautaire NDG Community Council  
Coop la Maison Verte  
Dépôt alimentaire NDG Food Depot  
DES Action Canada  
Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia  
Equiterre  
Fédération de l'Âge d'Or du Québec, Région Île de Montréal  
Fédération des femmes du Québec  
Institute in Management & Community Development, Concordia University  
McGill Centre for Research & Teaching on Women  
National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Montreal Section  
NOVA Montreal  
Organisation multiresources pour les personnes atteintes de cancer  
Prevent Cancer Now  
Quebec Native Women Inc. / Femmes Autochtones du Québec  
Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes  
Réseau Québécois des Femmes en Environnement  
SEFACS/L'AQIO, CSSS de Laval  
Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University  
STOP  
Vie Nouvelle  
West Island Women's Centre / Centre des femmes de l'Ouest-de-l'Île  
Women on the Rise  
Y des femmes de Montréal

## **Annex C**

### **BCAM Speakers' Bureau Presentations**

- 23 July, '08 Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (now Agence Ometz)
- 21 Aug., '08 50+ group of NDG
- 23 Aug., '08 Chinese Family Services Health Day
- 20 Oct., '08. NOVA Montreal
- 23 Oct., '08 YMCA Westmount
- 28 Oct., '08 Italian Women's Centre (50+)
- 3 Nov., '08 Heritage Regional High School, St. Hubert (to confirm)
- 3 Nov., '08 Dawson College nursing students
- 18 Nov., '08 Projet Changement (seniors)
- 20 Nov., '08 Maison Mosaic (mothers and infants)
- 10 Dec., '08 Cote St. Luc Senior Social Centre
- 26 Feb., '09 Marianopolis College
- 9 March, '09 Y des femmes
- 1 Apr., '09 Royal West Academy
- 27 Apr., '09 McGill University Medical Students
- 12 May, '09 World Environmental Education Congress
- 13 May, '09 World Environmental Education Congress
- 29th May, '09 Madame prends congé (Centre de femmes de Pointe St-Charles)
- 4 June, '09 Jewish Women International of Israel-Chomedey

## **Annex D**

### **Individuals and Groups Requesting Brochures**

Centr'Elles, Gaspé

Lauren Shayer

Dr. St. Martin

Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale (AFÉAS), La Croche

AFÉAS, St-Hyacinthe

Centre de Femmes Liber'Elles

Kate Dykman, U. of Winnipeg, Manitoba

Centre des femmes de la Colombe, Ste-Agathe-des-Monts

AFÉAS, St-Felix-de-Valois

AFÉAS, Québec

Bishop's University Gender Equity, Sherbrooke

My left Breast, Peterborough, Ontario

AFÉAS, St-Denis-de-Brompton

L'École Massey-Vanier, Cowansville

AFÉAS, Baie-du-Febvre

Marie-Reine Bossé, Saint-Eusèbe

AFÉAS, Chicoutimi

AFÉAS, Rivière-du-Loup

AFÉAS, Mont-Joli

AFÉAS, Eastman

Bibliothèque Mercier, Montréal

AFÉAS, Joliette

AFÉAS, Louiseville

AFÉAS, St-Hyacinthe

Centre d'éducation populaire de Pointe-du-Lac, Trois Rivières

Rheta McLaughlin, Lindsay, Ontario

Clarie LaFlamme Montréal

Réseau Québécois des Femmes en Environnement (RQFE), Montréal

Fédération Professionnelle Santé Québec

Centre des Femmes de Montréal