

# Breast Cancer Action Montreal ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013

for presentation at the  
Annual General Meeting  
September 18, 2013

## **Breast Cancer Action Montreal's mission and scope:**

**Breast Cancer Action Montreal (BCAM)** is a non-profit organization that educates the public about environmental toxicants and their links to breast cancer, and advocates for stricter industry regulation and stronger government policy regarding toxic chemicals in consumer products that put women at greater risk for the disease. Our work aims to improve the quality of life for women with breast cancer now and to prevent or reduce its incidence for future generations.

We are particularly concerned about getting at all the root causes of this disease (heredity and lifestyle choices explain only 50% of the causes of breast cancer) and ensuring primary prevention. Much of our work is centered around informing the population at large, and women in particular, on how to avoid risks associated with the disease, particularly environmental risks. BCAM operates a number of successful outreach programs in French and English that serve as sources of public education about exposure to toxic chemicals and the links to breast cancer. Through these programs we are able to fulfill our mission of awareness, advocacy and support. As well, BCAM sponsors a range of public events in and around Montreal, including workshops, lectures, panel discussions and awareness rallies. BCAM regularly partners with women's groups, universities and environmental organizations in Quebec and across Canada. We work with a gender analysis and within an anti-oppression framework.

### **Board of Directors**

#### **September 20, 2012 - September 19, 2013**

All members are community representatives.

President (resigned July 1, 2013)	Patricia Kearns
Vice-President - (interim president as of July 1,2013)	Nancy Guberman
Treasurer	Terrye Perlman
Secretary	Avis Antel
Director	Christine Kupka
Director	Lannie Mayo
Director	Carol Secter
Director	Deena Dlusy-Apel
Director	Deborah Ostrovsky
Director (non-voting) - as of May 2013	Deborah Bonney

### **Advisory Board**

Sharon Batt  
Dr. Irena Buka MB, ChB, F.R.C.P.(C)  
Dr. Karen Kedrowski  
Beverly Thorpe BA (Hon) B Sc  
Fiona Hanley RN, M Sc

### **Honorary Board Members**

Janine O'Leary Cobb M Sc  
Michele Landsberg, Order of Canada  
Francine Pelletier

### **Staff**

Executive Director	Rosanne Cohen
Administrator	Viorica Lorcencova
Youth Project Coordinator	Naiké Ledan
FemmeToxic Coordinator	Darshana Dhunnoo

### **Report from the Board**

This year the board composition underwent some changes with the arrival of Nancy Guberman and Deborah Bonney (non-voting director).

The board held 11 regular meetings, during the year. Mention should be made of the meticulous minutes taken by secretary Avis Antel, the firm control over our finances of treasurer Terrye Pearlman and chair Nancy Guberman's abilities to keep the meetings focused.

The board's major activities for 2012-2013 included strategic planning, reflections on our financial situation, actualizing the decision to move the office to a new location, revising our mission statement and the continued support to various working committees (Bulletin committee, Events committees, FemmeToxic, Workshop/Speakers' Bureau, Members' Workshop). We also accepted a proposal from Rosanne Cohen (current executive director) and Patricia Kearns (board president) to experiment job-sharing the executive director's position, each working 2 days a week on specific mandates. They will report to the board with an assessment of this way of working in December.

#### **Strategic planning**

It was felt by the board, that BCAM is at a crossroads in terms of its development and that it would be good to develop a strategic plan to orient its growth over the next three years. A committee thus met to develop a work plan which included organizing focus groups and individual interviews with BCAM members and partners to get their appreciation of BCAM and their perspective on its future. Based on these interviews and board discussions, the committee developed a strategic plan proposal which was presented to and adopted by the board and will be presented at the annual AGM to our members. We believe that this plan will help BCAM grow to become a major player within the environmental, women's and workers' (health and safety) movements, as well as an essential source for media and a recognized advocate on health and environment issues for all levels of government.

## **Financial situation**

BCAM is, and has been for some time, in a precarious financial situation. The board has had to adopt deficit budgets for the past two years and our accumulated surplus will soon be gone. In light of this situation, the board put new efforts into our solicitation campaign. Members who did not renew their membership were called to encourage them to do so, donors were also called if they had not yet sent in this year's contribution and a personalized solicitation letter was sent to all (Thank you to Rosanne for the excellent letter). These efforts paid off with an important increase in private donations. However, the amounts we raise in this way, while important, are far from sufficient to ensure our operational costs. While BCAM was successful in obtaining two major grants (one from Status of Women Canada to work on developing leadership among marginalized young women around issues related to body image, media messages, personal care products and health, and the other from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation for 2013-2014 to pilot a new way of giving our community presentations that will lead to collective actions), these monies must be spent on those specific projects and contribute very little to our on-going operational expenses (core staff, on-going activities and events, etc.). The only grant we have for core funding is the PSOC grant (Quebec government) to the amount of just over \$22,000 and a few grants of less than 5000\$ each.

The board is thus in reflection about how to increase core funding. Finding five donors who contribute \$10,000 each (or 10 donors at \$5000) would put us in a stable financial situation, or finding a family/private Foundation that would support us, are avenues that we are exploring. We are also planning to solicit members to become legacy donors (making BCAM one of the beneficiaries in their will).

## **Office move**

With the arrival of 2 new staff members to work on the Status of Women project and FemmeToxic and given the difficulty in accessing our office after 6 PM, it was decided to look for new space. Board members supported staff in the search for and visit of potential spaces. We are very pleased with our new location.

## **Mission statement**

Board member Deborah Ostrovsky led a reflection on our mission statement which led to its revision. The new statement is found on the first page of this report. You will also find concise statement on our web site.

## **On-going committees and activities**

Updates on the work of the various committees can be found elsewhere in this report, but the active participation from many board members should be noted. Mention should also be made of the decisions to: transform the members' annual workshop into a café-rencontre format, go virtual with our Bulletin and take on the dissemination of Pink Ribbon Inc. following important cutbacks at the Réseau Québécois d'action sur la santé des femmes (RQASF) who previously assumed this mandate.

## **Conclusion**

BCAM is currently in a situation of flux and opportunity as it becomes increasingly known and solicited throughout Quebec, Canada and elsewhere. To take advantage of the situation we have developed a strategic plan which we believe will help us move forward and meet the challenges involved in expanding into the Francophone milieu and reaching a broad range of women of all ages, ethnic origins and socio-economic status.

Finally, the board takes this opportunity to thank those members who will be leaving us: Terrye Perlman, Chris Kupka, Deborah Ostrovsky, and Lannie Mayo. Their inestimable contribution to BCAM has ensured our on-going vitality and success. We know we can still count on them as active and supportive members but their presence on the board will be missed.

## **Internal Community Life**

For the year 2012-2013 BCAM had 276 members (the number has not changed from last year).

This membership is quite diversified in their motivations for becoming members. Some join as a way of giving a financial contribution to a cause they believe in, while others are interested in becoming active in the life of the organization. All members are kept informed of BCAM's activities through our E-bulletins, newsletter, website, social media and our café-rencontres but other occasions are offered to members wishing to become more actively involved in our work. Several committees are composed of both board and regular members including the Newsletter committee, the Endocrine Disruptor Campaign committee, and the Events committee. Other members are part of our speakers' bureau doing presentations in the community. Still others come out for the annual Girl Guides walk in support of BCAM. A huge thank you to all these BCAM activists. With our strategic plan we hope to offer more opportunities for members to participate in working committees and BCAM activities and to increase and diversify our membership.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on September 20, 2012 and was attended by 14 members.

BCAM also has many volunteers who contribute in diverse ways to our activities. These volunteers can be as young as 14, showing the wide reach of the issues BCAM addresses. Volunteers offer a multitude of skills and expertise to BCAM including translation, legal advice, organizing fund raisers, blogging, organizing events, and clerical work. We have sixteen translators who ensure that all of our written documentation is presented in both official languages and we are truly indebted to them for helping us reach the francophone community. Other volunteers ensured the on-going activities of FemmeToxic over the year as we did not have a paid staff position to work with FemmeToxic. And volunteers helped us move and set up the office and did logistic work for our events.

Our sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

And, of course, board members offer often-incalculable hours of volunteer time to BCAM. While it is indeed often difficult to put a figure on the hours of support offered by our members and volunteers, we estimate that this year they gave 3130 hours of volunteer time to the organization.

## **Office news 2012 - 2013**

In late winter a decision was made by the BCAM board to move the BCAM office to larger premises. After being on Monkland Avenue in N.D.G for over a decade, it had become evident, particularly in light of the impending hiring of two new staff members, BCAM had out-grown the 300 sq.ft. office space. Rosanne Cohen, BCAM's E.D launched an extensive search for a larger rental space and with the help of several board members locked down a great location. A two year lease was signed for the 1020 sq.ft. space located at the historical RCA building at 1001 Lenoir in the Saint-Henri district of Montreal. The move took place mid-June 2013. The new office space was up and running in no time. A special thanks to the BCAM staff for making this transition happen without a hitch.

Viorica Lorcencova, BCAM's administrative assistant, continues to be a huge asset to the organization. In addition to her administrative duties Viorica has become a key person in the management of our communication platforms and plays a vital role in the organization of our various projects.

Two new staff members joined BCAM this year. Naïké Ledan is the project coordinator on BCAM's 3I project: Influence, Initiative, Impact, a project supporting marginalized young women's leadership development and advocacy capacities. The project is funded by Status of Women Canada. Darshana Dhunno has also been hired to work with Naïké on this leadership building initiative as well as being the new coordinator of BCAM's FemmeToxic project. We're delighted to welcome both these women to BCAM, their dynamism, creativity and youth are amazing assets for us.

BCAM continued to host interns this year. Chloe Sebag, a 2nd year McGill Social Work student joined our team to work on BCAM's FemmeToxic project from September to December.

As mentioned in the board's report, Rosanne Cohen (E.D.) and Trish Kearns (president) presented the board with a proposal to job share which was accepted. Each will now work 2 days/week and have divided the various mandates and dossiers of the executive director with Rosanne maintaining the title. This format will be experimented in the coming year until December 2013.

## Projects

**FemmeToxic**, BCAM's youth focused project continues to be a vital part of the organization. BCAM recognizes the urgency of spreading the message of breast cancer prevention to younger and younger women as the statistics of young women diagnosed with breast cancer grows higher and since we know that prevention should start as early as possible.

With BCAM's guidance, volunteers have grown and developed the FemmeToxic program making it a peer-led vehicle for reaching out to and mobilizing young women to become participative citizens. Youth engagement studies prove that youth-led, peer-learning models are key to effective engagement. *FemmeToxic's* major campaign is the issue of toxicants in cosmetics. This past year *FemmeToxic* hosted multiple activities; workshops, information sessions and DIY's (Do-it-yourself makeup workshops). *FemmeToxic* has attracted a number of volunteers ranging in ages from 12 - 25. Volunteers have been involved in blogging, outreach, communicating through social media and FemmeToxic workshops. In addition FemmeToxic volunteers played an important part in BCAM's October event, *Little Pink Lies*. *FemmeToxic* volunteers were excellent spokespeople at the event and participated in a number of press interviews.

In February 2013, BCAM received a grant in the amount of \$186,000.00 from Status of Women Canada to fund a 2 year project under the theme; *Setting the Stage for Girls and Young Women to succeed: Engaging girls and young women in leadership roles*. (It should be noted that this grant is for the specific project and that *FemmeToxic*, per se, has no funding). The project, **3I: Influence\*Initiative\*Impact** addresses the leadership component of *FemmeToxic*. By using the beauty industry as an entry point to explore barriers young women face to community and political leadership, this project offers an important vehicle to empower young women in their decision-making processes, in their ability to critically reflect on the messages they receive about their role in society, in their interaction with media and as consumers, and in their capacity to address barriers to leadership and find solutions for change and to move forward. By working with five young women's groups in and around Montreal, including racialized, economically marginalized, and immigrant youth, this girl-led action-oriented project aims to address the under-representation of girls and young women in community, political and civic action by engaging and supporting young girls initiatives on issues that matter to them. 3I will help promote young women's leadership, and provide a fresh and exciting opportunity for us to work with future health advocates.

In the fall of 2011, the Catherine Donnelly Foundation funded two very ambitious Canadian environmental enhancement initiatives, each with a specific, important goal. Environmental Defence

Canada was one of the recipients. The goal of their initiative: to identify and eliminate the top 5 hazardous indoor carcinogens by 2017. In May 2013, under the same Initiative, BCAM applied for and was awarded a grant of \$50,000.00 from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation to support a one year project ***Prevention and Action against Cancer and Toxicants (PACT)*** in partnership with Environmental Defence Canada (EDC). *PACT* is an education and mobilization project for Quebec community groups, with the goals of sensitizing them to the dangers of the five targeted toxins / carcinogens in consumer products and of encouraging them to fight for regulatory change and to pressure industries to phase-out or eliminate toxins. Our specific objectives are: to reach new groups of citizens, particularly marginalized groups, still unaware of the toxicants in consumer products; to sensitize them to the issues; to stimulate the emergence of creative and innovative actions aimed at regulatory or industry change and to find funding sources for sustainability and growth of the project beyond one year. In harmony with EDC's campaign, BCAM is developing a two-part training workshop; an advocacy toolkit available to registered users on our website and will be seeking new ways of raising funds for the continuation of the project. Building on our successful and innovative sensitization campaigns, *Becoming a Chemical Detective: Tips for a toxic free home* and *FemmeToxic*, BCAM's new two-part workshop will first raise awareness among citizens to the dangers of the five targeted toxins / carcinogens in consumer products, with a follow-up workshop that will focus on facilitating and empowering citizens to create ways of mobilizing to fight for regulatory change and to pressure industries to phase-out or eliminate the toxicants from their products.

At next year's AGM, these projects will be in full swing, so we will be able to report to you on their activities, actions and impact.

### **BCAM's Education and Sensitization initiatives**

BCAM's education and sensitization mandate has a wide scope. Here in detail are our major activities for this year:

#### **BCAM workshops:**

As part of our public educational mandate BCAM presents free volunteer-led workshops in English and in French on environmental health risks providing tips for the reduction of involuntary chemical exposures in the home and in personal care products. These workshops are very popular and reached 320 people in the past year. Through its extensive experience with these workshops, BCAM has noted that participants tend to focus on individual actions. This is because we spend some time providing this type of solution i.e. offering alternatives for healthier living. However, as an advocacy group working towards structural change, BCAM feels that there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on collective solutions aimed at influencing and pressuring decision makers in government and the private sector for stricter industry regulation and stronger government policy regarding toxic chemicals in consumer products. We will thus be working, in the coming year to reorient our presentations so that the majority of groups we present to will be motivated to undertake a collective action following the presentation.

Currently our three workshops are:

- Becoming a Chemical Detective; Tips for a Healthier Home
- FemmeToxic Workshop for 12 to 25 year olds
- Beast of Beauty: Toxic Ingredients in Cosmetics

List of organizations to which we presented:

- South Asian Women's Community Centre
- Rainbow natural foods, Ottawa, Ontario
- La maison verte

- High School of Montreal adult centre
- 2 different presentations at Prime Time, a division of the Cummings Centre
- Verdun High School
- Mères-EnfantsDeux-Montagnes
- Boys and Girls Club of LaSalle
- Centre d'éducation et d'action des femmes
- Beaconsfield Library
- L'R des centres de femmes du Québec
- Vanier CEGEP, Women Studies Class
- Y des Femmes
- West Island Women's Centre
- 2 held at 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy
- Madame Prend Congé, le centre de femmes de Pointe-Saint-Charles

### **The 9th annual Lanie Melamed Memorial Event:**

This year Breast Cancer Action Montreal teamed up with the Simone de Beauvoir Institute of Concordia University and Cinbiose (UQAM) to host a public lecture by **Adria Vasil**, best-selling author of the Ecoholic book series and Canada's acclaimed straight-shooting green living expert who regularly blogs on the female toxic body burden. Adria's lecture was called ***KILLER BEAUTY: The Toxic Seduction of Bodycare Marketing and the Hidden Poisons Lurking in Shampoo to Shoes***. Adria debunked claims of big brand marketing, busted lousy "natural" and "organic" labels, and talked about health threats hiding in the products we put on and in and around our homes. Adria also shared non-toxic alternatives that work and took questions from the audience. The event took place on March 13 at Victoria Hall in Westmount. The event was free with simultaneous French translation provided by professional translators who volunteer for BCAM and equipment was provided at no cost once again by LMB Interpretation Systems and Services. 83 people attended the event. Adria Vasil's books were on sale at the event, 100% of the cost covered by Marche Tau. \$990.00 was raised for BCAM through the sale of the books.

### ***Little Pink Lies:***

This past October, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, BCAM held our annual alternative to Pink public awareness campaign. This year our campaign was named *Little Pink Lies* referring to those half-truths BCAM believes proliferate particularly during the month of October. BCAM's goal was to critically analyze the messages promoted during October. BCAM feels the public is misled by what we called the "Little Pink Lies of Breast Cancer". In order to counter the five myths BCAM held a press event where a presentation of each lie was followed by correct information. Questions were taken from the audience and a lively discussion ensued. This was covered by some Anglophone media (see section on media for details). In addition to the "Lies" posted on the BCAM website and disseminated through social media in the month of October, BCAM provided members and press with a recommended reading list.

### **Café-rencontre Series:**

BCAM continued the series of casual drop-in evenings for members, friends and interested public. Our first in the series of cafés-rencontres for 2013 was held on April 25, with discussion focused on endocrine disrupting chemicals. BCAM Executive Director, Rosanne Cohen, and former BCAM President, Patricia Kearns, presented highlights from a meeting in Toronto called: Preventing Environmental and Occupational Endocrine Disrupting Chemical Exposures - A Strategic Collaboration, which they attended. Participants found the information about endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC's) revelatory and were surprised to learn that EDC's are in so many products, from our cosmetics and cleaners to canned foods and cars. They are linked to breast and prostate cancer, autism, thyroid problems, ADHD and more. The round-table conversation about what we as advocates can do encouraged BCAM members to take steps to further their knowledge on the subject and to begin to think of ways to enlighten others about the

risks of exposure to harmful unregulated chemicals. This café-rencontre led to the formation of a new committee made up of board and regular members, including some new to BCAM. This group will plan and carry-out a public awareness campaign on EDCs by way of social media.

The second Café-rencontre was held May 15 with a discussion on the issues around mammography and how to make sense of the confusing messages concerning this loaded subject. It was long believed that cancers caught "early" by mammography were less likely to be fatal. It is now known that some cancers are more aggressive than others, and that the time of diagnosis or the size of the tumor may have little to do with long-term prospects. In our assessment of the café-rencontre series, it was noted that we are not getting the level of attendance that we would like and so BCAM is re-thinking how we can better promote our café's to reach a larger audience.

## **Film Screenings:**

### ***Living Downstream***

*Living Downstream* is an eloquent feature-length documentary that charts the life and work of Sandra Steingraber: an American biologist, author, cancer survivor and cancer prevention advocate. The feature also documents the growing body of scientific evidence linking human health with the health of our environment.

A series of screening events made possible by a grant from the Ontario Arts Council's National and International Touring Program was kicked off with a special screening at New York City's iconic Lincoln Center on October 20, 2012 followed by screenings in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. The Montreal screening was presented by Breast Cancer Action Montreal. This was the film's first screening with French subtitles.

The film's writer and director, Chanda Chevannes, was in attendance for a Q&A discussion at the close of the Montreal screening. Sandra Steingraber was to join the post screening discussion by skype, however Sandra fell ill on the day of the screening.

The screening was attended by sixty-three enthusiastic people who participated in a lively Q & A.

### ***Pink Ribbons Inc***

BCAM has taken on the dissemination of the NFB documentary *Pink Ribbons Inc.* following cutbacks at the Réseau québécois d'action sur la santé des femmes (RQASF) who previously assumed this mandate. This year BCAM was invited to participate at the following screenings:

- ***La Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine (TCLCF)*** in celebration of International Woman's Day. BCAM former president Patricia Kearns co-animated a post screening discussion on pinkwashing with Lise Goulet from RQASF.
- ***Cataléthique***, an organization that provides a space for dissemination and exchange on best practices in corporate social responsibility and sustainable development invited BCAM who was represented by member Fiona Hanley who led a post screening discussion on how widespread pinkwashing is, why companies are engaging in it, and what consumers can do.
- ***Centre Etudiant Benoit Lacroix- FemmeToxic*** volunteers led a post screening discussion.

## **Social Media Campaign on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals**

As mentioned above, pursuant to BCAM's café-rencontre, a committee was formed in early June to design and implement a social media campaign with the goal to educate the public about EDC's: what they are, where they are found, what the health impacts are and what we can do about it. In part two of the campaign, the committee will propose a collective action to pressure government and manufactures to



eliminate these dangerous chemicals from everyday products. The planning for the campaign is well underway and will kick off in the fall of 2013.

### **Campaigns, Partnerships and Alliances**

In August 2012, BCAM participated in a social media campaign initiated by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. The result, Johnson & Johnson, makers of Aveeno, Neutrogena, ROC, Clean & Clear, Purpose and Johnson's Baby Shampoo agreed to phase out carcinogens including formaldehyde and 1,4 dioxane, and other toxic chemicals linked to birth defects, diabetes, hormone disruption and breast cancer by 2015. This followed Johnson & Johnson's announcement made in November 2011 that the company is globally reformulating its baby products to remove carcinogens 1,4dioxane and formaldehyde by the end of 2013. These changes were triggered by years of campaigning and dialogue by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and its allies including the release of two reports *Toxic Tub* and *Baby's Tub is Still Toxic*, which showed Johnson&Johnson baby products contain carcinogens.

In January 2013 BCAM also participated in another campaign initiated by our U.S allies, Campaign for Safe Cosmetics that told Dolce&Gabbana that their baby perfume idea stinks. Babies are especially susceptible to the dangers of toxic chemicals in fragrances and other personal care products. Early life exposure to toxic chemicals that mimic hormones can contribute to early puberty in girls and may have long term impacts that manifest later in life, including an increased risk of breast cancer and other cancers. The goal of the campaign was to get Dolce&Gabbana to reverse course and halt the development and sale of its baby perfume. This was met with limited success. Some large U.S retailers were convinced not to carry the perfume, however the campaign had huge press coverage in Canada as well and relayed important information to parents to know that ingredients in many fragrances can have serious health consequences for babies.

In the spring of 2012 BCAM formed a study group with Le Réseau Québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes (RQASF) and the Réseau des femmes en environnement (RQFE) in order to initiate collaborative actions on public awareness of environmental toxicants. The culmination of that work was a monthly publication called Les loupes actives which was designed with 3 main components; naming a specific toxicant, what products it's found in, its health risks and suggestions for individual and collective actions (e.g. signing a petition). The goal of L.L.A is for people to try to eliminate one toxicant per month. The first publication was launched in September 2013 and distributed through our collective networks. The toxicants covered to date are parabens, parfum, bisphenol A and phenylenediamine. To date over 500 people have signed up for Les loupes actives.

In February 2012, BCAM in partnership with the National Network on Environments and Women's Health (NNEWH), the Canadian Women's Health Network (CWHN) and the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) held a forum in Toronto; *Hormone Disruptors: Towards a New Policy Framework in Canada*. The forum brought together non-profits, scientific and environmental organizations and individuals from across Canada. The goal of the forum was to devise strategies for achieving changes to the policy frameworks that regulate exposures to chemical toxins and in particular endocrine disrupting chemicals. Recent research led by Dr James Brophy and Dr. Margaret Keith discovered a strong association between increased breast cancer risk and chemical exposures to workers in a number of areas; automotive plastics, metal fabrication, food canning, agriculture, bars and casinos. The findings underline the need for improved occupational health and safety controls and changes to chemicals management legislation in Canada. As a result of the forum BCAM has undertaken a public awareness campaign on endocrine disrupting chemicals launching September 2013.

Fertility is an under-researched area in cancer care, and there is limited data on how the oncology system deals with the fertility concerns of young adults with cancer. Many young cancer patients are not aware

of the impact of cancer treatment on their fertility. Samantha Yee, MSW, RSW, PhD Candidate of the University of Toronto undertook research on this subject hoping to use the findings from this study to do advocacy work to fill the gaps.

Samantha Yee asked BCAM to publicize her work in order to find female research participants for an anonymous e-survey on "Cancer, Fertility and Motherhood". BCAM sent information through our BCAM and FemmeToxic websites and social media. The University of Toronto's Research Ethics Board has approved the study (reference# 27879).

## **Communications**

### **E-Bulletins**

During this year BCAM was in touch with its members on a regular basis using our e-bulletins. Finding that right balance between staying in contact and over doing it by sending out multiple messages is always a concern. We think we struck the right balance: over the year we sent out **15** bulletins containing news on BCAM events - special film screenings, cafés-rencontres, the Lanie Melamed Memorial Event, Little Pink Lies event in October - the list goes on. (please see Education and Sensitization Section).

We also included news of free public events *not* hosted by BCAM that might interest our members, on World Cancer Day for example.

This year through our e-bulletin, we sent out 2 issues of *Les Loupes actives*, an initiative between Réseau québécois pour la santé des femmes (RQASF), BCAM and Réseau des femmes en environnement that aims to inform people about simple ways to make their homes and bodies less exposed to toxicants.

And finally, our e-bulletin provided us with an important way to thank our members for the donations they made throughout the year. Each e-bulletin allows members to go directly, through a "Support Us" link to our simple donation platform.

### **The Last Issue of BCAM's Paper Bulletin, Spring 2013**

BCAM's Board of Directors took the decision this year, like many other organizations, to transition from a paper newsletter to an electronic one. The advantages are: ability to be timelier, cost saving and reduction of paper use. We feel the urgency to improve our ability to communicate our message that breast cancer is tied to toxic chemicals in the environment as widely as possible, by the most efficient means available to us. The electronic version of the newsletter will enable our readers to share that message with a greater number of people than was ever possible with the print version. It expands our reach and our influence.

### **Facebook**

Facebook is one of the fastest growing on-line platforms that makes it simple for organizations to connect with like-minded people and groups in a very timely manner. When something about breast cancer hits the news, BCAM can post an article and comment in a matter of minutes. We can also invite people to our events this way.

As of June 30 2013 BCAM has 682 followers on Facebook and FemmeToxic has 895.

### **Twitter**

Twitter, like Facebook, is incredibly valuable as an inexpensive tool to follow news, have access to expertise from other groups and to pertinent articles and of course to create connections with individuals/organizations. It is more dialogue oriented than Facebook.

Twitter had already been up and running for both FT and BCAM since late March 2013 when new opportunities to Tweet with more regularity came up: a Board member who is a writer took on the task of keeping our Twitter account active! Since early April 2013, we have amassed well over 100 additional followers for both BCAM and FT (almost 30% increase in less than five months). Who are these dedicated new followers? Patients, media professionals, health care professionals, likeminded but much larger organizations.

We have had lots of constructive contact with groups, and significant knowledge-sharing with Breast Cancer Action Germany (BCAG) and BCA in the US, Breast Cancer UK, Scottish Cancer Network, etc. Through Twitter we are able to help groups like Breast Cancer Action who are sometimes retweeting our French texts, etc., just as we are serving Francophone populations by retweeting translated articles.

BCAM is yet to establish a way of evaluating whether Twitter translates into people becoming members, volunteers, or donors but we can see other benefits when a dedicated person actively follows news and contacts on Twitter.

### **Website**

Our website is our home base where the public can find out everything they need to know about us and the issues we work on. Over the last year we have had 17,907 visitors to the BCAM website (a 6 % increase from last year) and 17,012 visitors to the FemmeToxic website (around the same as the previous year). It is well known that the more you put into your website (change the content, update the blog) the more visits you receive. BCAM is in the process of trying to find new writers to provide more content on the issues that pertain to our mission to ensure that our website is relevant, timely and constantly renewed.

### **Future of Communications**

As part of BCAM's Strategic Plan for the next 3 years, we will form a Communications Committee charged with overseeing our communications plans for the future. Two members of the Board are professional communications experts and we look forward to some clear direction on how to improve our standing in the social media landscape.

### **Press**

BCAM remains the “go-to” organization for straight talk on breast cancer as we remain a stand-alone, alternative point of view. BCAM continued to have strong media coverage this year from the Anglophone press however this was not the case with the francophone press. We must continue to work diligently on this challenge and come up with different strategies to engage the francophone press in our work.

Thank-you to our media representatives Rosanne Cohen and Nancy Guberman.

The following is a list of press coverage we received this year:

- CJAD radio interview on Pinkwashing
- CJAD radio - Ric Peterson Show - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Global TV Nightly news and website article - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Global TV - Focus Montreal - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Montreal Gazette - Article - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Ottawa Citizen.com - Article - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Non Profit Quarterly - Little Pink Lies Campaign
- Montreal Gazette - Article - Financial Impact of breast cancer on patients
- CJAD Radio - Interview with Adria Vasil on Montreal lecture

- West island Suburban - Interview with Adria Vasil on toxic cosmetics
- CBC Radio - Daybreak - BCAM response to Angela Jolie's op ed on double mastectomy
- CBC TV News - BCAM response to Angela Jolie's op ed on double mastectomy
- CTV TV News and website article - BCAM response to Angela Jolie's op ed on double mastectomy

## **Fundraising**

BCAM's programs continue to expand in response to the growing requests from the public for education and resources on the links between environmental toxicants and breast cancer. Thanks to the ongoing support of BCAM's donors, BCAM is able to continue to provide information on primary prevention, community outreach initiatives and public education programs.

BCAM is enormously grateful to the individual donors, foundations and funding organizations for their support: Abe and Ruth Feigelson Foundation; the 103207 Canada Inc.; Big Smiles Daycare; Carver Institute Inc.; Charitable Impact Foundation; Cineffects Productions Inc.; Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors; Digor Inc.; H.W.Hollinger (Canada) Inc.; Ladies Auxiliary Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 94; Les Modes Lana Lee; The Québec Ministry of Health and Social Services; Rainbow Natural Foods Inc.; Syndicat des professionnelles en soins infirmiers et cardio-respiratoires du CUSM (SPSICR-CUSM); Telus; The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation; Ville de Montreal; employees of IBM Canada; Bell Canada; BMO Financial Group; BMO Nesbitt Burns and UPS through United Way's Campaign as well as donations from various Members of the National Assembly.

## **Perspectives**

### **Three Year Strategic Plan**

Our vision is that in three years, BCAM has become a major player in the women's, environmental, health & safety and governmental milieux, as well as being recognized as a leader on the issues of the environmental links to breast cancer by the public and the media. We will be known for our advocacy work and have reached a broad range of diversified women including minority women, unionized women and in particular Francophone women. We will have stable core funding to ensure a stable staff able to fulfill our mandate.

To get there, we propose.

- 1. That BCAM continue to broaden its scope to reach people and organizations throughout Quebec and to ensure a Canadian presence.**
- 2. That a major priority in the mandate of the ED and the board be to build networks and coalitions with groups from the following milieux:**
  - a. Women's movement
  - b. The environmental movement
  - c. The health & safety organizations
  - d. Policy milieu – all levels of government
- 3. That the board clarify the status of FemmeToxic (FT) within BCAM, notably concerning its governance.**
- 4. That the board review the BCAM mission statement and other defining documents.**

**5. That we develop a global communications strategy including our branding and our various communications tools (bulletin, newsletter, web, social media), as well as clarifying the relationship between BCAM's and FT's tools (ex. 1 or 2 websites, 1 or 2 FaceBook pages, pamphlets, etc.)**

**6. That we redefine our structure and functioning.**

**a) The board**

**i) The board's mandate is to:**

- develop an on-going analysis of the social-political climate in Quebec, Canada and internationally as it pertains to BCAM's mandate and work, be aware of public policy of interest to BCAM and determine the key issues that BCAM should be addressing
- assume part of the networking and promotional work of the organization
- develop policy (human resources, etc.)
- assume part of the organization's advocacy work
- ensure sustainability of the organization

**ii) Terms of board members**

**The committee proposes that board members be elected for a 3-year term renewable once.**

**iii) The board should have some permanent committees including:**

- human resources committee
- governance and nominations
- social-political analysis This committee could/should refer to the scientific advisory committee.

**b) the membership**

**Active members should be integrated into the organization through their participation on the following board-member working committees:**

- the endocrine disruptor campaign committee (or major campaigns committee)
- the membership and volunteer committee (organizes tri-annual open houses for new volunteers and members, ensures ways of keeping in touch with members and finding ways for them to participate in the life of the organization)
- events committee (organizes café-rencontres, conferences, etc.)
- popular education, action and sensitization committee (organizes our speaking engagements, trains speakers, develops our workshops)
- communications committee (ensures the content of our communication tools – notably the Newsletter)

**7. Ensure sustainable funding**

**We need to ensure an increase of a minimum of \$50,000 to our core funding to maintain the status quo and another \$20,000 to sustain FT as a viable project. We thus propose that a small committee be named to develop a feasible strategy.**

**8. To help determine priorities for BCAM's programs, projects and activities for the next three years, we propose the following orientations:**

- a. **That BCAM take a leading role in the campaign against endocrine disruptors and that this be an overriding issue for determining the choice of our various activities;**

- b. That the development of FemmeToxic remain a priority so that it become a viable and dynamic long-term component of BCAM;**
- c. That BCAM develop and put into practice a new model for its sensitization and education activities so that these activities lead to collective action on the part of the groups we reach. This model will be developed and piloted by the PACT project;**
- d. That BCAM renew with its historical orientation as an advocacy organization that intervenes on issues that touch on environment and health or the causes and treatment of breast cancer.**