

BREAST CANCER ACTION MONTREAL

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

For presentation at the

Annual General Meeting, September 22, 2010

The fiscal year starting July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2010 once again was exciting and productive. We continue to raise awareness about breast cancer and promote our mission to reach as many people as possible with our message. We want the government to take responsibility and reduce the toxins in our everyday lives and thus reduce the numbers of new breast cancer cases. And we are particularly inspired by the affirmation from the world as more and more people are actively attuned to the connection between environmental toxins and health issues.

Although Carol Sexter resigned as president last year, she tirelessly continued to fill our needs in every way possible and still does. However we were saved from exhaustion and extinction early in the New Year when Rosanne Cohen answered our prayers and stepped in as acting president. She has been amazing, offering us her youthful energy and enthusiasm. We are blessed.

Office news

The office responded to 35 email requests and 65 phone requests for information about breast cancer, a 50% decrease from the preceding year. And yet through our initiatives and outreach we have touched many more people than in the preceding year.

Terrye and Irv Perlman donated a new computer to replace a defective machine, and a new printer was also purchased this year.

Given the increasing activity in the office, it became necessary to expand the role of the office assistant. A new position was created and in November we hired Ania Nestorowicz to fill this new role. We have since increased her hours from 14 to 18 hours per week. Ania has been assuming some of Janice's administrative duties, allowing Janice more time for project management and development.

Website

Over the past couple of years, as BCAM's work and presence grew, the website we had started proved to be limited. Gerry Goodfriend redesigned the site to correct this shortcoming.

Although this addressed some of our web concerns, the structure that the site is built on is not interactive. We are currently getting estimates for converting to a 2.0 structure.

Annual Workshop for BCAM members and friends

'*Embracing the Mystery: Using Mind/Body Fitness Along the Path of Wellness*' was the theme of BCAM's annual Workshop for members and friends which was held at 5035 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West on October 31, 2009.

To set the theme of the program and in honour of long-time BCAM member and supporter, Judit Felligi, who had passed away recently, Board member Deena Dlusy-Apel read a poem, "Choices", written by Judit.

Chris Kupka introduced guest speaker Susan Tardif, Certified Mind/Body Specialist and former coordinator of the exercise program at Hope and Cope's Wellness Centre.

After explaining to the audience how she came to be involved with cancer patients, Susan encouraged the participants, who were seated in a circle, to define what "wellness" meant to them. As individuals in the group identified several concepts, Susan discussed the meaning and relevance of each. This led to an interesting exchange of ideas within the group.

Susan then described how functional training can be of value as part of an exercise routine. She demonstrated the six most common actions of the body, pointing out and naming the muscle groups involved. Then the audience practiced movements designed to strengthen those muscles. She assured us that we can all manage to "fit in" time for activity, if only for a few minutes at a time several times a day. The key is to be mindful of the movement, and not just hurry through an exercise in order to complete it.

The session concluded with a breathing exercise and a short meditation, a perfect ending to an interesting and enlightening morning.

Networking

Partnership with David Suzuki Foundation

In January the *David Suzuki Foundation* initiated a short-term partnership (January through August 2010) for the mutual promotion of our project *FemmeToxic* and their new initiative, a participatory inventory of cosmetic products. The common objectives of the two projects are to provide data to the government about the need for legislative change in cosmetic ingredient laws. *FemmeToxic* promoted participation in the inventory website through our workshops and the *Girls Action Foundation* network. DSF agreed to collate the information gathered through the inventory responses, write a report and distribute it to Federal MNA's. Our organisation will stay connected with the David Suzuki Foundation, following the information gathering period of the project, in order to develop collaborative actions based on the outcome of the inventory and the report.

Mutual links were established between our websites and our YouTube video was highlighted on the DSF website. The DSF inventory project developed a "shopping guide" resource which they provided to us for distribution through the *FemmeToxic* workshops and they, in turn, distributed the action postcard, developed by *FemmeToxic* at an environmental expo in Vancouver.

Jewish General Hospital

In May the Jewish General Hospital Cancer Prevention Centre sponsored BCAM's presentation on safe cosmetics, *The Beast of Beauty*. Nearly one hundred people attended the event held in the John Molson School of Business at Concordia.

Rhoda Lim, one of the coordinators for the CPC planned the event, with Carol Selter acting as BCAM's advisor.

The presentation opened with Rhoda and Reesa from the CPC giving an overview of the work done by their centre, and showed how its services and information can be accessed. Fiona Hanley and Nancy Guberman presented on behalf of BCAM. A piece on the dangers of tanning beds, prepared by Rhoda, was integrated into our regular presentation.

The JGH team did all the advertising and publicity for the event. In addition, they found merchants who provided a large assortment of door prizes, ranging from herbal teas to restaurant gift certificates and trendy denim items. Ms. Lim also put together a take-home educational package that included literature from the CPC, BCAM and the Canadian Cancer Society.

LMML April 2010

This year's guest speaker for the Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture was Dr. Ireana Buka, Director and co-founder of the Paediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) at the Misericordia Hospital, University of Alberta. Dr. Buka is a clinician with special interest in environmental influences on the health and development of the foetus and child in the context of clinically relevant disorders and determinants of health. Dr. Buka is currently serving on a consultative group for building capacity in health care professional training in paediatric environmental health with the World Health Organization and recently accepted a consultative position with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

Her presentation for the LMML was entitled, *Children and environmental exposures in Canada: do our kids need protection from carcinogens?* Unfortunately, attendance was down for the lecture this year with approximately 50 attendees - 16 being new participants to BCAM activities. Given that the topic related to childhood cancer, it was felt that the target audience, a new one to BCAM, may have had difficulty in attending an evening event. It was also decided that we will try a new venue for next year's lecture.

17 Organizations endorsed this event and Dr. Buka was interviewed by 8 different media groups. All publicity was handled in house this year.

Endorsers LMML

- Cancer Prevention Centre — JGH
- CKUT 90.3 FM
- Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal

- Coop La Maison Verte
- 514-489-8000
- LGBT Family Coalition
- NDG Community Council
- NDG Food Depot
- NOVA Montréal
- Organisation multiressources pour les personnes atteintes de cancer
- Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes
- Réseau québécois des femmes en environnement
- Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes
- Sierra Club, Section régionale du Québec
- West Island Women's Group
- Y des femmes

Press

BCAM solicited the press for interviews with our guest speaker Dr. Irena Buka for the LMML. Dr. Buka responded to interviews by CBC Radio, CKUT, Radio Canada International, UMontreal, Global TV - Focus Montreal and print articles appeared in the Gazette's newspaper and online blogs. We also issued a press release for a public lecture, by Karen Kedrowski, *“Assertive Advocates and Reluctant Champions: Comparing the Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer Activist Movements in the USA”*. As a result, Ms. Kedrowski, a visiting Fulbright scholar to McGill University was interviewed by Anne Dowson on CJAD.

BCAM continues to receive requests for press responses on issues relating to breast cancer and safe cosmetics. An important story in the press this year stemmed from the concerns regarding Quebec's pathology labs' high rates of inaccuracies. BCAM replied to the government response to these issues on CTV television, CBC radio and the Montreal Gazette, emphasizing the need for more research and stressing the importance of primary prevention of breast cancer. Another major issue was the report issued by our partners the Safe Cosmetics Campaign and Environmental Defence Canada on the hidden ingredients in fragrance, *Not so Sexy, The Health Risks of Secret Chemicals in Fragrance*. CTV National news covered the story including a perspective from BCAM which highlighted our youth project FemmeToxic. This was followed by stories on radio and in print with BCAM interviews included.

CJAD requested interviews twice during the year covering our perspective on pink ribbon marketing strategies, toxic chemicals and BCAM's perspective on treatment and prevention. Additional articles were written in various publications about toxins in cosmetics by La Pige, The Mark and Protegez-vous. Thanks to Rosanne Cohen, Nancy Guberman, Janice Melanson and Carol Sector who responded to these press requests.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

On June 10, BCAM held its first “Volunteer Appreciation Event,” to acknowledge the work of the 79 volunteers who have been instrumental in expanding BCAM’s impact over the past year. Provisional president Rosanne Cohen expressed the Board’s gratitude to the 29 volunteers who

were able to attend the dinner. After coffee and dessert the guests joined members of the public in the adjoining hall for the lecture, *“Assertive Advocates and Reluctant Champions: Comparing the Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer Activist Movements in the USA,”*. The lecture was given by Dr. Karen Kedrowski.

“Breast Cancer Prevention in Action” / Speakers’ Bureau

Coordinator Donnie Frank continued to book speakers for new engagements, using the model created several years ago for the project funded by Service Canada’s *New Horizons for Seniors* initiative.

Between July 1, ’09 and June 30, ’10 BCAM volunteers gave the presentation to 10 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 the government for better labelling and tighter regulation of products.

An important aspect of the presentation was the easy-to-read written information that accompanied the PowerPoint. The pamphlets, which were developed previously in collaboration with the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, were handed out at each presentation. Participants regularly asked to take extras for friends.

List of organizations to whom we presented :

Ericcson Wellness Program
Centre des Femmes de Montréal
Maison Parent-Roback
Bibliothèque Dollard des Ormaux
Centre des Femmes Dynamic
Vanier; I in class presentation
Vanier: in class presentation
Éco de Femmes de la Petite Patrie
Relief Society (JCLS -church group)

Safe Cosmetics Report

FemmeToxic has once again been the main focus of the Safe Cosmetics Campaign this year.

After much research and input from the 2009 summer intern employees, the website went live at the beginning of September 2009 and a launch party was held to kick it off. Over 50 students attended a fun event where we highlighted the information on the website, created an art piece with recycled makeup as the medium and enjoyed good food and music.

A Facebook page was created, and we started collecting fans and registered website users. We have seen a steady increase in both web-traffic and fans on the Facebook page. From February to April 2010 there were over 2016 visits to the website, an average of 21 visits per day- 1,469 of these being unique visitors. We saw a 150% increase in fans on Facebook in the first two weeks of March. This increased activity can be attributed to our movement from the virtual world

into the community. We now have 254 fans on our Facebook page, and it is steadily increasing; we get at least one new fan every day.

In December we were able to hire a full-time campaign assistant, Angela Day, through the YWCA Eco-Internship Program. Advisory committee members, Carol Sector and Deena Dlusy-Apel collaborated with Angela to develop content for an inter-active workshop to be presented in schools, day-camps and community groups. During the period March through May, a total of 19 presentations were given in schools and community groups; this exceeded our initial goal of 12 presentations for this time-frame. The following Schools and Community groups participated by hosting one or more presentations.

- Trafalgar High School
- Options II, High School
- MIND High School
- Verdun Girls Club
- YWCA
- Girls Action Foundation Zoom
- Mile End Programme

FemmeToxic has also organized 2 public outreach events called “Love Yourself”. The first event coincided with Valentine’s Day. This event summarized the FemmeToxic objectives and provided the teaching and materials for a ‘*do it yourself facial*’. In order to best facilitate this activity, enrolment was limited to 15 participants; the spaces were quickly filled through the Facebook event advertising. The feedback was very strong and encouraging for our first foray into the community. The second event was planned for Mother’s Day. A 5 à 7 was held in the office where members and guests enjoyed wine and cheese and made bath salts to give to their moms or keep for themselves. Participants also followed up on the campaign begun by our US partner the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, to pressure Procter and Gamble US division, to decrease the amount of 1,4 dioxane found in their Herbal Essences shampoos by sending individual letters to P&G. BCAM and 6 partner organizations* also sent a letter to the Canadian division requesting that they follow the American lead and eventually eliminate 1,4 dioxane from all their products.

* Signers for the P&G Canada Letter

- National Network on Environments and Women's Health
- Environmental Health Association of Québec (ASEQ-EHAQ)
- Environmental Defence
- Réseau des femmes en environnement
- AFEAS Femmes en Mouvement
- Canadian Nurses for Health and the Environment

An action postcard was developed as a hand-out that students and participants could send to the Minister of Health. 1000 cards were printed and to date, 800 have been distributed.

The National Campaign strategy for FemmeToxic, in cooperation with Girls Action Foundation, began in April with a presentation at their training event, Zoom. This will be followed by a

workshop at their National Retreat in October 2010 and will continue as part of their National Day of Action events in 2011. We are currently strategizing to determine how we will proceed with the National Campaign in cooperation with our partner Girls Action Foundation. We have also been contacted by various organizations across the country inquiring about how to join the campaign. We are developing plans to facilitate distance training and partnership agreements with these and other groups in major Canadian cities.

This March 2010, we recruited new volunteer interns for the project as 4 of our current interns are graduating and moving on. We had a very strong response to our advertising and interviewed 5 young women, 3 of whom will join the team. New interns and volunteers participated in a train-the-trainer session on June 9th to enable them to give the workshop presentations. We were also able to hire a fulltime student for the summer through a grant provided by Young Canada Works. Anne Thibault began work in mid-May and began offering a modified version of the school workshop presentation to summer day-camps. 6 of the 8 anticipated presentations were booked within 2 weeks. She will also begin the research to create a data-base of safer cosmetics, and will, with the help of the interns, initiate small scale actions like poster campaigns, street theatre and possibly a new video and film screenings. The summer students will also begin scheduling school workshops for the fall.

This year applications were sent for funding to 4 Foundations; New Horizons for Seniors, La Fondation Solstice, Foundation of Greater Montreal and the Kaufmann Family Foundation. Our requests were denied from New Horizons and the Kaufmann Family Foundation. Our request to the Foundation of Greater Montreal was selected to proceed to their second round of considerations. We are still waiting for the final response from FGM, and La Fondation Solstice made another \$5000 contribution. We also applied for salary subsidies from YWCA – Eco Internship, Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs – HRSCD. We were successful in our applications to the YWCA and YCW thereby enabling us to hire both Angela and Anne.

Visioning Meeting

In February 2010, BCAM board members and staff held a visioning meeting facilitated by Tana Paddock from the Centre for Community Organizations (COCO). One of BCAM's most important objectives was to choose three strategic directions for future programming.

The following directions were prioritized as an overarching focus for BCAM over the next several years;

1) Create more allied relationships with prostate cancer groups, in response to the scientific evidence that has been found linking prostate cancer to environmental toxins.

2) Optimize the focus on breast cancer during October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, to plan a month long media campaign to publicize BCAM's position on a number of issues namely; that research must move beyond its current emphasis on treatment to also embrace a serious search for the root causes of the disease and its prevention; that BCAM promotes and supports the adoption of the Precautionary Principle as a guideline for action. Stress BCAM's position on pink ribbon marketing campaigns.

3) Evaluate the current approach to the newsletter to better engage and attract members.

These three strategic directions are interconnected and can be integrated into one another in the action steps that are developed.

Fundraising

BCAM is enormously grateful to the individuals, groups, foundations and funding organizations for their ongoing support which enables BCAM to fulfill its mission, goals, and programs. Fundraising continues to be an ongoing challenge in light of slow economic growth. Despite the challenge, thanks to all those who made BCAM the recipient of their fundraising efforts and generous donations, we finished the year on a positive note. Thanks to the Beaconsfield Golf Club Ladies, the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 94), Creative Boost and the Greenfield Park Girl Guides. The foundations and funding organizations included the Jarislowsky Foundation, La Foundation Solstice and the J.W McConnell Family Foundation as well as donations from various Members of the National Assembly.

In August, Board Member Terrye Perlman hosted a Gold Party to raise funds for BCAM. With the rise in the price of gold, members and friends were invited to bring in unwanted, unused, or broken gold jewelry for professional individual appraisal. It was a fun, social evening for everyone and a very successful fundraising event for BCAM. BCAM would like to thank Berj and Siran Alexanian for providing their professional services without which the event could not take place.

BCAM has always encouraged our membership to go back into their communities to fundraise for the organization. BCAM was most fortunate to have an enormously dedicated long time member, Peggy Sakow, who initiated a fundraising concert for BCAM held on November 15th 2009 at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. Together with the Shaar's Director of Music, Stephen Glass, they developed and presented, "All the Things You Are", an evening designed to pay tribute in song and music to mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters, and to recognize the work of Breast Cancer Action Montreal. The concert showcased artists who volunteered their time to sing for our cause; Father Erik Oland, SJ, Cantor Gideon Y. Zelermyer, the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir, Patrick Olafson, John Tessier, and Berta and Luis Grinhauz. BCAM would like to express its gratitude to everyone involved in this wonderful event who gave so graciously of their time and talents to make the evening such a success. Our thanks also go to the Sisterhood of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim for sponsoring this event.

Throughout the year BCAM continued to develop an organizational structure for successful fundraising and establish key partnerships in support of the organization that will ensure growth and achieve future funding needs of the organization.

Networking 2009-2010

BCAM continued to develop and expand our networks with like-minded environmental and health organizations and jointly collaborated on various projects throughout the year.

BCAM was invited to sign on to various letters and petitions generated by other groups. We added our name to the following documents:

- Signed on to 1,4 dioxane petition in collaboration with Environmental Defence
- Signed on to a letter to the Minister of Environment, Jim Prentice, urging the government to ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs from May 09 - in collaboration with the Chemicals Management Plan Participants and the Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Signed the petition generated by Dalhousie University Novel Tech Ethics to address the issue of the recent appointment of a Pfizer executive to CIHR Governing Council
- Signed on to the request from Clean Production Action calling on European legislators to eliminate halogenated substances, that is, all chlorinated and brominated chemicals from electrical products

In April 2010, BCAM initiated sign-on letter to Procter and Gamble Canada requesting a meeting and the elimination of 1,4 dioxane from their products in follow up to the announcement by CSS that P&G US will decrease 1,4 dioxane in their Herbal Essences shampoo. The following 9 groups collaborated, but no response was ever received from Procter and Gamble.

- National Network on Environments and Women's Health
- Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec
- Environmental Health Association of Québec (ASEQ-EHAQ)
- Environmental Defence
- Canadian Women's Health Network
- Réseau des femmes en environnement
- AFEAS
- Canadian Nurses for Health and the Environment
- RQASF - RÉSEAU QUÉBÉCOIS D'ACTION POUR LA SANTÉ DES FEMMES - supported our P&G campaign in their bulletin to their vast network - they are extremely supportive and positive in their comments about our work and their desire to follow our actions and support them.

BCAM was approached by RFE (Réseau des femmes en environnement) to support their application for funding on researching endocrine disrupters and agreed to partner as a knowledge transfer participant.

We received invitations to participate in two roundtable discussions this year; one was attended by Rosanne Cohen at **McGill - Centre of Genomics and Policy** regarding genetic testing disclosure rights and Janice Melanson attended the **CWHN Roundtable in Ottawa - Women, Toxins and the Environment**.

Carol Sector continued to serve 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. This project wrapped up this spring with the publication of the pamphlets Breathing Health, Heart Health, Mental Health and Women's Everyday Environments: Ideas for protecting and promoting health, as well as a graphic booklet

on Environmental Health published in Creole, Bengali, Dari, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, and Urdu.

In an effort to collaborate with environmental and health NGO's in the Montreal region, BCAM with RFE initiated a full day meeting to explore future possibilities. The following groups participated:

- Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec (ASEQ-ASEHA)
- Action cancer du sein Montréal (ACSM-BCAM)
- Nature-Action Québec
- Regroupement des infirmiers et infirmières pour l'écoresponsabilité (RIIEQ)
- Fondation David Suzuki
- Réseau des femmes en environnement
- Santé-Canada (Programme de santé environnementale, bureau de Longueuil)
- UQAM – Service aux collectivités

The outcome of the day's events and discussions were very productive and it was agreed that we will continue to meet on a semi-annual basis. Jointly we agreed to create a networking tool for the distribution of event information, research and general information, to be shared and promoted within the group.

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. In the spring of 2010 BCAM supported and promoted the publication of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetic's video, *The Story of Cosmetics*, via our membership, our social networking and websites in addition to a screening event hosted in collaboration with the Y des Femmes.

Acknowledgements

The Board wishes to publicly acknowledge individuals for their outstanding contribution of time and talent: BCAM member Donnie Frank who continues to organize one of BCAM's most successful initiatives, The Speakers' Bureau; Gerry Goodfriend who skillfully maintained our website and designed our posters; Nancy Guberman, a BCAM spokesperson for media interviews and moderator for a number of BCAM's public events including the sixth annual Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture; Dr. Karen Kedrowski, a visiting Fulbright Chair who, on the invitation of BCAM, gave a brilliant public lecture on gender differences in cancer activism; Catherine Rideout who gave her time and expertise on fundraising concerns.

BCAM's board extends a grateful thank you to Honourary Board Member Janine O'Leary Cobb, who acted as editor of the BCAM Bulletin for the last 9 years; Susan Hertzberg, BCAM board member who has taken on the role of editor; Janice Melanson, an incredibly skilled and passionate staff member who continues to shepherd the development of FemmeToxic while ensuring the smooth operation of the organization; office assistant Ania Nestorowicz and Safe Cosmetic Campaign assistants Angela Day and Anne Thibault for their good work; the FemmeToxic student interns who made time for BCAM during their school year; and all the generous and talented volunteer translators who enabled us to produce information in both languages.

Annual General Meeting 2009

The AGM took place on September 29th. Maychai proposed the **slate for election to the Board of Directors**: Susan Hertzberg as vice-president, Terrye Perlman as treasurer, Avis Antel as secretary, Stephanie Najjar as youth representative, and Rose Alper, Maychai Brown, Rosanne Cohen, Deena Dlusy-Apel, Fiona Hanley, Chris Kupka, Terrye Perlman, and Carol Selter as Board members at large. Deena moved to accept the slate; Maureen Lafreniere seconded the motion and it was accepted.

Following the business portion of the meeting, Rose introduced Maureen Lafreniere who discussed her interview with Dr. Jack Siemiatycki, epidemiologist and the Guzzo Chair in Environment and Cancer at l'Universite de Montreal.

The evening concluded at 8:00.