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National Symposium on FGC

Paula Migliardi, Research & Evaluation Coordinator

With funding from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), and Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, the Sexuality Education Resource Centre held a two-day workshop in early May to address Female Genital Cutting (FGC). The goal of the "Symposium on Female Genital Cutting: Focus on Canadian Approaches to Addressing FGC" was to move forward the current knowledge base, and to create a network among researchers and caregivers working on the complex issues associated with FGC. Key representatives of community organizations, community members, practitioners, students and researchers from across Canada as well as from the USA and UK shared common interests and insights to better address the needs of Canadian women and families who experience FGC related issues. A total of 55 participants attended the two days and an additional 20 medical residents, physicians or medical personnel joined in for part of the workshop on clinical issues.

Continued on page 4

*Wishing you a
Safe and Happy
Holiday Season*

World AIDS Day

December 1

Held every year on December 1st since 1988, World AIDS Day is a date for people to think about and act upon the global HIV epidemic. HIV continues to have a devastating impact on millions of people around the world. Whilst this infection can be prevented, HIV transmission continues to occur. According to UN AIDS estimates, there are now 33.3 million people living with HIV, including 2.5 million children. During 2009 some 2.6 million people became newly infected with the virus and an estimated 1.8 million people died from AIDS. (UN AIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic)

Source: www.avert.org

A coalition of Winnipeg organizations will host an event marking World AIDS Day 2011 at the **West End Cultural Centre on December 1, 2011, 7:30pm-9:30pm**. The event, titled *Global Village, Local Voices*, will showcase the different ways individuals are responding to HIV both in Manitoba and across the globe. The evening will feature speakers at the forefront of responding to HIV, an artist's corner showcasing works created by Manitoban artists about HIV, musical entertainment, story tellers and the unveiling of the Manitoba HIV Memorial & Prevention quilt. For more information, contact Nine Circles Community Health Centre at 940-6000 or www.ninecircles.ca.

Other World AIDS Day related events include a pancake breakfast and vigil at the Broadway Neighbourhood Centre on the morning of December 1st as well as an announcement of the *Spread Awareness* video contest winners.



**PROMOTING SEXUAL HEALTH
THROUGH EDUCATION
WWW.SERC.MB.CA**

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The Board and staff of SERC wish to express their gratitude for the ongoing support of SERC's funders without whom the quality of and extent of our services and programs would not be possible.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
United Way of Winnipeg
Brandon and District United Way

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A United Way Funded Agency

Letters, articles and information for the newsletter are welcome.

We reserve the right to edit. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect SERC policy.

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If at any time you wish to be removed from our contact list, please call (204) 982-7800 or fax to (204) 982-7819. Please allow 15 business days to process your request.

Wzup in Brandon

- Kerri Law, Coordinator, SERC Brandon

SERC's administrative assistant Bev Kachur retired on October 21st. We wish Bev all the best during her retirement years. SERC would also like to thank Bev for her hard work in keeping the office well organized and very efficient.

Best wishes to Pam McKay in her new instructing position at Assiniboine Community College. Pam did an amazing job over the past year developing the GLBTQ Program.

We will miss both Pam and Bev very much!

We would like to thank Kaitlyn White for doing a great job covering Amanda Van Weert's maternity leave. We are very pleased to announce Kaitlyn will not be leaving SERC, but taking a new position as the administrative assistant, while she continues to work towards her Bachelor of Arts Degree.

We would like to welcome back Amanda Van Weert from maternity leave.

SERC is thrilled to have two new people join our Brandon team. Amanda Trelford will be providing

counselling for GLBT community members.

A warm welcome is extended to Tara Lambert who has been hired to fulfill the position of GLBTQ Program Facilitator. Tara's main focus over the next six months is to facilitate service provider trainings, many in partnership with Rainbow Resource Centre.

We had a very busy summer providing education and outreach services in Brandon and surrounding areas. Dauphin's Country Fest, Rocking the Fields of Minnedosa, Folk Festival, Edge fest, and many local and rural bars received a large supply of condoms to keep their audiences safer during the beautiful summer months.

SERC has been visible around town over the last few months staffing displays at the local high schools, National Family Day event, and health fairs.

Our annual open house on October 12th was a great success with 38 people attending, including Brandon Mayor Shari Decter Hirst.

GSA CONFERENCE DECEMBER 14TH IN WINNIPEG

Rainbow Resource Centre (RRC) and SERC are collaborating to provide a two-pronged conference December 14, 2011. RRC is hosting a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) conference for high school youth from across Manitoba, called *standOUT!* SERC is sponsoring *standUP!* a parallel Ally Training for educators. These opportunities are free and lunch and materials are provided. Contact Fiona Jackson for details at fionaj@rainbowresourcecentre.org or 284-2799.

“Our Families Can Talk About Anything” (OFTA)

Workshop Series for Newcomer Canadians

Coming again in 2012

Multicultural Youth Group –

10 weeks, beginning January 13, 2012, from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

This workshop series aim is to provide newcomer youth ages 14-21 with information and skills that will assist them in adapting to Canada, “juggling cultures”, dealing with sexuality issues, and that will help them better understand and communicate with parents.

Multicultural Couples Group –

5 weeks, beginning February 9, 2012 from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

These workshops focus on:

- changing roles and responsibilities of men and women
- respectful communication in the relationship
- how to deal with anger and handle conflict in better ways
- working together on relationship well-being (including the couple’s intimate relationship).

For more information, contact Carola at 982-7815 or Martha at 982-7810.

Sacred Lives Project Update

Cathy Denby, Coordinator, Aboriginal Community Initiatives

Sacred Lives, a project of SERC’s Aboriginal Community Initiatives-White Wolf Speaking, which was funded through Department of Canadian Heritage, has completed its funding requirements.

The Sacred Lives project is a community prevention peer based educational program that looks at reaching youth aged 11-17 on the issues of sexual exploitation. The program was developed by experiential child and youth care educators to deliver a cultural message specific to the dangers and issues involved in areas such as peer pressure, recruitment and grooming as they pertain to exploitation and sex trade.

The past year has consisted of the peer educators developing a play based on the teachings of the Miikiwaap and performing and presenting on the issues to various schools within Winnipeg and particularly the North End, who have larger populations of at-risk youth.

A DVD and facilitator’s guide for service providers is in the final stages of development and was developed through the input of the peer educators, youth council, Elder and cultural advisor of the Sacred Lives Project. The hope for this DVD is to provide educators and service providers a tool for the classroom that explores prevention of sexual exploitation.

Ongoing funding is currently being pursued by White Wolf Speaking and SERC in order to continue reaching children and youth at risk of exploitation.

For further information regarding this program please call Laverne Gervais, Sacred Lives Coordinator at 204-794-6478 or Cathy Denby, White Wolf Speaking Coordinator at 204-771-4314.

Meegwetch

News and Notes

Welcome to...

...**Melanie Saindon** Accountant, working in the Winnipeg office.

...**Tanya Smith**, Winnipeg Administrative Assistant

**Yes, I would like to
HELP SERC
continue to work for informed
choice and sexuality education**

NAME

ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

CITY

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

PHONE

FAX

HERE IS MY DONATION OF

\$200

\$100

\$50

Other

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cash

I have enclosed a cheque/money
order payable to SERC

DETACH AND MAIL TO:

Sexuality Education Resource Centre
Suite 200 - 226 Osborne Street North
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 1V4

"FGC Symposium" continued from page 1

The motivation behind this workshop was the limited access to Canadian publications and limited work that groups or individuals in various Canadian cities currently engage in research and/or practice on FGC. In the Symposium, we focused on recent and past community-based research projects, clinical approaches, policy development, and education and health promotion approaches to FGC. Participants learned about the policy and community work being done in the UK. Among the speakers were: Notisha Massaquoi from Women's Health in Women's Hand (Toronto), Dr. Gillian Einstein (University of Toronto), Dr. Lisa Avery (University of Manitoba), Dr. Bilkis Vissandjée (University of Montréal), Najla Barnawi (University of Alberta), Kowser Omer-Hashi, and Naana Otoo-Oyortey (FORWARD).

Participants realized the complexities of policy development, learned about the many reasons behind FGC and became aware of the health impacts of the practice on women. They also found valuable the different approaches used to work with communities. Many participants were also surprised to see how much more work needs to happen for the health care system to properly respond to women's health needs.

Despite the work that has been done across Canada, we found that gaps in knowledge remain in regards to the perinatal models of care for women with FGC, the specific understandings of sexual and reproductive issues among women with FGC throughout the lifespan, the benefits and consequences of the FGC legislation as it stands in Canada, the role of "harm reduction" in FGC care and consequent shifts in gender roles associated with being a woman at different crucial moments. These issues only represent a taste of the number of issues that were raised during the Symposium. A long list of topics for research, policy related issues and considerations for programs are included in a soon to be released report.

Studies conducted in different parts of Canada have consistently found that **over 85%** of parents agreed with the statement 'Sexual health education should be provided in the schools'.

Source: *Sexual Health Education in the Schools: Questions & Answers*, 3rd Edition, SIECCAN, 2010.