



## Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

### Montrealers making their Mark: 'Tamara'

#### *Domestic Abuse survivor helps Montrealer's find a path out of violence*

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
Montrealers making their Mark: 'Tamara'	1,3
Centre Update	2
Solidarité sans frontières dénonce la déportation	3,4
Transgender Woman Elected Mayor in India	4
Write a Love Letter to Feminism	4
Bill S-217	5
Carrot Coriander Recipe	5
Calendar	6

On the anniversary of the Polytechnique shooting, the discussion surrounding violence against women, and how far we've come in 25 years, is again growing. For many in Canada, the shooting was a wake up call — a reminder of just how vulnerable we all can be.

"Tamara," who was a little girl running from shelter to shelter in war-torn Sri Lanka in 1989, never needed such a reminder.

Today, she has fled a war zone and an abusive marriage, and is now helping other Sri Lankan women do the same in Montreal.

"I am so much happier," the 35-year-old said in Tamil, with the help of a translator.

We agreed to protect her identity because Tamara, as she chooses to call herself, is still being harassed by her ex-husband.

#### **Years of Suffering**

In 2004, she landed in Montreal, five-months pregnant and shocked to see her groom greet her at the airport with two boys.

"I was never told he was divorced," she said.

Tamara recalls her husband dragging her to their basement, and putting a loaf of bread through a grinder.

"He threatened to cut me into pieces if I ever spoke up," she said.

Tamara says the suffering went on for years. Her husband threw microwave-boiled milk at her face. He pulled down her skirt in front of other family members.

Tamara's friends told her to call police but could never pick up the phone.

"I was married with children," she said. "I was worried what would happen to me."

Tamara only spoke Tamil and depended on her husband, hoping he would change. She felt a duty to keep the family peace.

I can relate to Tamara, having heard the same thing in India. If there are problems, the wives should "adjust" because married women are more respected.

### **Qu',9en pensez-vous?**

#### **What do you think?**

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:

• [adisun3@gmail.com](mailto:adisun3@gmail.com)

• Écrivez - nous à

[adisun3@gmail.com](mailto:adisun3@gmail.com)

## CENTRE UPDATE



### Centre Hours

**Monday & Thursday 9am—9pm**  
**Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday– 9am-5pm**

The Centre is wheelchair accessible  
 Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

### Volunteers

If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Homa (Ext. 102) or [homa@bellnet.ca](mailto:homa@bellnet.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

### **South Asian Youth (SAY) Update**

Picture of youth at Ecole Secondaire Lucien Page, part of weekly Bollywood Sessions where they meet to choose songs, choreograph and dance together. These sessions hope to create a safe space where young women can take on initiative in supporting each other as they explore their dance-based creativity. We are grateful for all the ideas and energy they bring every week

-Farha and Naila



### **Congratulations!**

Indro Tupac Amaru Sharma Sarkar arrived at 12:48pm on January 17, 2015 (6lbs, 3oz) to make Kobir (Sarkar) and Amani (Sharma Sarkar) first-time parents. While, Mela Sarkar, SAWCC's public relations secretary welcomed her third grandchild. The picture was taken the night of the event at St.Mary's hospital.



### **Annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women**

Join SAWCC as we attend the annual memorial march to commemorate the lives of missing and murdered women and girls of all backgrounds. The march places a particular emphasis on Native women and girls as the violence affects their communities disproportionately. The march now in its 6th year, was founded in Vancouver in 1991 by a group of Native women and frontline workers in response to the negligent response by police in the case of the murder of a Coast Salsih woman. The walk will seek to raise awareness among the general population and the media about the deeply systemic nature of this gendered and racial violence.

When : Saturday February 14th, 3-6pm

Where: Cabot Square (Atwater and Sainte-Catherine)

### **Our Condolences**

We, Centre staff and EC members sending our deepest sympathies & prayers to Rashmini Segarajasinghe- Ernest & her daughters, Joyanthi & Jayshree on their loss of their father & grand father Hyacinth Macaulay Ernest. Late Mr. Hyacinth Macaulay Ernest was born on Aug. 17, 1924 and was called home on Nov.29<sup>th</sup> 2014 after a long and blessed life of love and service to others.

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SAWCC extends condolences to Janani and her family for the loss of their loved one. The center's book keeper and community worker Janani Sundaralingam's mother passed way on Monday January 26, 2015 after 74 years and a fight against some chronic diseases.

## Trusting police

Recent headlines have galvanized movements to denounce gender-based violence, from the online conversation surrounding #Beenrapedneverreported to a controversial Youtube video from Southern India that shows villagers, frustrated with police inaction, beating drivers who tried to rape a woman.

Tamara's faith in our justice system was based on her Sri Lankan experience, where she believed an abusive husband might face only a petty fine.

Translator and community worker Janani Sunthralingam says Sri Lankan authorities would torment civilians during the war and that's why trusting police here can be an issue.

"When I first saw police cars and sirens here, I would start shivering," said Suntharalingam.

## Helping herself and others

Tamara left the marriage in 2010, finally realizing nothing would change.

The South Asian Women's Community Centre helped her with shelter, counselling and language skills.

Today, the single mother is a CLSC home care worker. She has brought at least 50 people to SAWCC, five of whom were abused women.

Tamara shares her stories through Tamil poetry.

Twenty-five years after a gunman stormed into a Montreal university and killed 14 women, there's still work to be done to arm abuse victims with knowledge.

Tamara's doing her part.

"I tell our women to be strong and brave," she says.

## By Sudha Krishnan

CBC Montreal journalist Sudha Krishnan works on CBC News Late Night and fills in on the anchor desk. She is also a columnist as well.

Sudha has been a life member of SAWCC for many years. She first got involved through the summer day camp program as a counselor and then served on an executive council for a few years.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montrealers-making-their-mark-tamara-1.2856449>

## Solidarité sans frontières dénonce la déportation d'une famille Rom vers des violences néo-nazies en Hongrie aujourd'hui

Anasztazia Szilagyi, son mari Dezso Nemeth, et leurs deux enfants Mark (21 ans) et Mercedesz (10 ans) seront déporter ce soir vers l'Hongrie où ils font face à la violence néo-Nazi.

Ce matin, le juge Locke de la cour fédérale a refusé la demande de sursis et ce moins de 12 heures avant la déportation prévue.

Hier marquait le 70<sup>ième</sup> anniversaire de la libération de Auschwitz où environ 23 000 Roms ont été systématiquement massacrés. De 1939-1945, 500,000 Roms ont été assassinés en Europe. Cela s'est produit dans l'ombre des violences nazies à travers l'Europe. C'est cette même violence raciste, usant des mêmes symboles et du même langage qui est en hausse aujourd'hui en Hongrie. La famille Nemeth est venue au Canada en 2011, fuyant le racisme et la violence néo-Nazi envers les Roms en Hongrie qu'ils ont eux-même vécu.

Citant une étude d'Havard publiée l'année dernière, l'avocat de la famille Nemeth, Me Éric Taillefer, a décrit

la situation en Hongrie comme étant “pré-génocidaire”. Il a demandé au juge Locke d’arrêter leur déportation jusqu’à ce qu’ils puissent avoir accès à l’évaluation des risques avant renvoi. Puisque le gouvernement fédéral a placé la Hongrie sur sa liste des “pays sûrs”, la famille n’est pas éligible à l’évaluation des risques avant renvoi jusqu’à 2016. Comme Me Taillefer l’a mentionné, cela signifie que de nouvelles preuves à propos des risques que la famille encoure en Hongrie, qui n’étaient pas disponibles au moment où leur demande d’asile a été traitée, n’ont jamais été considérées.

Leur demande d’asile a été entendue en 2013 par Anna Brychcy, une commissaire avec un des plus bas taux d’acceptation dans la Commission. En 2013 Brychcy a rejeté tous les cas hongrois qu’elle a entendus. En refusant de donner l’asile à la famille Nemeth, Brychcy a déclaré que l’État hongrois protège les droits des Roms.

Le fait que la Hongrie ne protège pas ses citoyens et ses citoyennes roms a été reconnu par un autre commissaire, qui a entendu et accepté la demande d’asile du fils adulte et de la fille des Nemeth, après que la demande de leurs parents ait été rejetée.

En Hongrie, Anasztazia, Dezso, Mark et Mercedesz font face à la discrimination et à la violence à cause de leurs origines roms. En plus, la déportation va briser leur famille en deux, séparant Anastazia et Dezso de leurs deux enfants les plus âgés et de leurs petits-enfants.

**ARRÊTONS LES EXPULSIONS !  
ARRÊTONS LE RACISME CONTRE LES ROMS !**

MISE EN CONTEXTE: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/fr/anti-roma-discrimination-in-hungary>

DÉCLARATION D’ ANASTASZIA: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/fr/statement-by-anasztazia>

HISTORIQUE: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/fr/espanol-summary-of-the-nemeth-familys-struggle>

COUVERTURE MÉDIATIQUE: <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/fr/media-nemeth>

### **Transgender Woman Elected Mayor in India**

On Sunday, independent candidate Madhu Kinnar was elected mayor over Mahaveer Guruji of the popular Bharatiya Janata Party by more than 4,500 votes.

Nine months before, the Indian Supreme Court declared transgender people, known as hijras, as a legal third gender in a landmark ruling that legally recognized the identities of an estimated two million people in the nation. Since the ruling, all legal documents include a third category for transgender people, and the government has been required to construct separate public bathrooms and special hospital wards.



Kinnar, who comes from the “low caste” community Dalit, used to earn her money singing and dancing in trains. She says she was overwhelmed by the support she received from the public.

“I consider this win as love and blessings of people for me. I’ll put in my best efforts to accomplish their dreams,” Kinnar said.

<http://feminist.org/blog/index.php/2015/01/05/transgender-woman-elected-mayor-in-india/>

### **Write a Love Letter to Feminism**

As Valentine’s day approaches and the mood of love diffuses through your senses, why not express your love for feminism? Profess your feelings with poetry or write a letter directed towards feminism and what it has done for you. Submissions will be welcome anytime— there is no deadline. Your work could be included in the upcoming bulletins. E-mail [adisun3@gmail.com](mailto:adisun3@gmail.com) if you are interested.

## **Balanced Representation of Women and Men on Canadian Boards of Directors– Bill S-217**

Canadian women are actively involved in the corporate community as business owners, shareholders, executives, managers and employees, and they play an equally important role in the marketplace as consumers, they should have balanced representation on boards of directors.

According to the research organization Catalyst, women make up 47% of the Canadian labor force but only 14% of board seats among the 500 largest Canadian companies surveyed by the Financial Post. Women's representation on the boards of publicly traded companies still stands at only 10.3% (29.1% for Crown corporations). Close to one-third of the companies ranked in the Financial Post 500 had two or more women on their boards, but 41.9% still do not have any women board members. At this rate, only one out of five board seats will be held by women by 2020.

As many industrialized countries have discovered, legislation is needed to achieve balanced representation in the corporate world. Switzerland, Norway, Spain and France have passed laws requiring women's representation on

## Ingredients

boards to reach 40% within six years. According to Corporate Knights, only 9% of board seats in Norway were held by women in 2003. With the legislation in place, that percentage was already at 44% in 2008.

The Government of Quebec passed a law requiring Crown corporations to have 50% female representation on their boards of directors since 2011.

Given corporate inaction and the slow progress seen so far, the Parliament of Canada must also pass legislation to show that balanced representation on Canadian boards of directors is an essential part of today's economy and soci-

## Recipe

1 tbsp **lemon juice**  
 1/4 cup finely **chopped coriander (dhania)**  
 2 tsp **oil**  
 2 tsp finely **chopped garlic (lehsun)**  
 2 tsp finely **chopped green chillies**  
 1/4 cup finely **chopped onions**  
 1/4 cup finely **chopped cabbage**  
 1/4 cup finely **chopped carrots**  
 3 cups **basic vegetable stock**  
**salt** to taste  
 2 tsp **cornflour** dissolved in 2 tbsp **water**



## Method

1. Heat the oil in a deep non-stick pan, add the garlic and green chillies and sauté on a medium flame for a few seconds.
2. Add the onions and sauté on a medium flame for 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Add the cabbage and carrots and sauté on a medium flame for 1 minute.
4. Add the basic vegetable stock, lemon juice, salt and cornflour-water mixture, mix well and cook on a medium flame for 2 to 3 minutes, while stirring occasionally. Add the coriander and mix well.
5. Serve immediately.

**Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

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34 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2015

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)

Feb 3– Staff meeting	3 Fév– La réunion du personnel
Feb 10– Session on STM (10:30am–12:00 pm)	10 Fév — Session d'information Sur le STM (10h30—12h)
Feb 17– Information session on Family Budget (10:30am– 12:00 pm)	17 Fév - Session d'information sur le budget des familles (10:30am–12:00 pm)
Feb 19– Executive council meeting (6pm-)	19 Fév —Réunion du conseil administratif (18h-)
Feb 24–Cooking class (10:30am–12:00 pm)	24 Fév — Session d'information sur les produits toxiques dans les cosmétiques (10h30—12h)

# February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 	18	19 	20	21
22	23	24 	25	26	27	28