

In Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] territory



Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

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## Qu'en 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:

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

• Écrivez - nous à

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

## JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES 2017

**CÉLÉBRONS LA RÉSISTANCE DES FEMMES**  
pour une juste paix et l'égalité!

celebrate women's resistance for peace with justice & equality!



Rejoignez-vous à nos deux événements :

**CONFÉRENCE ET PRÉSENTATIONS CULTURELLES**  
Dimanche le 5 mars, 14h-17h  
Lieu : Maison St. Columba, 2365 rue Grand Trunk  
Métro Charlevoix  
Gardiennage sur place

**MANIFESTATION**  
Mercredi 8 mars  
Rassemblement à 17 h  
Lieu : Place du 6 décembre  
(coin Reine Marie et Côte-des-neiges)  
Métro Côte-des-neiges

2 EVENTS :

**CONFERENCE & CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS**  
Sunday 5th March at 2pm  
Location : Maison St. Columba, 2365 rue Grand Trunk  
Métro Charlevoix  
Child care available

**DEMONSTRATION**  
Wednesday 8th March  
Assemblée 5pm  
Location : Place du 6 décembre  
(coin Reine Marie & Côte-des-neiges)  
Métro Côte-des-neiges



## CENTRE UPDATE



### Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

**Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm**

**Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday/mardi, mercredi & vendredi— 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 Juvaria (Ext. 104 or [juvaria@bellnet.ca](mailto:juvaria@bellnet.ca)) to coordinate a meeting!

**Next Executive Council Meeting: Tuesday, March 21st, 2017 at 6pm.** All are welcome.

## Executive Council Meeting Highlights Meeting of February 20th, 2017

- ◆ Updates about Youth Outreach Program in schools as it continues. Having more time provides better opportunities to communicate with youth and will be working on an anti-Islamophobia initiative. We will hear more as it progresses.
- ◆ Indu attended, as the SAWCC representative, the press conference organized by the Coalition pour l'égalité et contre le racismisme systémique (Coalition for equality and against systemic racism). The event was with good attendance and received media coverage.
- ◆ FFQ board elections will be coming up and encouraged someone on the EC to come forward for this.

### **Photo: press conference by the Coalition for equality and against systemic racism**

(Photo: *Journal Métro* le 8 février 2017)

Photo taken at the press conference organized by the Coalition for equality and against systemic racism, calling on the Quebec government to set up a Commission on Systemic Racism.



### **SAWCC Bulletin -- submission guidelines:**

SAWCC members are encouraged to send submissions to the Bulletin, to share items of interest with other members. Send submissions to: [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

If using the post send to: SAWCC Bulletin, 1035 Rachel est, Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2J3

Submissions should reach by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Submissions may be original work or reprints (with permission) and can include --

art, reports, photos, information, opinion pieces, short fiction, poetry, announcements, recipes, etc.

Publication criteria are guided by SAWCC's commitment to not negatively discriminate on the basis of physical and mental ability, religion, colour, nationality, age, sexual orientation and identity, caste, and class. Publication is further guided by the feminist ethos of sisterhood, and principles of intersectionality\*, equality, equity, and transparency. As well, material that may compromise confidentiality of individuals without their consent will not be published.

SAWCC reserves the right to select, reject or edit submissions. When authorship identified, items reflect the views of the authors.

\*Intersectionality -- the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

*Celebrating....  
the Elegance of  
Womanhood!*

*Happy Woman's Day!!*

## Letter to the Editor

I just have to say how wonderful the newsletter is, always but especially thus month. The words of solidarity after the massacre from all of SAWCC as well as those Farah spoke at the vigil, are very special and important and thoughtful. Thanks.

Also exceptional was the piece on Alzheimer disease. I began reading it with some trepidation, given how often articles about this condition go astray, but this one was just right -- contents, issues addressed and tone. BRAVAS.

And of course, much else kept me reading and remembering how much of an honor it is for me to be a SAWCC member; I thank you for having me with you.

All my very best wishes, with extra wishes for true justice, peace, and inclusiveness.

- Abby Lippman

## Letter to the Finance Minister



### TRÉSOR COMMUNAUTAIRE



MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

SI VOUS VOULEZ FAIRE MIEUX, ÉCOU-  
TEZ-NOUS!

L'AUSTÉRITÉ SIGNIFIE UN ÉCART PLUS  
LARGE ENTRE LES PAUVRES ET LES  
RICHES, C'EST-À-DIRE POUSSANT LES  
PAUVRES EN DESSOUS DE LA PAUVRE-  
TÉ, IL EST DONC SAGE D'INVESTIR AU-  
JOURD'HUI ET DE RÉCOLTER LES  
FRUITS DEMAIN. NOUS NE VOULONS  
PAS D'AUSTÉRITÉ, NOUS VOULONS  
PROSPÉRITÉ ET DIGNITÉ.

CESSER DE PRIVATISER LE SYSTÈME  
DE SANTÉ, FOURNIR UN LOGEMENT AC-  
CESSIBLE À TOUS ET ARRÊTER LES  
COMPRESSIONS BUDGÉTAIRES POUR  
LES CENTRES DE FEMMES.



## CELEBRATE WOMEN'S RESISTANCE for PEACE with JUSTICE & EQUALITY



*"I define peace not as the absence of war, but as the presence of justice and the absence of fear." Ursula Franklin, (1921-2016)*

On International Women's Day 2017, the 8th March Committee of Women of Diverse Origins invites all women and allies to celebrate women's resistance to forces that violate their lives and those of their families and communities, their lands, rights and freedoms. Historically, women have been at the forefront in movements and revolutions for positive change – challenging patriarchy, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

Among the many women here and around the world resisting inequality and war are Kurdish women who have been courageously struggling for self-determination and against imperialism. In recent years they have been a formidable force fighting ISIS and their struggles have assured them equal standing in the communities. And women in Palestine continue to bear the brunt of the burden of the longest military occupation in history, where surviving each day is an act of resistance against a Zionist apartheid state.

Peace can only come with justice and equality. In Québec and Canada we have been stunned by the mass killing of Muslims in Québec City. But we are not surprised. To score cheap political points, provincial and federal governments, politicians and media have been fanning the flames of xenophobia and Islamophobia for a long time, playing a dangerous game on the bodies of minority women, and in particular Muslim women. And unfortunately racism continues to be alive and well against other marginalized communities, as witnessed by revelations about sexual abuse of Indigenous women in Val d'Or. Or the question of a young black child in Montreal, echoing what he heard in the schoolyard, and asking his father, "Are black people dirty?"

With Trump in the White House, these times are fraught more than ever with insecurities, especially for people already vulnerable and displaced by economic and political marginalization and war – within countries and as refugees. Hard-won gains by the women's movement are under attack -- from reproductive rights to pay equity. But at the same time the blinders are off and neoliberalism and blatant corporate rule over domestic affairs and in support of wars of aggression are clearer than ever before. Projects that displace people, destroy the land and poison the water, such as pipelines and large-scale mining are facing staunch opposition by peoples' movements where women are on the frontlines of resistance in Ecuador, North Dakota (USA), Barrière Lake (Québec) and elsewhere. People are taking to the streets in huge numbers, with imaginative and creative acts of defiance, disruption and clarity of rhetoric and purpose. Women demonstrated not just in Washington but around the world making it clear, as women in apartheid South Africa declared in the 1980s: "Now you have touched the women you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

The Trudeau government's pro-pipeline reversal, backing of on-going settler-colonialism and occupation by Israel, and support for weapons deals with Saudi Arabia has unleashed opposition here in Canada as its election promises are scrapped one after the other. In Québec and Canada we need to assert what we have known for a long time, that for gender equality to exist and thrive we need fair wages (\$15 an hour minimum wage), affordable housing, universal accessible daycare, fair migration and refugee policies, and an end to violence against women.

We live in dark times, but are inspired by and celebrate the resistance of women who have gone before. We celebrate the Russian women who 100 years ago during World War I, demonstrated for "Peace and Bread", a significant precursor to the Bolshevik Revolution. We remember the women of North Bengal (India) who 50 years ago rose up in the Naxalbari peasant uprising against exploitative and oppressive feudal land relations, inspiring successive generations, till today, particularly Dalits and tribals (Indigenous), fighting caste and class oppression. We remember the sisters we lost in the past year - Diana Yaros, Ramani Balendra, Nathalie Moreau, and those further away who were felled by assassins' bullets in recent years - Berta Caceres of Honduras, Kurdish women shot dead in Paris -- Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Dogan, and Leyla Saylemez -- and many others. Repressive forces thought they would bury these women, but didn't realize they were sowing seeds. Their actions and sacrifices have sparked positive change for themselves and their communities. We celebrate them and we celebrate our on-going resistance for peace with justice and equality! Join us !

### Conference and cultural presentations

Sunday, March 5, 2-5 pm, St. Columba House  
2366 Grand Trunk (Pt Saint Charles) Métro Charlevoix  
Childcare provided

See website : [wdofdo.wordpress.com](http://wdofdo.wordpress.com) and Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wdo.fdo/>

### Demonstration

Wednesday, March 8 - Assemble 5pm  
Place December 6th  
(corner Queen Mary & Côte-des-neiges  
Métro Côte-des-neiges)

## CÉLÉBRONS LA RÉSISTANCE DES FEMMES POUR UNE JUSTE PAIX ET L'ÉGALITÉ



*"Je définis la paix non comme l'absence de guerre, mais comme la présence de la justice et l'absence de peur." Ursula Franklin, (1921-2016)*

À l'occasion de la Journée internationale des femmes de 2017, le Comité pour le 8 mars des femmes de diverses origines invite toutes les femmes et leurs allié.e.s à célébrer la résistance des femmes face aux différentes forces qui violent leurs vies et celles de leurs familles et de leurs communautés, leurs terres, leurs droits et libertés.

Historiquement, les femmes ont été à l'avant-garde des mouvements et des révolutions défiant le patriarcat, le colonialisme, l'impérialisme et le capitalisme.

Parmi les nombreuses femmes d'ici et ailleurs dans le monde qui résistent à l'inégalité et à la guerre, saluons la détermination des femmes kurdes luttant courageusement contre l'impérialisme pour leur autodétermination. Ces dernières années, elles ont été une formidable force de combat contre Daesh, les mettant sur un pied d'égalité dans leurs communautés. Quant aux femmes de la Palestine, les plus touchées par l'occupation militaire la plus longue de l'histoire, elles se tiennent toujours debout, défiant et résistant l'apartheid meurtrier de l'État sioniste au quotidien.

Seules la justice et l'égalité peuvent être garantes de la paix. Au Québec et au Canada, nous avons été stupéfaites par la tuerie sauvage des musulmans à Québec. Mais nous n'en sommes pas surprises. Depuis un bon bout de temps, pour de sordides raisons de politiques électoralistes, les gouvernements provinciaux et fédéraux, les politiciens et les médias attisent les flammes de la xénophobie et de l'islamophobie jouant dangereusement avec les corps des femmes des communautés ethniques minoritaires et en particulier des femmes musulmanes. Si ces actes extrêmes interpellent, malheureusement le racisme continue d'être bien vivant à l'égard de bien d'autres communautés marginalisées, comme en témoignent les révélations sur les abus sexuels perpétrés contre les femmes autochtones à Val d'Or et ce, impunément. Ou encore, à travers la question d'un jeune enfant noir à Montréal faisant écho de ce qu'il entendait sur la cour d'école, et demandant à son père: «Les Noirs sont-ils sales?

Avec Trump à la Maison Blanche, on rentre dans une période plus que jamais non sécuritaire, en particulier pour les personnes déjà vulnérables et déplacées à cause de la paupérisation programmée par la guerre et la marginalisation tant économique que politique de leur territoire. Les gains durement arrachés par le mouvement des femmes sont attaqués – allant des droits en matière de procréation jusqu'à l'équité salariale. Mais en même temps, sur un registre plus positif, les oeillères sont en train de tomber : le rôle du néolibéralisme et des grandes entreprises, qui supportent et endossent les guerres d'agression, sur les politiques intérieures est plus clair que jamais. Les projets destructeurs délogeant des pans de population, détruisant les terres et empoisonnant les eaux - comme les oléoducs et l'exploitation féroce des mines à grande échelle - font face à une opposition acharnée des mouvements populaires où les femmes sont en première ligne, notamment en Équateur, au Dakota du Nord (USA), au Lac Barrière (Québec). Les gens descendent en masse dans les rues, posant des actes de résistance avec un discours et des objectifs clairs. Les femmes ont manifesté non seulement à Washington, mais partout dans le monde. Comme disaient les femmes sous le régime d'apartheid sud-africain dans les années 1980: «Maintenant vous avez touché les femmes, vous avez touché une roche, vous avez délogé un rocher, et vous serez écrasé »

Les volte-face du gouvernement Trudeau sur les pipelines, son soutien continu à l'État sioniste d'Israël et aux accords d'armement avec l'Arabie saoudite ont déclenché l'opposition ici au Canada devant l'abandon de ses promesses électorales l'une après l'autre. Au Québec et au Canada, nous devons réaffirmer ce que nous savons depuis longtemps : pour réaliser l'égalité des sexes, nous avons besoin de salaires équitables (\$15 salaire minimum), des logements abordables, un réseau de garderie universel et accessible, des politiques d'immigration juste et une fin aux violences faites aux femmes !

Nous vivons des temps sombres, mais nous sommes inspirées par les femmes qui nous ont précédées et célébrons leur résistance. Nous célébrons les femmes russes qui, il y a 100 ans, au cours de la Première Guerre mondiale, ont manifesté pour «la paix et du pain», ouvrant la voie à la révolution bolchevique. Nous nous souvenons des femmes du nord du Bengale (Inde) qui, il y a 50 ans, ont participé au soulèvement paysan de Naxalbari contre les relations féodales exploitantes et oppressives, inspirant les générations successives jusqu'à nos jours, en particulier les Dalits et les tribus indigènes.

Nous nous rappelons des soeurs que nous avons perdues au cours de l'année écoulée - Diana Yaros, Ramani Balendra, Nathalie

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Moreau, et celles plus éloignées qui ont été abattues par des balles d'assassins ces dernières années - Berta Caceres du Honduras, les femmes kurdes abattues à Paris - Sakine Cansiz , Fidan Dogan, et Leyla Saylemez - et tant d'autres. Les forces répressives pensaient qu'elles enterraient ces femmes, mais ne se rendaient pas compte qu'elles semaient les graines de la relève. Leurs actions et leurs sacrifices ont suscité des changements positifs pour elles-mêmes et leurs communautés. Nous les célébrons et nous célébrons notre résistance pour une juste paix et l'égalité!

Joignez-vous à nos deux événements :

#### **Conférence et présentations culturelles**

Dimanche le 5 mars, 14h-17h

Lieu : Maison St. Columba, 2365 rue Grand Trunk

Métro Charlevoix

Garderie sur place

#### **Manifestation**

Mercredi le 8 mars

Rassemblement à 17 h

Lieu : Place du 6 décembre

(coin Reine Marie et Côte-des-neiges)

## **Eva Ottawa quitte le Conseil du statut de la femme après 4 mois**

ici.radio-canada.ca, 31 janvier 2017

(Photo : Radio-Canada/Olivier Lalonde)

*La première femme autochtone à présider le Conseil du statut de la femme (CSF) du Québec, Eva Ottawa, a remis sa démission seulement quatre mois après avoir été nommée par le gouvernement Couillard. Elle sera remplacée par Louise Cordeau.*

Un texte de **Mathieu Dion**, correspondant parlementaire à Québec



Contactée par Radio-Canada, Eva Ottawa a refusé de commenter son départ, se limitant à invoquer des « raisons personnelles ». Toutefois, selon nos informations, la relation avec le conseil d'administration du CSF composé de dix membres, en plus de sa présidente, était très difficile dans certains dossiers. Les membres sont notamment issues des milieux institutionnel, patronal et syndical. Des tensions pourraient donc être à l'origine de ce départ précipité. De plus, Mme Ottawa occupait moins l'espace public que sa prédécesseure Julie Miville-Dechéne. Or, les sorties publiques représentent une grande part du travail de la présidente du CSF.

#### **Première Autochtone à présider le CSF**

La nomination d'Eva Ottawa en septembre avait été grandement saluée, puisqu'il s'agissait « de la première femme autochtone de l'histoire du Québec à diriger un organisme consultatif relevant du gouvernement », avait alors rappelé la ministre de la Condition féminine, Lise Thériault. Le Conseil a pour mandat de promouvoir et de défendre les droits et les intérêts des Québécoises. Ex-grande chef de la Nation atikamekw, Mme Ottawa avait été précédemment membre de la Commission des droits de la personne.

#### **Louise Cordeau, nouvelle présidente**

Le Conseil des ministres a annoncé en fin d'après-midi le nom de celle qui prendra la tête du Conseil du statut de la femme, l'avocate Louise Cordeau. Mme Cordeau a travaillé en tant que directrice de cabinet du président de l'Assemblée nationale dans les années 90, après quoi elle a occupé la même fonction au sein du ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes jusqu'en 2003. Elle a ensuite œuvré dans les médias, d'abord en tant que directrice à Radio-Canada, puis éditrice et chef de la direction au *Journal de Québec*. Louise Cordeau est à l'origine de « Québec ville en rose ». Pendant l'événement qui en était à sa sixième édition en octobre, des dizaines d'édifices et sites touristiques sont illuminés en rose en soutien aux femmes atteintes du cancer du sein. Mme Cordeau entrera en fonction le 6 février.

#### **Eva Ottawa leaves the Council on the Status of Women after 4 months**

ici.radio-canada.ca, January 31, 2017

*The first Aboriginal woman to chair the Quebec Council on the Status of Women (CSW), Eva Ottawa, resigned only four months after being nominated by the Couillard government. She will be replaced by Louise Cordeau.*

A text by Mathieu Dion, parliamentary correspondent in Quebec City

Contacted by Radio-Canada, Eva Ottawa refused to comment on her departure, limiting herself to invoking "personal reasons". However, according to our information, the relationship with the board of directors of the CSW of ten members, in addition to its president, was very difficult in some cases. Members come from the institutional, management and labor circles. Tensions could therefore be at the origin of this precipitate departure. In addition, Ms. Ottawa occupied less public space than her predecessor Julie Miville-Dechéne. Public outings represent a large part of the work of the President of the CSF.

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### First Indigenous Person to Chair CSW

The appointment of Eva Ottawa in September was highly praised, as it was "the first Aboriginal woman in Quebec's history to run a government-sponsored advisory body," recalled the Minister of Status of Women, Lise Thériault. The Council's mandate is to promote and defend the rights and interests of Quebecers.

Former Chief of the Atikamekw Nation, Ms. Ottawa was previously a member of the Human Rights Commission.

### Louise Cordeau, new president

The Cabinet announced late in the afternoon the name of the woman who will take the head of the Council for the Status of Women, lawyer Louise Cordeau. Ms. Cordeau worked as the Cabinet Director of the President of the National Assembly in the 1990s, after which she served in the Department of Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs until 2003. She then worked in the media, first as a director at Radio-Canada, then as editor and chief executive officer at the Journal de Québec.

Louise Cordeau is the originator of "Québec ville en rose". During its sixth edition in October, dozens of buildings and tourist sites were illuminated in pink in support of women with breast cancer.

Ms. Cordeau will take office on February 6.

## Community Alert: Montreal is NOT a Sanctuary City

Montreal, March 1, 2017 – Solidarity Across Borders, a migrant justice organization based in Montreal, active since 2004, is issuing this Community Advisory in order to correct the misleading public information concerning the passing of Montreal's symbolic "Sanctuary City" Declaration on February 20, 2017. We encourage supporters and allies to share this advisory widely.

In the past several days, since Montreal adopted the "Declaration Designating Montreal a Sanctuary City", we have been contacted by many non-status migrants and their supporters. Some individuals believe they will now be safe on the streets of Montreal or even that they can present themselves to immigration authorities to regularize their status, while others are hopeful to be able to access essential services such as health care, education, work and housing. In general, the declaration has raised questions, hopes and expectations of many undocumented migrants.

But the idea that City of Montreal has taken substantial measures to become a real sanctuary city is false.

### Access

The substantive demands of undocumented migrants, reflected in the relentless organizing and mobilizing of groups such as the Non-Status Women's Collective of Montreal, Mexicans United for Regularization, and the Haitian Non-Status Action Committee, as well as other groups and undocumented individuals, are not met by the the City of Montreal's declaration.

The "Declaration Designating Montreal a Sanctuary City" does not give undocumented people access to, for example:

- secure jobs with dignity;
- healthcare;
- education for children and adults;
- drivers' licenses;

bank accounts (this is not an exhaustive list).

The City of Montreal should demand access to all of these things for undocumented migrants, but the legal power to change this belongs to the Quebec and Canadian governments.

### Continued Police Collaboration with the CBSA

In addition to accessing essential services, a "sanctuary city" means being able to go about daily life in Montreal without fear of being handed over to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) as a result of a casual interaction with police or metro agents. The "Declaration Designating Montreal a Sanctuary City" does NOT stop the Montreal Police (SPVM) or metro agents from handing undocumented people over to the CBSA.

Every week, the SPVM arrests undocumented people for small infractions or demands ID in situations of racial profiling, discovers that they have stayed past a deportation order, and hands them over to CBSA for detention and deportation. The City of Montreal's declaration will not change this.

Because this reality has not changed, we remind undocumented people to prepare for interactions with SPVM in a way that can help keep you safer. Preparing in advance could help keep you calm and secure.

### A summary of what the "Declaration Designating Montreal a Sanctuary City" does and does not mean:

- **HEALTH CARE:** The City of Montreal's declaration does NOT provide access to health care. We need to pressure the provincial Quebec government to provide health cards to all residents of Quebec, including temporary and undocumented residents.
- **EDUCATION:** The City of Montreal's declaration does NOT provide access to education at any level. The Collectif éducation sans frontières continues to pressure the Quebec government to provide access to free primary and secondary education for all children in Quebec, including undocumented children.

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- **WORK:** The City of Montreal's declaration does NOT provide access to declared work for undocumented residents. The Canadian government refuses to give Social Insurance Numbers and work permits to undocumented people living in Canada and the City of Montreal's declaration will not change this.
- **POLICE:** Importantly, the City of Montreal's declaration does NOT prevent the police (or metro agents) from collaborating with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) agents. The Montreal police regularly hand over undocumented migrants to CBSA agents, and there is no reason to expect this practice to stop. Montreal does have the power to change this and we must continue to demand that it adopts a resolution telling its police to never, in any circumstances, hand people over to the CBSA.
- **HOUSING:** The City of Montreal's declaration states that the City will allow access to the public housing it controls, regardless of someone's immigration status. It's not clear how this will work in practice at the HLMs, coops and OBNLs that are partially funded and controlled by the City.
- **MUNICIPAL SERVICES:** The City of Montreal's declaration states that the City will allow access to municipal services which includes libraries, recreational facilities and food banks. It's not clear how this will work in practice.
- **OTHER SERVICES:** The City of Montreal's declaration will NOT allow undocumented persons access to driver permits (a provincial responsibility) or bank accounts (which require identification that is provided by the provincial or federal governments).
- **REGULARIZATION:** The City of Montreal's declaration does NOT mean that undocumented residents can regularize their status and eventually become permanent residents and citizens. A regularization process is a federal responsibility. Justice and dignity demands an inclusive, comprehensive and ongoing regularization program for all temporary and undocumented migrants.

The Mayor and city councillors should stop claiming Montreal is a "sanctuary" to refugees and migrants. To make this claim without tangible measures in place to meaningfully protect all migrants, refugees and undocumented people is both confusing and grossly irresponsible.

Ask organizations you are in touch with to adopt the [Solidarity City Declaration](#) and add their name to the growing list of Montreal organizations who endorse it.

Together, let's build our networks of support, mutual aid and solidarity, beyond the symbolism and opportunism of politicians.

*- A Community Advisory prepared by the Support Work and Solidarity City committees of Solidarity Across Borders.*

web: [www.solidarityacrossborders.org](http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org)

e-mail: [solidaritesansfrontieres@gmail.com](mailto:solidaritesansfrontieres@gmail.com)

facebook: [www.facebook.com/CiteSansFrontieres](http://www.facebook.com/CiteSansFrontieres)

twitter: [@SolidariteMTL](https://twitter.com/SolidariteMTL)

tél.: 438-933-7654 (messages only)

## MEMBER NEWS



**Dolores** celebrates the birth of granddaughter, **Josephine Chameli** in February, to Siraj and Kim.



**Nivatha Balendran** was selected for: *Daughters of the Vote* program in Ottawa, Ontario and the National Capital Region, March 6th - 10th.



# The Project

**Maya Khankhoje**

Foreword.

*The events are factual, the names fictional, the sentiments heartfelt.*

## The Picture

Grigori's email pops up in my mailbox with a picture of himself holding a newborn in his arms. This is the project I've been working on.

## The Phone Call

*-I'm phoning from the hospital lobby.*

*-What happened?*

*- Terminal cancer. I've just had an operation to buy me some time.*

*- I'm so sorry...and how is your...the... baby?*

*I was on shaky ground. A loner in his late sixties with a baby?*

*-I left him back home with friends because I had to fly back for my surgery.*

*-Let me know if you need anything.*

*-Will do.*

*-Anything, remember.*

*-Thanks, Maruca.*

## The Walk

The trees have started shedding their leaves. Grigori is crossing the park, his gait is a bit unsteady, his cheeks hollow, his skin sallow.

*- How are you?*

*-Much better, thanks. Flew back with my son. In the infant section of the plane the other mothers helped me change diapers. I haven't a clue.*

*The other mothers? I smile.*

*-Pop in sometime to meet Anton.*

*-Will do.*

## The Nursery

*-Come on in. Meet Alice. She and Daisy help me with Anton, 24/7.*

*-Does he take after you or his mother?*

What a dumb question! Who is his mother anyway? The woman who sold her eggs? Or the one who rented out her womb? Both got paid handsomely by their country's standards. And my friend also got a good deal, certainly less expensive than here. In this country surrogacy is strictly regulated and commercial transactions are off the table. Is the real mother the woman who shared her DNA or the woman who carried the baby for nine months, provided him with food and warmth, cradled him in a warm liquid, suffered from morning sickness and backaches, endured his kicks and hiccups and risked her life for the sake of his? Margaret Atwood might have an answer if she were to write a sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. Fancy words like gestational surrogacy, intended parents, donors are a publicist's legerdemain, a pseudoscientific construct, a social copout. My mind goes back to *The Gift of the Magi*, the Christmas tale by O'Henry in which the young wife secretly sells off her lovely locks to buy a fob chain for her husband's watch while he secretly sells off his watch to buy a pretty comb for her lovely locks.

## The Birthday Party

A gaggle of women sit around the cake prodding Anton into laughter. Anton is bewildered, but plays along. Grigori smiles, he has finally warmed up to the whole idea. Somebody takes pictures for posterity: father and son cheek-to-cheek, son on father's lap, father gazing tenderly at son, son blowing out a single candle. Everybody sings happy birthday slightly off-key. Anton giggles but his father is pensive. He's trying to etch the image in his mind's eye hoping it won't vanish after death.

## Fall again, then Winter, then Spring...

I'm scanning my emails for important news. The dreaded email finally arrives: *Grigori left us last night*. I had seen him briefly before my trip.

*-Just came to say hello before going to visit my grandchildren, I had said.*

*-Have a safe journey and don't forget to take your boxes.*

*-My boxes?*

*-Yes, your food containers.*

So everybody's efforts to make him nutritious appetizing food had come to nought. His lanky frame looked tiny in the cumbersome hospital bed in his master bedroom. Meticulous as ever, Grigori believed in tying loose ends, even those of cheap plastic containers. Why then did he not tie the loose ends that he left behind for his friends, acquaintances, lawyers, social workers and caring adopted "aunties" to untangle? Everybody was baffled but I think I finally got it. His lack of formal provisions was his way of spitting at death in the face.

### The Options

He finally did appoint a legal guardian. He appointed Kiran, the travelling companion of his youth, his helpful neighbour, the devoted nurse of his final days on earth, the woman with whom he had had a past. But we had our own doubts. She was no spring chicken herself. But who knows, she might do a better job than young biological parents.

What about his family back home? Those of us in the so-called inner circle knew very little, so I did a search and I managed to locate a brother and sent him a hand-written letter. Below are some extracts from that letter:

About a couple of years ago I received a cryptic picture of Grigori with his son and a woman by his side. "This is the project I've been working on..."

And this is how I was inducted into the circle of women who tried to help Grigori and who are now trying to help Anton.

Anton needs help. He needs a large family circle and the possibly bright future that is his by birthright. Regardless of the circumstances and the reasons which might have led Grigori to father him at such a late date in his life, Anton does not deserve to have doors shut on him...

I hope you all make your interest and love for this little boy known. And act on your love and duty.

He is, like all children his age, a lovely joyous child. He deserves better. He deserves the best.

A couple of weeks later I got a phone call from a man with a heavy accent. The following is the gist of what he said:

*-I'm Rodin, Grigory's brother. You needn't have registered the letter to make sure I got your message. I'm in constant spiritual contact with my brother and I wait for him to speak to me. He shall show us the way to follow. Here there is a large home that includes four generations where Anton will always be well received. He can come to visit as many times as he wishes. And that includes you, Maruca. I was never estranged from my brother as some believe. It is just that our lives took different paths that sometimes intersected and sometimes not. There was a small number of concentric circles. Anton is best where he is, over there in your country, where the laws and conditions will protect him. He will be spared the agony that our country is passing through at present and perhaps when he grows up he will come to his ancestral country and help liberate it.*

Anton's birthday is around the corner. There will be a memorial in honour of his father on the day Anton turns two. Perhaps his relatives from his home country will be present, perhaps not. But the circle embracing this motherless and fatherless child will certainly be there. To remember a life extinguished and to celebrate a life ignited.

### Afterword.

There are 1,400,000 entries on surrogacy in the web. The literature on the subject is a work in progress. Commercial surrogacy, as opposed to altruistic surrogacy, is practiced on a large scale in Georgia, India, Russia, Thailand, Ukraine and to some extent in some states of the US. Canada bans commercial surrogacy.

## Celebrate Canada's 150th and Montreal's 375th with Sinha Danse!

### SinhaDANSE

Call for participants! 150 non professional dancers needed

Join us at the [Info session/dance rehearsal](#) on Saturday March 4th 1pm OR Sunday March 5th 12pm at Conseil des arts de Montréal, 1210, Sherbrooke St. East (corner of Montcalm, Sherbrooke metro station).

To be part of [MoW! Montréal\(olly\)Wood](#), [register online](#) now\*! The project is entirely free, open to all, 12 years and +.

Rehearsals begin March 28 until early July. You need to come to **2 x 2-hour rehearsals per week and be available for both performances on July 8th and 12th.** ([Rehearsal calendar here](#))

Tuesdays 6-8pm or 8-10pm ([PEYO](#), Centre William Hitchson – Park Extension)

Wednesdays 6.30-8.30pm ([Conseil des arts de Montréal](#) – in front of Parc Lafontaine)

Saturdays 1-3pm ([PEYO](#), Centre William Hitchson – Park Extension)

*You can miss an occasional rehearsal, but you must be able to catch up to continue learning the choreography.*

The exterior **presentations** will be held in July 2017 and accessible to all for free during Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> and Montreal's 375<sup>th</sup> celebrations

Saturday evening, **July 8 at Place de la Gare-Jean-Talon in Park Extension**

Wednesday evening, **July 12 at Parc Lafontaine**

<http://www.sinhadanse.com/en/callmow/>

## Memoriam for Mom

**Shaheen Munir**

*"Mamataz Ghani*

*wife of Mohammad Abdul Ghani*

*May 21, 1929 - August 26, 1985"*

Mom, your hair falling out

body shrinking

Chemo-therapy;

wearing sea-green cotton embroidered 'Shari' I bought  
for you

surrounded by sons, daughters, sisters, nieces and  
grand children

family portrait at sister 'Nahar's house -  
while you were staying for treatment-

fighting to survive Cancer

spread from ovary to your lungs...

we hid from you, you never knew -

Mom, Dad

You are resting together now

resting in a different world,

in the garden of heaven-dark green in colour;

Acacia tree flowers profusely,

shades long- extended,

spring flowing constantly...

certainly all kinds of trees and delights- fruitful  
and flourishing:

where season is not limited

and Mom, Dad-

I believe now you are in bliss

resting in the "Garden of Peace" in dignity.

## Mother's Day

In the hallway

inside an olive green jar

Eucalyptus spearmint scented candle is flickering...

Happy Mother's Day, Mom.

"TEAVANA"

A golden tea gift set with floral images

loose leaf tea pouches and tea tins-

Youthberry

White Ayurvedic Chai

Jasmin Oolong

Wild Orange Blossom...

an epicurean journey.

Eucalyptus tea

yellow Body wash and Foam Bath

green Body lotion

stress relief violet sugar scrub

wrapped with cellophane

tied up with blue ribbon...

Aromatherapy

Happy Mother's Day, Mom.

\*Grounded on the Mother's Day 2016



**Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

South Asian Women's Community Centre  
1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage.  
Montréal, QC H2J 2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812  
Fax: 514-528-0896  
E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca

36 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2017

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

Mar 7 at 10:30 - Arts and crafts  
Mar 14 at 10:30 - Job orientation  
Mar 21  
:10:30 - Welfare and financial planning by Sun Life Insurance  
:18:00 - EC meeting  
Mar 28 at 10:30 - Session to be determined  
Mar 31  
: 10:00- 11:30 - Glass painting  
: 12:30- 14:30 - Nowruz (Afghan and Iranian New Year)

7 mar à 10:30 - Art et artisanat  
14 mar à 10:30 - Programme d'orientation professionnelle  
21 mar  
:10:30 - Bien-être social et planification financière, par Sun Life Insurance  
:18:00 - Réunion du comité d'exécutif  
28 mar à 10:30 - Session à déterminer  
31 mar  
: 10:00- 11:30 - Peinture en verre  
: 12:30- 14:30 - Nowruz (Nouvel An -des afghanes et des Iraniens)

## March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7  Arts and crafts	8	9	10	11
12	13	14  Job orientation	15	16	17	18
19	20	21  EC meeting Welfare & fin. planning	22	23	24	25
26	27	28  To be determined	29	30	31  Glass painting	 Nowruz

## Membership Renewal

It's that time of year! Please renew your SAWCC membership to ensure you get all the mailings and can participate fully in the organization.

Changes to your information (address, phone number, etc. email, etc.)? Download the membership form from our website, insert the correct information and send it along with your membership dues.

<http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca/EN/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Membership-form.pdf>

Please mail cheque to: SAWCC, 1035 Rachel est, Montréal, Qc., H2J 2J5.

Make cheque payable to: "South Asian Women's Community Centre".

Indicate in the note section: "membership".

Making a donation to SAWCC at the same time? Donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax-deductible receipt (for 2017 tax year).

### Membership dues:

\$15.00 (for salaried)

\$7.00 (for non-salaried)