

### **International Women s Day Edition**

International Women s Day 2000 marks the beginning of the Women s World March. In Newfoundland and Labrador, women, through numerous organizations are joining together to bring attention to the issue of poverty and all forms of violence against women. For many of us in the organized women s movement, IWD is another occasion to celebrate our achievements while being mindful of the inequalities which continue to exist in our world. There is a sense of urgency in our province as we prepare for IWD and the Women s World March, we are aware of a need to reclaim our women s movement in global solidarity with women everywhere. There is an excitement in the air, women are embracing both a need to celebrate and a need to challenge.

When we look back at our 20th century, we are mindful of our victories. We recognize and celebrate the work of our foremothers who have won for us the many rights we often take for granted today. Women, individually and collectively, have made gains often without realizing that the very existence of feminists and a feminist movement has made even our smallest strides possible.

But, what of the challenges? These are all around us. In the theme of the World March lies the enormous challenge ~ to bring attention to violence and poverty and to put forward our ideas for the eradication of both. There is also a challenge within our very own women s community. That challenge is one of demonstrating our respect for one another as women and women s organizations. It is about fostering an understanding of the equality seeking work women accomplish within unions, churches, service organizations, youth and senior groups. It is about challenging ourselves as feminists to continue building bridges to embrace and claim the work we are all doing toward women s social and economic equality.

As we sing, dance, march and enjoy a meal together this IWD, let us show some leadership in embracing feminist work whether it is accomplished at a Family Resource Centre, a Women s Centre, or Women s Institute. What brings us together is more powerful by far than the places where we are not in total agreement.

Let March 8, 2000, signal the beginning of our renewed efforts at building bridges. Let the rallying cry of Newfoundland and Labrador women become the unleashing of our collective power. Let us leave no doubt in anyone s mind that the women s movement in this province is alive and well and working together on the World March of Women.

In Sisterhood,

Joyce M. Hancock

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### **Why A March?** **For Hope, Equality, Peace, and Democracy**

On International Women s Day, women throughout Newfoundland and Labrador will join with

women from around the world in launching their World March of Women 2000 activities. The five continents will echo with our words, songs, shouts and steps.

Why so much enthusiasm? Why is the World March of Women in the year 2000 sparking so much interest? The answer lies in how women live today. Many are poor, yet we live on a rich planet. In many countries women must fight for their most elementary rights: water, food, shelter, paid work, access to school, citizenship, and freedom to choose to bear children. Their World March resolutely takes issue with poverty and all forms of violence against women.

Some of the goals of the World March of Women are, to promote equality between men and women, to force governments, decision makers and individuals the world over to institute the changes necessary for improving the status of women and women's quality of life, to highlight the common demands and initiatives issuing from the global women's movement relating to the issues of poverty and violence against women, and to enter the new millennium by demonstrating women's ongoing determination to change the world.

The World March of Women in the year 2000 sees itself as inclusive and respectful of women's diversity and it gives rise to the development of many alliances.

One event being launched around the world at many IWD events on March 8, 2000, is an international signature campaign to support the World March of Women demands. In Canada, there will be postcards distributed from one end of our country to the other inviting Canadians to join in demanding that the UN and its member states take concrete measures to eliminate the poverty and violence facing so many women. In this province many women's groups are actively planning events to celebrate the World March of Women. There will be luncheons, displays, presentations and marches. A St. John's committee is gathering responses from around the province to the question, what would have to change in our society for our lives to be free from poverty and violence? Sign a postcard, add your voice ~ consider participating.

For further information on the World March of Women, visit their web site at: <http://www.ffq.gc.ca/marche2000>