

## **Ottawa Regional Women's Committee Report** **September – December 2015**

The fall was a busy time for the ORWC. In September we participated in the Take Back the Night March, where we met up in the downtown core with our sisters from the CRFF. This annual march is a very lively affair with hundreds taking to the streets as a statement that women should be able to feel safe in their communities at all times.

October is Women's History Month and for our monthly meeting we focused on learning from some powerful women mentors on how to take control of our own lives and practise self-care. October 4 is a day when vigils are held across the country for our missing and murdered Aboriginal sisters; I attended a very moving ceremony at noon on Parliament Hill. We are hopeful that with Justin Trudeau as our new prime minister, this issue will finally receive the attention it deserves. I also attended a fundraiser put on by The Worker's History Museum, which consisted of songs and stories focusing on how women's rights have evolved over the years in the Ottawa region. I was also privileged to attend the Marche Mondiale des Femmes in Trois Rivierès On October 17. This event was very well organized and it was very exciting to be marching in solidarity with 5,000 women, knowing that similar marches were being held throughout the world. Many thanks to the CRFF for inviting us!

With the OFL convention and other priorities taking place in November, we postponed our elections until January. However, we were pleased to welcome our new resource PSAC staffer, Ginette Jalbert. We look forward to working with Ginette in the coming year!

On December 6 we participated in the annual vigil to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. As is our tradition, we invited people to come to 233 Gilmour afterwards for hot chocolate and cookies. With the unusually mild weather, our turnout was less than usual, but that meant we had leftover hot chocolate to donate to the locked out workers at the OLG slots ☺. Also in December, the PSAC presented a forum entitled "Domestic Violence at Work". One of the guest speakers was our former REVP, Maria Fitzpatrick, who shared her very own personal experience with domestic violence.

Moving forward, the ORWC will continue to focus on recruitment and on priorities as established by the National Human Rights Committee, such as child care, domestic violence and leadership. We hope to develop a large scale project, perhaps involving Syrian refugee women. We will also be holding our Regional Women's Conference in the spring.

Please continue to promote the ORWC in your circles!

In solidarity,

Linda Koenders,

Chair, ORWC