

## **Message from the Chair:**

Was it really only a year ago that we were meeting at another Annual General Meeting, eating wonderful food, listening to music, launching a website and being entertained by clients and staff? A lot has happened in the past year at Across Boundaries, in our communities, in the city and around the world. This is our ninth year of service and as we look toward celebrating our ten-year anniversary, the city of Toronto continues to be a place for a growing number of families from around the world and around the country.

In 1996, one year after the agency began providing mental health services to the community, the population in the City of Toronto was reported at 450,000. In 2001 that number jumped to over 5 million. A 1997 report conducted for the City of Toronto found 42 percent of new immigrants chose Toronto as their destination. A beautiful and vibrant city, Toronto has many things to offer people from around the world and around the country. Despite this, people of color continue to experience barriers in accessing affordable housing, sustainable employment, community resources, access to education, income support and citizenship status. Community organizations such as Across Boundaries have been vital in supporting people of color who are experiencing mental health difficulties related to a mental illness, distress or an emotional crisis. The staff and volunteers continue to do it through Case Management, the Family Conference, attending public education workshops, answering enquiries about resources and services, networking and outreach.

This past year the Board of Directors, Co-Directors, Staff and volunteers have continued to work with the larger community and network of organizations to increase awareness of the impact of racism on the mental health of our

clients and their families. We have also continued to develop and implement our strategic plan. In addition, the organization had its second Fundraising event that brought out the talents and contributions of many individuals. The Board has been actively working on implementing a fundraising plan that will also include initiatives to promote awareness of the organization and to sustain the activities in future years.

This past year has also meant that some of our Board of Directors have finished their terms and/or have moved on. Their time and commitment is greatly appreciated. As we end this year I would like to thank Deborah Barnes and our Past Chair and Vice-Chair Arnold Minors for their involvement and leadership. I would also like to welcome aboard our new Directors on the adventure ahead of us.

It's been a busy year and we are all looking forward to another year of growth. We hope that you stay in touch with the organization; you can visit our website, join our mailing list, become a member, attend our fundraisers, or share our work with your friends, families and colleagues or someone of color who is struggling with their mental health.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Peggy-Gail DeHal-Ramson, Chair, Board of Directors



*Happiness is when what you think,  
what you say, and what you do are in  
harmony.*

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*



### OUR MISSION

To provide a range of supports and services to people from ethnoracial communities who are experiencing severe mental health problems.

To provide a holistic approach to dealing with mental health problems recognizing the interdependence of the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and broader environmental aspects of health, that effect the well-being of people from ethnoracial communities.



*Only after the last tree has been cut down,*

*Only after the last river has been poisoned,*

*Only after the last fish has been caught,*

*Only then you will find money cannot be eaten.*

*Cree Prophecy*



### VALUES AND BELIEFS

Across Boundaries recognises that individual and systemic racism is a barrier to the health and mental health for people of ethnoracial communities.

Across Boundaries recognises the diversity among people from ethnoracial communities who in addition to race, may also be discriminated on account of their religion, language, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual, orientation, disabilities, age, country of origin and citizenship status.

Across Boundaries is committed to challenging systemic racism in mental health service delivery.

Across Boundaries is committed to a community development approach and will strive to promote the active participation of ethnoracial communities in the mental health system

Across Boundaries will operate within an anti-racism framework to promote equity and access for ethnoracial communities.

## **ABOUT US**

Across Boundaries is the first mental health agency in Canada, which operates within an anti-racism framework. It is one of only two mental health agencies in Toronto serving People of Colour communities. According to the 1996 census, the aforementioned population now comprises about 54% of the total population of Toronto. Recent reports indicate that People of Colour (racial minorities) are among the most disadvantaged and would consequently have greater health and mental health issues.

Western psychiatric approaches and Eurocentric service delivery models are not always appropriate for individuals who originate outside of Europe. As taxpayers and equal participants in society, People of Colour communities are entitled to appropriate services. Recent studies have explored and validated the need for 'integrated' or 'holistic' care from an anti-racism framework.

Across Boundaries has a holistic model of mental health care that also integrates the principles of health promotion and prevention, medical and complementary approaches. The centre recognises the interdependence of spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, economic, cultural, linguistic and broader environmental aspects of life, playing a key role in the recovery process of individuals.

The agency supports and initiates creative, effective, and sustainable programs and projects, which facilitate the empowerment of consumer survivors of Colour. Across Boundaries will continue to share its knowledge and expertise, gained over years, and articulate contemporary, relevant, and inclusive 'better practices'. The mental health system as a whole benefits by being able to access a model that is appropriate (sensitive to race, gender and culture which is one of the

guiding principles of Mental Health Reform) and accessible by Communities of Color. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has recognized the need for integrating anti-racism/anti-oppression practices in mental health and has funded the centre to provide anti-racism training to service providers in the mental health system. For more information on our programs, please visit our website <http://www.acrossboundaries.ca>

### **Program Report 2003-2004**

The total number of clients served over the last three (3) years is showing a pattern of steady 25%- 30% increase annually. In year 2001-2002, we served 180 clients; 2002-2003 =227; 2003-2004 = 277

In this fiscal year, Across Boundaries received 166 referrals, 68 were admitted to the case management services and 98 were admitted to the in-house programs. The total number of clients served in the case management service was 183 and the target number was 75-100. There were 14 clients from case management who were hospitalized. There is an average of 10-15 clients in the waiting list at any given month. The continued increase of referrals and clients served has created enormous strain on the agency because while the clients served have steadily increased, the number of staff remains the same for the last 4 years. There is also the issue of space needed to accommodate the large number of clients attending various programs that are provided at the centre.

The in-house programs serve as: a) a transitional program for those who are discharged from case management; b) as an immediate measure to connect any referred client to the agency to reduce waiting time; and c) a day program to address social isolation, skill building and provide alternative approaches to healing.

Our outreach and mental health support initiatives in the Somali, Tamil and Afghan communities have continued in partnership with various organizations including the Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch SAFE Centre, East Scarborough Storefront, Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre and the Catholic Cross Cultural Services. The Caribbean Group and Persian Life Skills held at the centre continue to be well attended.

The consumer/survivor survey result shows a high degree of client satisfaction and improvement in quality of life. Attendance in various programs remains high such as the ESL/Literacy Program (20 clients), Computer training (40), Art Therapy (30), Community Kitchen (80), Drop-In (60) Yoga (15), Support Groups (36), and Creative Expressions (30).

We were able to hire a Family Support Worker for three (3) months. While family members very much appreciated the brief support provided to them, they continue to they need an on-going support in order for them to provide the proper care for their ill family member. On March 27, 2004, Across Boundaries organized a successful family conference focusing on anti-stigma strategies in various communities, in partnership with the Family Outreach and Response Program and the Family Support Program at the Toronto East General Hospital.

Across Boundaries has actively participated as a member of the Steering Committee of Project Access to Support Services (PASS) of the North York and Scarborough Quadrants which is a project to develop a coordinated access system for community-based mental health individual support services in the area. The Centre has also participated in the West Quadrant in developing Guidelines for Discharge Planning and in the East Quadrant, which is keeping a regular update of the waiting list in each agency.

Affordable and appropriate housing is an on-going priority for our clients. Staff has been actively working in partnership with various housing agencies. We are playing a key role on the Steering Committee of a project “ Best Practices for Working with Homeless Immigrants and Refugees”. This was a community-based action research, which looks at the experiences of adult immigrant and refugees with respect to their use of shelters and drop-ins. In addition, Across Boundaries is an active member of the Supportive Housing and Diversity, a coalition of mental health and housing support agencies working to develop models of best practices for housing workers who are working with the mentally ill population within the ethnoracial/ etnocultural communities.

The anti-racism/anti-oppression training program provided training to a total of 153 service providers in mental health. Aside from these trainings; Across Boundaries provided many presentations to different cluster groups that were particularly interested in the holistic model of mental health care within an anti-racism framework.

A comprehensive and user-friendly web site was developed and has been very popular since its inception. The web site has been accessed by many agencies to refer as well as to obtain information about Across Boundaries.



*A “No” uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a “Yes” merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trouble.*

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*



## **The Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant**

We are in the 3rd year of our three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The grant is to support a resource development program to diversify Across Boundaries' funding base in order to enhance provision of mental health services to ethnoracial communities.

Over the last year our efforts were aimed at building and raising the profile of the organization, building relationships, beginning a database and planning future activities. Last year, we also had a very successful fundraising event the World Mind & Music Event at the Rivoli on 29<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2004.

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of Carlos Bulosan Theatre, Adam Solomon, Waleed Abdulhamid, Negarit , Usheak Koroma , Afghan Women's Catering Group, pointillist painter Anastasia, The Rivoli as well as Aruna Aysola for coordinating the event, and all the numerous volunteers and staff without whose support this would not have been possible.

We move ahead on a very positive and excited note and look forward to reporting many more advances in our work over the next year. Please stay tuned...

## **OUR FUNDERS**

Your Support has helped us make our programs the success that they are:

- **The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - Janice Buchanan, our Regional Consultants.**
- **The Ontario Trillium Foundation.- Carrie Butcher, Program Manager.**

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Deborah Barnes  
Bobby Blanford (**Chair – part year**)  
Patrick Brown  
Kim Gittens (**Treasurer**)  
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Arnold Minors (**Vice-Chair**)  
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Roma Rashidi  
Aseefa Sarang (**Co-Director**)  
Peter Sealy  
Sherry Shen  
Nandini Tirumala  
Peri Vyramuthu

**A special thanks to the following individuals who have helped us in numerous day-to-day tasks. Some of you have come to us as students, as donors, as volunteers, as facilitators, as consultants and as participants of the programs.**

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Yasmin Khan  
Zarko Dudic

Our sincere thanks also to those who gave anonymously and to those whose names we may have missed.

**Across Boundaries gratefully acknowledges your contribution.**

**To Volunteer Or Make A Donation, Please Call 416 787 3007, Ext. 27.**

## **COMMUNITY & AGENCY COLLABORATION**

In the past year we have worked collaboratively with the following groups, agencies and institutions on Boards, committees, ad hoc structures, consultations, and through student placements:

- Access Alliance Racialized Group & Health Status; Exploring Poverty, Housing, Race – Band Discrimination & Access to Health Care in Toronto.
- Adam's House
- Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness, Social Isolation and Mental Health Reform
- Assaulted Women's Helpline
- Best Practices for Working with Homeless, Immigrant & Refugees
- Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Toronto)
- Centennial College
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAM-H)
- Community Resources Consultants of Toronto (CRCT)
- Community Treatment Order Advisory and Evaluation Committee
- COSTI
- Community Occupational Therapy Association (COTA)
- Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
- East Scarborough Storefront
- Ecuhome Corporation
- Ethnoracial Coalition-Access to Addiction Services
  
- Ethnoracial Disabilities Coalition of Ontario

- Family Mental Health Alliance
- Family Service Association of Toronto
- Friends of Alternative & Complementary Therapist Society (FACT)
- George Brown College
- Gerstein Centre
- Griffin Centre
- Health & Diversity Conference Planning Advisory Group
- Homeward
- Hong Fook Mental Health Association
- Humber College
- Humber River Regional Hospital
- Intercede for the Rights of Domestic Workers Caregivers & Newcomers
- Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre
- LCC Consulting
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- Mindeynta Somali Association
- Nellie's Hostel
- North York General Hospital – Department of Psychiatry, Substance Abuse Program
- Northwest Mental Health Planning Group
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
- Ryerson University
- Sabawoon Afghan Family Education and Counseling Centre (SAFE)
- Scarborough General Hospital Forensic Case Management Program
- Supportive Housing and Diversity (SHAD)
- Sistering
- South East Toronto Mental Health Network
- Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health & Addition Program (OFCMHAP)
- Kapisanan Philippine Centre
- Rexdale Community Health Centre
- South-East Toronto Mental Health Network
- Steering Committee of Project to Access Support Services (PASS) in North York & Scarborough
- Supportive Housing in Peel
- Toronto Forensic Mental Health Committee
- Toronto Peel Mental Health Implementation Task Force Systems Subcommittee
- University of Toronto, School of Nursing
- Vasantham: A Tamil Seniors Wellness Centre
- Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre (WREC)
- York University



*If you were all alone in the universe with no one to talk to, no one with which to share the beauty of the stars, to laugh with, to touch, what would be your purpose in life? It is other life, it is love, which gives your life meaning. This is harmony. We must discover the joy of each other, the joy of challenge, the joy of growth.*

*Mitsugi Saotome*



