

VIS-À-VIS

A NATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

A Modern Tragedy

SEP 11 1989

Family Violence in Canada's Native Communities

In this issue of Vis-à-vis, we examine family violence through the eyes and voices of Canada's native people. They share their experience as witnesses or victims of family violence in their communities. Their words provide a new perspective on the social roots of family violence and on the need for community-based models for change. While their message has a particular resonance for aboriginal peoples, it is also relevant for other Canadians in their search for a greater understanding of family violence.

By Raymond and Marie-Louise Obomsawin

"We can recover by knowledge, not by instinct. Our instinct is no more healthy than we are. . . So to recover we must. . . go back to traditions. . . (of) many centuries."

G.T. Wrench, in The Wheel of Health
During an age largely forgotten, although it was not that long ago, the native peoples of North America enjoyed the well-being and fullness that life is meant to offer, free from the tragedy of family violence. This was their legacy as long as they continued to live in oneness with the natural, social and spiritual laws of creation. A system of life and relationships centred around the Creator

fostered good health, sanity, sobriety, familial security, chastity, honesty and general self-sufficiency. Although not perfect, it was a form of society that was contentedly free of hospitals, insane asylums, nursing homes, orphanages, police forces, prisons, brothels, half-way houses and pogy cheques.

In such traditional communities it was the responsibility of parents and older relatives within the extended family to nurture within their children, beginning right at birth, the virtues of self-control, self-sacrifice in deference to others, and self-respect. The young went on to develop qualities of modesty, patience, courtesy, integrity, order, persistence, resourcefulness, courage and respectful obedience to elders.



This vital development of character and society was based more on life experience and observation than on verbal instruction. As well, native life was closely tied to a larger respect for spiritual and physical realities, based on the universal evidence of cause and effect relationships. Central to this reality was an awareness of the subtle warfare between good and evil forces for control of the minds and bodies of individuals and communities.

This early native life system was rapidly dissolved with the advent of European colonization and its techno-materialist culture, broken promises, forced dislocations, alcohol, denaturalized diet, disease and brands of Christianity that all too frequently denied the teachings of Christ. A simple, integrated, healthy and self-reliant way of life was now shattered.

Since colonization, the damage continues unabated. We see en-

continued on page 2

Return postage guaranteed by/Port de retour garanti:

Canadian Council on Social Development/
Conseil canadien de Développement social
Box/C.P. 3505, Station/Succ.C
55 Parkdale, Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 4G1

	Canada Post Postes Canada
Bulk: third class 1054	En nombre troisième classe Ottawa



demic conditions of drug and alcohol dependency, family violence, child sexual abuse, failure in school, unemployment, incarceration, lack of housing, disease and violent death. These hydra-headed problems are exacerbated by government-sponsored institutional programs that continue blindly to undermine native values in community life. Allen "know-it-all" institutions have squandered hundreds of millions of tax dollars to create programs around symptoms, instead of addressing the only real answer.

The formula for effective and lasting renewal is not overly complex.

Vis-à-vis

A NATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON FAMILY VIOLENCE
Volume 5, Number 4
Winter 1988
ISSN 0823-0404

Vis-à-vis is published quarterly by the Canadian Council on Social Development, with financial assistance from Health and Welfare Canada.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Family Violence Program
Canadian Council on Social Development
55 Parkdale Avenue
P.O. Box 3505, Station C
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4G1
Tel. (613) 728-1865

Family Violence Program
Policy Analyst: Linda MacLeod
Researchers: Chantal Goyette,
Jocelyne Leblanc
Vis-à-vis Editor: Carolyn Joyce Brown

Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies of the funding agency. This publication may be copied and distributed with full credit given to the Canadian Council on Social Development.



Support the United Way

Native leaders, communities and people must resolve to research, re-discover and reapply their own distinctive approaches to socio-economic development, health care, education, family support and self-government. Many of the traditional principles are timeless and will never lose their relevance: wholism and integration of disciplines, spiritual principles of relationships, self-determination, cooperative and self-sufficiency economics, natural approaches to nutrition and health care, family-dominated training and education of children, and community cooperation. While such a system is being created — preferably

as part of the transition to self-government — special life skills training will be needed in such areas as marital relations, pre-natal care, infant care, parenting, respectful care of the elderly and home finances.

By returning to strong and valuable traditions, our native communities can create an opportunity for renewal and put an end to the modern tragedy of family violence. ☪

Do you know of a self-help group in Toronto?

The Self-Help Clearinghouse of Metropolitan Toronto is bringing its list of groups in the city up to date. If you are a member of, or know of, a Toronto self-help group, please contact:

Dr. Rubin Todres
Self-Help Clearinghouse of Metropolitan Toronto
40 Orchard View Blvd., Suite 215
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1B9
Tel. (416) 487-4355

National Inventory on Child Sexual Abuse Services

Family Service Canada, in cooperation with the Canadian Child Welfare Association, is compiling a national inventory of services in the area of child sexual abuse. If you or your organization provides either generic or specific services to sexually abused children, their families, adult survivors or offenders, then this inventory is of interest to you!

If you have not received a form and are interested in being listed in the inventory, please telephone or write:

Family Service Canada
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4G1
Tel. (613) 728-2463

Calendar

APRIL 19-21, 1988

Empowering the Family: An Atlantic Canada Workshop on Family Therapy, in Moncton, New Brunswick. Contact: Workshop '88, Family Service Moncton Inc., 386 St. George Street, Moncton, New Brunswick, Tel. (506) 857-3258.

JUNE 13-15, 1988

In Search of Healthy Sexuality, in Guelph, Ontario. Tenth annual sexuality conference. Contact: Continuing Education Division, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1, Tel. (519) 824-4120, ext. 3113.

JUNE 15-17, 1988

Family Systems and the Process of Change, at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Workshop with Dr. Virginia Satir. Contact: Marilyn R. Peers, Children's Aid Society of Halifax, 5244 South Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 1A4, Tel. (902) 425-5420.

SEPTEMBER 1988

National Conference on Shelters and Transition Houses, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Hosted by the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse. Date to be announced. Contact: Ms. Joey Brazeau, Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse, 1823 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3J 0G4, Tel. (204) 885-3302.

Native Communities Respond to Family Violence

Tikinagan Child and Family Services

Twenty-seven communities in northern Ontario will benefit from a public awareness and educational program on family violence being set up by Tikinagan Child and Family Services. The goals of the program are to compile information about the extent of the problem, conduct community consultation meetings, and work with regional and local leaders as well as resource people in each community to foster cooperation in combatting family violence. The program will help each community or organization to develop its own response. Links between agencies and workers will be developed and each community will be aided in defining the problem and finding community-based solutions. Contact: Tikinagan Child and Family Services, P.O. Box 627, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, P0V 2T0.

Nechi Institute: Training for Health Professionals

The institute runs a 14-day course on family violence to train health professionals who will be working with native families. During the past two years, it has been funded by the Alberta Department of Social Services, and the institute is now searching for continued funding. There are four modules: in the first, participants examine cultural differences in order to understand native issues. There is also some discussion of sexual abuse. During the second, on spouse abuse, participants look at the cycle of violence as well as families affected by both physical and alcohol/drug abuse. Approaches and treatment to solve the problem are discussed. The third module deals with child maltreatment and incest, including cultural differences in child rearing and a treatment model. The fourth, on abuse of the elderly, is an exploratory module, as there are few treatment approaches or literature available on the subject.

Contact: Brenda Daily, Coordinator, Family Violence Project, Nechi Institute, P.O. Box 3884, Station D, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4K1, Tel. (403) 458-1884.

Le Coin des femmes (Women's Corner)

Women's Corner, in Sept-Îles, Quebec, runs a shelter, a resource centre and an office of Indian affairs. The shelter opened its doors in Sept-Îles in January 1987. It is aimed at all women in crisis, both white and Indian, from Pointe-aux-Anglais to Blanc Sablon as well as from northern towns. The house can shelter four families but wishes eventually to accommodate more. Three of the six permanent employees are Indian.

The office of Indian affairs offers support to Indian women who want to start afresh. The resource and reference centre, officially opened in autumn 1987, responds to the needs of women, including information on day care, continuing education, group formation, gaining independence, etc. Resources are available in French, English and the local Indian language. Translation into Indian dialect is also available for any text in the centre.

Contact: Ghislaine Couture, Coordinator, Le Coin des femmes, 5A Napoleon, Sept-Îles, Quebec, G4R 3K5, Tel. (418) 968-6446.

Telephone Network Links Inuit Incest Victims

This network was started by Louise (not her real name), an Inuit woman who suffered violent incest throughout her childhood in a northern community. In adulthood, Louise sought help, only to find that the medical and helping professions were ignorant of the dimensions of the problem. She was finally treated effectively through hypnotherapy. Now married and the mother of a six-year-old son, Louise lives south of Montreal.

A chance conversation with a friend from her community led to the discovery that she, too, was an incest survivor. They resolved to keep in touch, becoming the first members of an international network of 40 adult incest survivors. Louise is at the hub of the active network, evidenced by her \$1000 per month telephone bill.

As the network developed, Louise felt there was a need for consultation and she made an agreement with Nancy Craig of the Centre de services sociaux (social services centre) in Richelieu. Craig now provides regular clinical consultation for the network.

Louise has presented her program to the Inuit Women's Association and has requested funding for administrative costs from Health and Welfare Canada. She was recently invited to Eskimo Point, N.W.T., to speak about the problem of incest and about the maturing victim. In October 1987, she presented her observations and history at the Third Annual Aboriginal Child Conference in Alberta. She has also been invited to speak at conferences in Australia and Mexico.

Today, Louise continues to plead, confront and challenge her own people so that no more children will suffer the lasting pain she knows.

To learn more about Louise's program, contact: Nancy Craig, Centre de services sociaux Richelieu, 25 Lafayette Boulevard, Longueuil, Quebec, J4K 5C8, Tel. (514) 679-0140.

Society Against Family Abuse

This voluntary organization in Yellowknife, N.W.T., is devoted to public education and advocacy on family violence. It does not receive government funding, relying instead on community fund-raising. Approximately 30 volunteers in the society provide counselling, translation of material on family violence from English to Inuktitut, and advocacy. At the government level, the society lobbies for improved housing and day care; on the front line, it aids women who are going through the courts. As part of its advocacy program, the society matches women in crisis with women who have been through the same experience. Much of this matching is done by telephone, as the women involved can be hundreds of miles apart.

The society serves as a clearing-house for information in the western arctic. It also provides the information link between various services and acts as a support system for the

many battered women who do not go to transition houses. In the arctic, there are immense pressures on a woman to stay in her community. Because there is a limit to the stay in a transition house, a woman who has no income is often forced to return to her community, where she faces grave consequences.

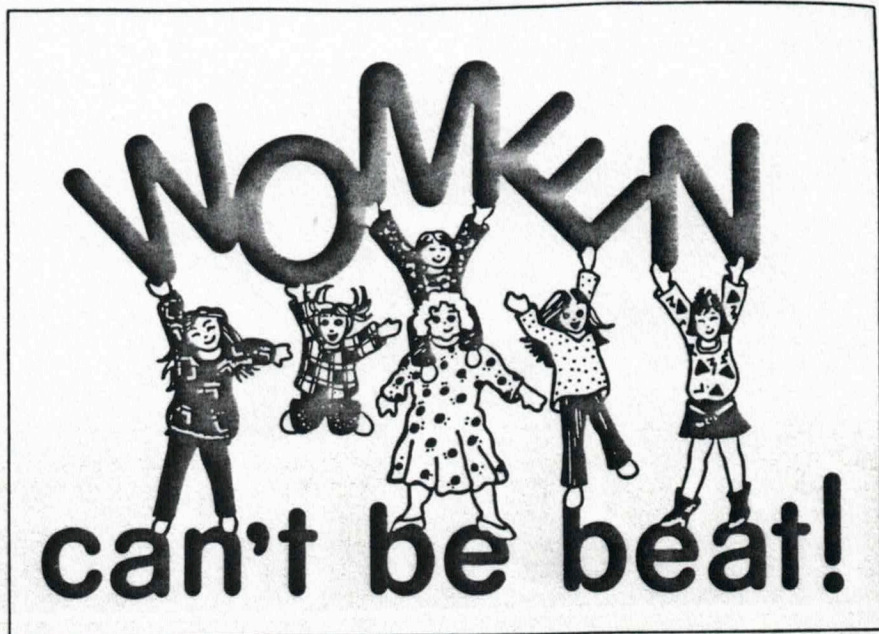
Contact: Lynn Brooks, Director, Society Against Family Abuse, care of Mental Health N.W.T., 5005 51st Street, Yellowknife, N.W.T., X1A 2P1, Tel. (403) 873-5386.

Helping Our Moms Effectively

The main goal of this program on the Six Nations Reserve is to help young mothers (aged 16 to 20), with children under the age of four, to improve their parenting skills. Started in 1983 as a pilot project, Helping Our Moms Effectively (HOME) is now coordinated by two full-time native staff members.

Mothers are referred to HOME from the Children's Aid Society, alcohol and drug abuse programs, doctors, and corrections programs. They receive individual counselling in their home. Once a month there is a special session on baby care. Support groups meet on Wednesday afternoons on the Ohsweken Reserve. At the meetings, the women make crafts they can later sell to earn extra income. Child care is provided during the meetings. Women who work or attend school during the day can attend meetings Tuesday evenings. These meetings are "rap sessions" at which speakers are invited to talk on such subjects as relationships, family violence, child care, and drugs. Volunteers in the program, most of them native mothers, help with fund-raising, the craft course, babysitting and transportation. HOME also provides referrals to drug and alcohol abuse programs, and counselling in custody disputes.

Contact: Ellen Doxtater, HOME, Ohsweken, Ontario, NOA 1M0, Tel. (519) 445-4050.



Women Can't Be Beat

This is a long-term prevention strategy to combat wife assault in Yukon. The double-entendre slogan emphasizes the fact that wife assault is against the law and affirms the dignity of all women. The three-phase project was started by the Yukon Public Legal Education Association with financial and professional assistance from several federal and territorial government departments, as well as non-government agencies. A number of concerned individuals in the criminal justice, social welfare and health care fields are also involved. This multi-disciplinary approach reflects the multi-faceted nature of wife assault and the need to address all aspects of the problem.

In phase one, an information and promotion package for resource persons was produced. This kit includes brochures on the law of assault, peace bonds, going to court and compensation for victims of crime. There are also practical aids to help women who have been assaulted, such as a guide to preparing a safety plan.

Phase two, scheduled to begin in 1988, includes distribution of the package to resource persons, a promotional media campaign and training workshops for resource persons who work with battered women.

Phase three continues the edu-

cational campaign with a view to changing public attitudes which permit wife abuse. It also includes production of a video for women going through the criminal justice system.

The educational and promotional kit for resource persons and victims can be obtained for \$10 from Yukon Public Legal Education Association, P.O. Box 4490, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2R8, Tel. (403) 667-4305.

Nodin Counselling Service

This service in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, takes its name from the word for "wind." In traditional Indian lore, the wind guides travellers when the moon and stars are hidden. As well, "wind" refers to someone who is having mental problems, whose behaviour changes like the wind.

Nodin Counselling Service is a general mental health program for those suffering from drinking problems, personal problems, nervousness, schizophrenia, the loss of a loved one and so on. The program serves the entire northwest corner of Ontario, from Sioux Lookout to the coast of Hudson Bay, an area which comprises 27 communities of 12,000 people spread across 300,000 square kilometres.

Family violence is an increasing source of its work. Women are referred from other professionals who work with them, or they call themselves. After the initial contact, the

women are encouraged to engage their spouse in counselling, unless they do not want the spouse involved. The women are usually open to counselling and, almost as frequently, the men are receptive too. The counsellors are all native, with the exception of the nurse. She acts as a liaison between the mental health team and the hospital, which is staffed predominantly by non-natives.

In northern native culture, leaving the family is not considered the way to solve wife abuse. Because there is great value placed on the well-being of the community, having the individual leave is considered destructive to the whole community. Leaving her community also presents major difficulties for the native woman. Many women do not speak English and have not been trained for the work force, making them unable to obtain employment and housing.

A crisis centre and shelter, staffed by natives and non-natives, has recently been established in Sioux Lookout.

Contact: Joyce Timpson, P.O. Box 1500, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, POV 2T0, Tel. (807) 737-3652.

Thompson Crisis Centre

The crisis centre in the mining town of Thompson, Manitoba, is celebrating its tenth year of operation. In those years, it has had more than its share of firsts: It was the first centre in Canada to conduct a native outreach program on wife abuse, using funding from the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program. It was also the first centre to use this funding for a project that was not directly related to alcohol or drug abuse.

One of the milestones of the centre is the establishment of North Women in Need (WIN) House, an emergency shelter and transition house for battered women and their children. Its dual nature, combining an emergency facility with a longer-term service, is unique. Women can stay up to 10 days in the emergency shelter and up to six months in the transition house. The most recent innovation is an in-house school program. A qualified teacher instructs children in the shelter so that they

do not have to change schools.

Community support and input is vital to both North WIN and the centre. Although much of the work is done by paid staff, volunteers are still involved in essential parts of the operation and inject fresh ideas. Last year the centre sponsored a job re-entry program because of a recognized need for job training and experience among women leaving abusive partners. A proposal in the works would help the centre to offer wider support to women who have left the transition house and are living on their own in the community. This would include a profitable enterprise that would enable women to gain job training and experience. Advocacy for women going through the court system is another part of the plan.

Contact: Eunadie Johnson, Executive Director, Thompson Crisis Centre, Suite 1-55, Selkirk Avenue, Thompson, Manitoba, R8N 0M3.

Research into Family Violence in a Native Community

Three Alberta communities, one of them an Indian reserve, are the subject of a study of how to respond effectively to all types of family violence. The study is a joint venture of the Alberta and federal governments.

Started in May 1987 and continuing over 28 months, the project is being run by Alberta's Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. One of the communities being studied is the Alexis Indian Reserve which has a population of approximately 736 and is situated about 100 km northwest of Edmonton. A local coordinating committee has been established on the reserve with the support of the band council. Since the start of the project, the committee has conducted a day-long seminar on family violence for the community and has helped the researcher develop a questionnaire on the incidence of family violence and agency responses. Future plans include developing questionnaires to gather data from service providers and from adult victims of family violence.

Contact: Katrine McKenzie, Director, Office of the Prevention of Family Violence, Alberta Social Serv-

ices, 10030 107 Street, 9th floor, 7th Street Plaza, Edmonton, Alberta, T5M 3E4, Tel. (403) 427-7599 or Dr. G. Léger, Chief, Community and Police Response Research Division, Solicitor General of Canada, 340 Laurier Ave. W., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P8, Tel. (613) 990-2740.

Course in Native Family Counselling and Community Service

Native Family Counselling and Community Service is one of several courses offered by the Native Education Centre in Vancouver, B.C. The centre is sponsored by the Urban Native Indian Education Society, an all-native community non-profit organization which provides educational and training programs based on the cultural values and beliefs of Indians. The Native Family course, the first of its kind in Canada, is two and a half years in duration and includes intensive training in community development, counselling, spouse abuse, child and sexual abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and Indian spirituality. Students also develop communications skills and gain work experience. Each trainee is given the maximum community support possible and is ensured employment upon conclusion of the course.

Courses at the Native Education Centre are open to natives 18 years of age or older and each program has particular admission requirements. Examples of programs offered in 1987-88 are Native Adult Basic Education, Native Urban Literacy Project, and Native Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Skills Training.

Contact: Native Education Centre, 285 East Fifth Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V5T 1H2, Tel. (604) 873-3761, in B.C. toll-free 1-800-663-5405.

Family Systems Treatment Intervention for Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse

This program is run by the National Native Association of Treatment Directors, which brings together treatment professionals to promote high quality alcohol and drug treatment services for native people.

One of its main projects is the family systems treatment intervention project for native alcohol and drug abuse. Treatment counsellors

are increasingly frustrated in their efforts to assist native people with these problems. Both residential and out-patient treatment in the past focussed on an individual abuser, usually an older man. In recent years, however, treatment providers are seeing younger men, women and youths. The problem of alcohol and drug abuse is extending to the whole family and often the whole community.

In this project, counsellors feel that treating only the individual fails to take into consideration the influence of other family members, who may contribute to the abuse or help in the healing process. The project is being conducted over a year beginning November 1, 1987.

The project team comprises five native counsellors who are conducting research and developing strategies for the project.

Funding for the project is being provided by the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program.

Contact: Rod Jeffries, Executive Director, National Native Association of Treatment Directors, P.O. Box 1882, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 3S2.

Research Projects

While there are many innovative programs for native people living with family violence, more are needed. The following research projects are evidence of the concern of native people, and their efforts to create programs suited to their needs. Research from a native perspective has touched on family violence, alcohol and drug abuse, cultural differences, and women in conflict with the law. This work has brought to the forefront the extent and effects of family violence, as well as the lack of resources available to native victims. But the news is not all grim. It is now apparent that native peoples are coming up with their own solutions to these problems.

Saanich Native Women's Society

In 1986-87, Indian women in Saanich, B.C., conducted a study on "women in conflict with the law" which stressed the links between women offenders and family violence. A community survey was undertaken to identify which social services were

used by native people, and where gaps in service existed. The most common opinion heard was that existing services are inaccessible, because of cultural barriers, insensitivity to native concerns, endless waiting lists and chronic difficulties with transportation. There are insufficient services to deal with prevention, parenting skills training, and other chronic problems. Lack of awareness of existing services and lack of knowledge about human rights are also obstacles for native women. Many of these women have experienced isolation and loss of their rights through the residential school system.

The society distributed a questionnaire on family break-up, suicide, family violence, job search, and drug and alcohol abuse. Respondents voiced an urgent need for adequate access to services and safe places to go in crisis situations. They indicated that they do not use outside agencies because they do not respect them. Services typically lack sensitivity to native clients and their needs.

The second phase of the project was designed to raise awareness, conduct research and build community support. Workshops focussed on probation, family counselling, alcohol and drug awareness, sexual assault, human rights and legal aid. A support network was established.

Some of the recommendations that came out of the study include establishing a crisis line, continuing operations that already exist, conducting research, and conducting a feasibility study for a transition house for native women and children, to be completed by June 1988.

Contact: Muriel Underwood, Saanich Native Women's Society, 6785 Veyaness Road, R.R. #3, Saanichton, B.C., V0S 1M0, Tel. (604) 652-1388.

Survey of Native Women's Needs in London, Ontario

The London Battered Women's Advocacy Clinic, recognizing that few native women were using shelters or the services of community professionals, hired a native research and outreach worker to raise the profile of the clinic in the native community. The worker proposed a needs assess-

ment survey of battered native women, both in London and on the Oneida reserve. The Women's Education and Research Foundation of Ontario agreed to sponsor the project. The survey was designed to:

- document the prevalence of battering in a representative sample of urban and reserve native women (prevalence was assumed to be higher than in the non-native population, but had never been documented)
 - determine whether the existing system adequately served the special needs of battered native women
 - help battered women become aware of the services available, through workshops and one-to-one contact with the interviewer. Some of the suggestions made by respondents included:
 - setting up a native transition house staffed by natives
 - setting up a 24-hour crisis line on the reserve, to be staffed by volunteers
 - setting up a transportation system to take victims to safe places, possibly as part of an existing on-reserve medical system
 - conducting a training program for on-reserve police
 - holding workshops to raise awareness
 - developing an on-reserve counselling service for men who batter
 - expanding existing counselling programs to include female counsellors
 - setting up specialized programs for children exposed to family violence
 - interpreting laws such as the Family Law Reform act and its application to natives on the reserve.
- Native Women's Needs Assessment Survey is now seeking funding to hire four native outreach workers in order to bring in these recommendations on four area reserves.
- Contact: Pauline Doxtator, Native Women's Needs Assessment Survey, 81 Ridout Street S., London, Ontario, N6C 3X2, Tel. (519) 432-2207. ☛