



**ACTIVITIES OF THE  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021**

## ABOUT THE COVER ART



"Mary Jane"

5" diameter

Made with porcupine quills,  
sweetgrass, and birch bark

by Melissa Peter Paul

**Melissa Peter Paul** is a Mi'kmaw woman from the Abegweit First Nation, located on Epekwitk (PEI). Growing up, Melissa was immersed in cultural teachings and began her artistic expression at a young age, making regalia and beadwork, and is skilled in both traditional and contemporary styles. Her exposure to other Mi'kmaw art forms led her to the quillwork, a traditional skill in which the ancestors of her maternal grandfather excelled.

She began an apprenticeship into Mi'kmaq Quill Art in 2015. Her training was grounded in the traditional insertion technique and used the study of cultural teachings and formal resources available through museums and historical publications. Quillwork is created by inserting porcupine quills, either dyed or kept natural, into birch bark. The pieces are then edged with quills, sweetgrass, or spruce root. Over the course of her apprenticeship Melissa learned protocols and techniques related to harvesting raw materials, as well as the complex geometry of traditional design.

Melissa launched her professional career as a quill artist with her first solo exhibit in Charlottetown in 2019. She continues to display her art publicly, and her exhibits receive glowing reviews. Melissa is proud to be passing the art on to her two sons and the broader community.

## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



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Advisory Council on the  
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June 30, 2021

Hon. Natalie Jameson  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women  
PO Box 2000  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 7N8

Dear Minister Jameson:

I am pleased to present you with the 2020–2021 Annual Report of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Annual Report contains a summary of the Advisory Council's activities, publications, projects, and collaborations with government and the community from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021. This year's annual report does not include audited financial statements. The Auditor General's Office has informed us that under the terms of the *Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act*, which does not require they provide an audit every year, they will complete an audit of our 2020–2021 financial records in 2022. We will provide them to you for tabling in the Legislature when the audit is complete. Our pre-audit financial statements for 2020–2021 are in good order and may be requested at any time from the Council office.

I was honoured to be appointed the Council's twenty-first Chairperson as of March 30, 2021, and will be pleased to serve in this role until January 2023. It is a privilege to follow Debbie Langston's leadership. Debbie served as the Chairperson of the Council through all but the last week of the year covered in this report. We were very fortunate to have Debbie's voice and presence so prominent in the public during challenging and unusual times, with the COVID-19 pandemic having multiple effects on women and with the Black Lives Matter and Indigenous rights movements drawing attention to the injustices gender and racial inequality continue to cause. Thank you, Debbie, for your willingness to tell your story as part of the Council's story of the past year.

In 2020, the Council marked its 45th year as a vital arms-length government agency advocating for gender equality for all Islanders. The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented to contain the virus have changed all aspects of life including magnifying pre-existing disparities in society and the impacts on low-income communities including job loss, and access to housing.

Following public health protocols, the Council adapted Council meetings, programming, and the ways it provided advice to government during the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health responses to it.



## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Some of the highlights of Council's work include the following:

- The *Gender and COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island* report by Council with input from past Chairpersons on the effects of COVID-19 on gender equality.
- The Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence Against Women adapted for COVID restrictions and responding to the need to "support survivors," and responding to the tragedy of the Portapique massacre in neighbouring Nova Scotia. Adaptations included moving to badges instead of pins (which pass through many hands) and moving to video instead of an in-person memorial service to remember the lives of murdered women on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
- The Council being called on more than ever before to advise government in consultation processes, including family violence prevention and response needs during lockdown, emergency leave provisions in the Employment Standards Act, the Temporary Foreign Workers Protection Act, land use matters, the Intimate Images Protection Act, pre-budget consultations, models for elected school boards, and, throughout the year whenever possible, gender-sensitive response and recovery from COVID-19. At year end, we were working to providing advice on police services, pre-kindergarten programming, alcohol-related policy, and the Child Protection Act review.

We closed out the year strongly by collaborating with other women's and community organizations and unions to present the "Choose to Challenge" podcast series for International Women's Day 2021. Five interviews in two languages included ten women-identifying Islanders as interviewers and interview subjects.

I wish to extend congratulations to Debbie in the completion of her five-year term. I look forward to continued collaboration with Council members. A warm welcome to newly appointed Council member, Garima Mishra. The Council and staff will work closely with you and your department, other Government departments, and community groups on the Equality Report Card scheduled to be released in March 2022.

The Council staff, Jane, Michelle, and Becky are an amazing team whose hard work and support keeps the Council's work vital and responsive to the needs of women.

Goals for my term will be to advocate for equitable and affordable access to housing, basic income guarantee as a dignified, human-rights solution to poverty reduction, improved mental health resources and economic empowerment for women.

Sincerely,



Cathy Rose, Chairperson



*Outgoing Chairperson Debbie Langston received a service award for her five years on Council at the March 2021 meeting. Presented by ED Jane Ledwell on members' behalf.*



*New member Garima Mishra, greeted by new Chair Cathy Rose in 2021.*

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### Vision, Mission, & Mandate

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PEIACSW) is an arm's-length government-appointed Council.

Nine Council members are selected from among Island women who have demonstrated a commitment to women's equality and who represent regional, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

The Council believes that women's equality is the foundation for equality for all people. Women's inequality continues to influence discriminatory attitudes and actions that affect our society and culture, our politics and laws, and our economies.

Council believes that women's independent social and economic security is key to equality and to freedom from physical, emotional, and sexual violence.

The Advisory Council began in 1975 as a Minute-in-Council. In 1988, it received full legislative standing with the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act. This Act continues to govern the Council's structure and mandate.

#### **Vision:**

- Gender equality for all Islanders

#### **Mission:**

- Promoting changes of attitude within the Prince Edward Island community and advising government to achieve equality in legislation, policies, and programs.

#### **With a commitment to feminist principles and process, the PEIACSW:**

- serves as an advisor to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women regarding issues facing Island women and girls and their families
- serves as a liaison between the community and the provincial government on matters related to equality
- works for equality and supports women's full and active participation in social, legal, cultural, economic, and political spheres of life
- promotes social justice for vulnerable populations, including senior women, Aboriginal women, low-income women, women of colour, Francophone women, women with disabilities, women who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, and others
- conducts research and offers recommendations to government, collaborators and partners to promote equality
- provides leadership that educates and stimulates public awareness about the status of women and their families
- works in collaboration with other provincial/territorial Advisory Councils

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women acknowledges all women-identifying people in our understanding of "women," including cis women, trans women, and gender minorities.

The work of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women takes place on the island district of Epekwitk in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq and their home since time immemorial.



*"Ma'kit," quillwork by Mi'kmaq artist Melissa Peter Paul of the Abegweit First Nation.*

### Council Meetings & Strategic Planning

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women is mandated to meet at least four times per year. At meetings, Council members share experiences, knowledge, and understanding of issues. They discuss and decide on policy priorities and recommendations to government. They meet with government officials or community organizations or both. They invite resource people who offer opportunities for learning and analysis. Council's strategic planning processes are ongoing. The goal of Council planning is to ensure that Council's policy work is based on Council's priorities and that Council looks to the future on issues of concern to women. Ensuring ongoing follow-up on issues is part of Council planning. Council sets its objectives in an interest-based, collaborative, and consultative process, with expert facilitation whenever this is possible.



A screen capture of Council members meeting by videoconference in May 2021.

#### Advisory Council Meetings & Highlights, 2020–2021:

##### **169th meeting: May 13, 2020, via videoconference**

###### *Wellbeing Check-In*

Chairperson Debbie Langston brought Council members together via videoconference to check in on everyone's wellbeing. Council members provided feedback on government questions about family violence prevention response during COVID-19 and on emergency leave provisions proposed for the Employment Standards Act.

##### **170th meeting: June 29, 2020, Summerside, PEI**

###### *Gender Impacts of COVID-19*

Chairperson Debbie Langston welcomed members to a physically distanced, in-person meeting at Eptek Centre in Summerside. Members held a roundtable on gendered effects of the global pandemic of COVID-19 and public health measures taken to prevent its spread.

##### **171st meeting: October 2, 2020, Charlottetown, PEI**

###### *Release of Gender & COVID-19 Report*

Council celebrated the launch of the report *Gender & COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island: In the Words of Women-Identifying Islanders*, March to July 2020. The group welcomed Emma Chilton from Community Legal Information for an informative discussion of CLI's tenant support program.

##### **172nd meeting: December 3, 2020, Charlottetown, PEI**

###### *Candle-Lighting for Victims of Violence*

Council members assisted with a private, COVID-19 compliant candle-lighting ceremony to mark the 31st anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. Decision-makers, front-line workers, survivors, and families of murdered women lit candles in remembrance of the 14 women who died at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal in December 1989, and in memory of the ten Island women who have been murdered since. The candle-lighting was documented for a video commemoration for December 6th. The ceremony was followed by a business meeting.

##### **173rd meeting: January 19, 2021, via videoconference**

###### *Pre-Budget Consultations*

Council members met virtually to review Council business and strategic planning and to discuss a submission to government regarding priorities for the 2021–2022 provincial budget. Members prepared for the meeting with education resources and presentations on gender budgeting and basic income guarantee.

##### **174th meeting: March 16, 2021, Charlottetown, PEI**

###### *Recognition of Outgoing Chairperson*

Council members met in a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting to recognize Debbie Langston's final meeting as the Council's Chairperson and to present Debbie with a service award. Members continued with strategic planning for the coming year to be ready to welcome a new Chairperson.

### Advisory Council Members

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**Cathy Rose, Fortune — Chairperson (beginning March 30)  
— Vice-Chairperson (to March 30)**

*Chairperson term: 30 March 2021 to 23 January 2023*

*Vice-Chairperson term: 29 October 2019 to 30 March 2021*

*Council term: 23 January 2018 to 23 January 2023*

Cathy Rose owned and operated Creative Esthetics Dental Lab for 23 years. She then went on to become a Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) and following that, obtained her Executive Masters in Business (MBA). She worked for 10 years in disability management, five of which were at UPEI as Coordinator of Accessibility Services. Cathy currently works in the area of capacity building for rural and Indigenous communities and runs a small home-based dental lab business. She is passionate about women's economic rights and empowerment and teaches business entrepreneurship across the Island. Cathy enjoys time at the cottage with her husband, three daughters, three stepsons, and their families.



**Debbie Langston, Blooming Point — Chairperson (to March 22)**

*Chairperson term: 29 October 2019 to 22 March 2021*

*Vice-Chairperson term: 23 January 2018 to 29 October 2019*

*Council term: 22 March 2016 to 22 March 2021*

Debbie Langston and her sisters were raised by their mother in the UK. After leaving school Debbie worked for the Metropolitan Police Service, where she met her husband. They immigrated to Canada with their young family in 2004. Debbie graduated from the Holland College Child and Youth Care Worker course in 2009 and is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program at UPEI. She has worked in a variety of settings and is currently employed as a Youth Service Worker with the Public Schools Branch. Debbie is a passionate advocate for equality for women and the rights of other marginalized groups.



**Chris MacPhail, Canoe Cove — Treasurer**

*Elected Treasurer 29 October 2019 to 23 January 2023*

*Council term: 23 January 2018 to 23 January 2023*

Chris MacPhail has been an active volunteer with Indigenous organizations since her teens, when she was a youth representative on the Native Women's Association of Canada. She is currently a Zone 2 director of the Native Council of PEI. She is also enrolled as a student at Holland College. Chris is a mother of three, including a daughter, Danelle, with Down Syndrome. She is also a grandmother. Chris is a dedicated advocate for children and youth with different abilities and a strong voice on environmental issues.



### Advisory Council Members, continued



**Serena Smith, Summerside — Vice-Chairperson (beginning March 30)  
— Member (to March 30)**

*Vice-Chairperson term: 30 March 2021 to 29 October 2022*

*Council term: 29 October 2019 to 29 October 2022*

Serena Smith is originally from PEI, but grew up across Canada. She returned to PEI to begin her career as a lawyer with Cox & Palmer in the Summerside office. She has a social work degree and is a registered social worker (on leave). Serena is passionate about social entrepreneurship and the equality of women and marginalized groups, which is reflected in her various volunteer positions. In addition to her work on the Advisory Council, she currently serves on the Board of the PEI Literacy Alliance and volunteers with the PEI Business Women's Association and Special Olympics PEI.



**Caroline MacRae, Summerside — Member**

*Council term: 19 February 2019 to 19 February 2022*

Caroline MacRae grew up in Charlottetown and spent several years teaching overseas in South Korea and Guyana. Within Canada she has worked on a youth advocacy project through the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association, as well as nursing at a remote hospital in Haida Gwaii, BC. She currently works as a Registered Nurse in Summerside. In addition to her work on the Advisory Council, she serves on the boards of PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and PEI Family Violence Prevention Services.



**Regina "Gina" Younker, Charlottetown — Member**

*Council term: 19 February 2019 to 19 February 2022*

Regina (Gina) Younker is an Islander by choice; she has lived in Prince Edward Island for over 30 years. She is a local anti-poverty advocate who is especially passionate about improving choices for women, mothers, and children experiencing poverty. Gina has been involved with the Adventure Group, and Women's Network PEI (specifically the Paths to Prosperity project). Currently, she represents PEI as a board member of the national anti-poverty organization Canada Without Poverty. Gina also serves on PEI's Poverty Reduction Advisory Council in addition to her appointment as an ACSW member, and she previously served on the provincial housing council. Gina lives in Cornwall, PEI. She is the proud mother of three grown children and grandmother to Savannah and Spencer and Stella.



**Barb McDowall, Charlottetown — Member**

*Council term: 29 October 2019 to 29 October 2022*

Barb McDowall has been an Islander by choice since her arrival in 2015, (a journey 14 years in the making). This remarkable place of possibility and opportunity is now her forever home. She gratefully adds her unique skills and perspective as a conscious living and dying coach to the unique skills and perspectives of the brilliant and talented women with whom she serves on Council.

### Advisory Council Members, continued



#### **Emily Rutledge, Charlottetown — Member**

*Council term: 29 October 2019 to 29 October 2022*

Emily is a single mom who works outside the home as a Career Counsellor. She has lived in the Maritimes most of her adult life. Originally from Toronto, she moved to Halifax to study art and crept further east to complete a psychology undergrad at UPEI. She moved on to do a Masters in Community Psychology and another in Counselling and is now happy to call the Island her home. Working as a Career Counsellor has afforded her the opportunity to be an ear to the realities Islanders face on a daily basis. She is passionate about supporting the mental health of Islanders and is a longstanding member of the Abortion Rights Network.



#### **Gaylene Carragher, Stanhope — Member**

*Council term: 29 October 2019 to 29 October 2022*

Gaylene is very honoured and excited to be working as a member of Council. She is a mother to three children, is married, and lives in Stanhope. She has worked at Holland College for 22 years and taught sessionally at UPEI for ten years. She is currently the Director of Retention, Part-time Studies & Career Services at Holland College. Her educational background includes an MEd, and MBA, and a diploma in human resources—she is a lifelong learner!



#### **Garima Mishra, Charlottetown — Member**

*Council term: 30 March 2021 to 30 March 2024*

Garima was born and raised in India and moved with her husband to Canada and PEI in 2017. An Engineer by qualification, she has been working as an IT professional for the past 11 years. Garima feels fortunate to be living in PEI around very diverse communities as there's a lot to learn from each one of those. She strongly believes that we all can progress and succeed together if we enable and support each other. As Garima and her husband prepare to welcome their first child into the world, she is excited to contribute by being a part of this Council. She is delighted to be part of this esteemed group of women who are striving to make our society a happier, more equitable place.



*Incoming Chair Cathy Rose (left) and outgoing Chair Debbie Langston (right).*

#### **Council Member Highlights and Changes, 2020–2021:**

Members of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women are appointed by Executive Council, selected from among Island women who have demonstrated a commitment to gender equality. Women self-nominate for inclusion through “Engage PEI.” Members usually represent regional, cultural, and ethnic diversity, including groups such as young, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Francophone, disabled, low-income, newcomer, racialized, and senior women. Council members are appointed for two- and three-year terms and may serve a maximum total of five years.

During 2020–2021, Debbie Langston completed her maximum five-year term after serving as a member, Vice-Chairperson, and, finally, Chairperson. In January 2021, Cathy Rose and Chrissy MacPhail were re-appointed for two-year terms. On March 30, Cathy Rose was named as the new Chairperson, Serena Smith was appointed Vice-Chairperson, and Garima Mishra was appointed as a new member for a three-year term.

### Advisory Council Staff

The Advisory Council had two full-time and one part-time permanent staff members in 2020-2021.



#### **Jane Ledwell — Executive Director**

*Jane joined Council staff in June 2004 and has been Executive Director since September 2012. She works full time.*

Jane grew up in rural PEI and studied English literature at Mt. Allison University in New Brunswick and the University of Waikato in New Zealand. A writer and editor in her spare time, she has published three books of poetry and has contributed to a number of other books, with a special focus on historical women writers connected to PEI. Prior to working with the PEIACSW, Jane worked at UPEI as a teacher and with the research- and policy-focused Institute of Island Studies. Jane lives in Charlottetown with her family.



#### **Michelle Jay — Program Coordinator**

*Michelle was hired as Program Coordinator in September 2012 and works full time.*

Michelle is a proud Mom, a proud lesbian, and a proud social justice activist. She has identified as a feminist and an advocate for racial and cultural inclusion since her teen years. Michelle grew up in Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Zambia and volunteered with refugees in Guatemala and Mexico as a young adult. Her formal post-secondary education was from Mt. Allison University and UPEI, where she eventually received a BA in Psychology. She has called PEI “home” with varying degrees of (dis)comfort since the mid-1980s. Michelle lives with her daughter in Charlottetown.



#### **Becky Tramley — Office Manager**

*Becky joined Council staff in October 1986 and works part time as Office Manager.*

Becky joined Council staff full-time in October 1986 and has worked part-time since 1993. She has served in a number of administrative roles over thirty years and is the Council’s living institutional memory. Becky grew up in Nova Scotia and PEI and is the youngest of seven children brought up in a mother-led family. Her studies have included attendance at UPEI and Holland College. She lives in Charlottetown with her husband and two cats.

### **Staff & Chair Development, 2020–2021:**

- The staff and Chairperson meet regularly to plan and review their work and to take opportunities for team-building together. The staff team sets team goals annually and reviews them regularly.
- This year, the Chair pursued a UPEI anthropology course focused on diversity. The ED participated in training including EVERYSEEKER Halifax’s anti-oppression workshops (June 3 & 10), United Way–sponsored “Soaring Beyond COVID-19” (September to November), and PAC-sponsored “Impacts of Domestic Violence on Children and Parents” (February 16 & 18). The Program Coordinator participated in United Way–sponsored, Women’s Network–led “Help 4 Helpers” training (January to February) as well as learning opportunities related to restorative justice. Workshops put on by community or government listed under consultations and events are often training opportunities.
- The staff and Chairperson enjoyed a team-building day in Victoria-by-the-Sea, with the new ED of the Coalition for Women in Government, Sweta Daboo (July 30).



*Chair and staff selfie with Sweta Daboo in Victoria-by-the-Sea.*

## Special Report: Gender & COVID-19 in PEI

The report *Gender & COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island: In the Words of Women-Identifying Islanders, March to July 2020* arose from Council members' desire to record women's experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and PEI's public health response to it. The report was launched October 2, 2020, and is available for download at [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca).



*Council's June 2020 meeting featured a physically distanced roundtable discussion on impacts of COVID-19.*

### Gender & COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island: In the Words of Women-Identifying Islanders, March to July 2020:

- During the spring of 2020, Council members were checking in regularly online and decided to set a priority on sharing women's stories about this historic moment of global upheaval. Later, a call from the Public Archives and Records Office asking Islanders to submit their pandemic experiences cemented the Council's commitment to record women's realities. The insightful report features poignant and political reflections on PEI women's local lived experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Stories, recommendations, and analysis come from over 20 participant women's voices. The report features interviews with each of the nine currently appointed members of the Advisory Council and a summary of themes from a roundtable with Council members and staff that also includes perspectives from interviews with nine past Council chairpersons.
- Participants observed the ways women are bearing the brunt of the health and economic effects of COVID-19. They also identified the ways the pandemic has shed light on not just gender inequality, but racial and economic inequality. The insights participants in this study provide tell a lot about the gendered effects of the global pandemic and the risk of losing ground on equality gains.
- The *Gender and COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island* report also highlights insights for policy. The Council insisted: the "Renew PEI Together" plan to recover from the social, economic, and health effects of the pandemic must include the experiences of all genders and groups that experience discrimination. Policy insights from the report were submitted to the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in September and October.

### Premier's Council for Recovery & Growth "Sector Champions" Group:

- Council's ED was asked to sit on the "Sector Champions" group to advise the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth
- Meetings and consultations for Sector Champions took place June 22 and October 19
- Submission of Councils "Insights for Policy" from the Gender & COVID-19 in PEI report to the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth (September 15)
- Consultations were followed up with a letter to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Premier's Council on gender considerations in pandemic recovery on October 22



## Research & Policy Work

Whenever possible, the Advisory Council submits briefs to public consultations on issues of concern to women and families. Council's submissions build on past policy recommendations to government. They are developed in consultation with Council members and often include consultation with community members or organizations.



*Council members took part in person and online and on-screen for the March 2021 meeting.*

### Highlights of Research & Policy Work, 2020–2021:

- Written feedback from Council on draft emergency leave provisions under the Employment Standards Act (May 13)
- Written feedback from Council on questions about family violence prevention and response, from a cross-departmental committee working on this issue during COVID-19 lockdown (May 28)
- Council members individually responded to a survey on governance for the Auditor General's Office (July/August)
- Response to a survey on the Land Matters project to review and update land-related policy and legislation (August 20)
- Input from Council on proposed Temporary Foreign Workers Protection legislation consultation documents (August 21) and follow-up input on draft legislation (February 12)
- Consultation led by the Interministerial Women's Secretariat and Department of Finance with gender and diversity groups regarding planning inclusive pre-budget consultations (September 21). The ED then participated in a virtual town hall (January 12), in preparation for Council's written submission to the consultation.
- Consultation led by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism regarding "Economic Engagement and Recovery for Women" and the new PEI COVID-19 Workforce Integration Fund (October 16)
- Written submission of feedback on Children's Law legislation (October 28)
- Written feedback from Council to Department of Finance consultations on the Provincial Operating Budget for 2021–2022 (January 22)
- Response to a survey on elected school-board models (March 9)
- Participation in a public consultation regarding the Child Protection Act Review (March 30)

### Government Committees and Task Forces, 2020–2021:

- The Program Coordinator continues to take part in the Restorative Justice of Community of Interest sessions initiated by the Department of Justice and Public Safety
- The ED was invited to join a Department of Health and Wellness government advisory committee consulting on Women's and Gender Diverse Islanders' Health Services and participated in one-on-one conversations regarding this work as needed (meetings November 24, December 15, January 19, and one missed on February 23)
- The ED was appointed by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to a task force to review and analyze the PEI School Athletics Association's policies and procedures with a gender and equity lens (meetings January 8, February 3 & 22, and March 9)

## Equality Report Card

The Equality Report Card assesses the PEI government's progress towards implementing recommendations related to gender equality. Council released a pilot in 2008 and subsequent Equality Report Cards in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2018.

### Preparing for the Next Equality Report Card:

In 2019–2020, members of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women developed the process and assessment model for the next Equality Report Card, specific to the mandate of government elected in May 2019.

Council presented their model for the next Equality Report Card to Minister Responsible Natalie Jameson in March 2020, during COVID-19 lockdown, without a timeline. In February 2021, Council and government agreed on a timeline for reporting and assessment and will collaborate towards the release of the next Equality Report Card in March 2022.



*The first ten years of Equality Report Cards, 2008 to 2018.*

## Meetings with the Minister Responsible

In a variety of forms, Council advises government, through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, on changes in policy and legislation to benefit the lives of Island women-identifying people, girls, and their families.

### Meetings with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, 2020–2021:

- The Council Chairperson, in particular, leads the Council's relationship with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Council Chairperson Debbie Langston met with Minister Responsible Hon. Natalie Jameson twice. The ACSW ED and Program Coordinator regularly participate in the meetings, as does the Director of the Interministerial Women's Secretariat.
- July 29: Topics included commemorating The Bog, recent government consultations, sexual assault response, support for new parents during COVID-19, women's escalating pandemic unemployment numbers, the call for a feminist national inquiry into the Portapique massacre, Equality Report Card timelines, our Gender and COVID-19 project, and other Council business.
- February 24: Topics included commemorating The Bog, recent government consultations, the need for a Family Violence Prevention Coordinator, housing and tenant issues and the need for updates to the Residential Tenancy Act; challenges for individuals accessing the COVID-19 Workforce Integration Fund; unjust barriers for people on Social Assistance caused by EI/CERB/CRB; Equality Report Card timelines, and other Council business.
- Council ED Jane Ledwell provided input to the Interministerial Women's Secretariat on a draft of the 2020 Statistical Profile of Women (February/March).



*In July 2020, Chair Debbie Langston presented Hon. Natalie Jameson with Council's 2019-2020 Annual Report.*

## Meetings & Correspondence with Government

Advisory Council members and staff attend many meetings and consultations representing the Advisory Council each year. Often, what Council learns in these meetings helps set priorities for Council. Sometimes, in lieu of meeting with officials, the Advisory Council offers analysis in correspondence.



*Advisory Council staff had the pleasure of answering PEI Senator Diane Griffin's questions about Basic Income Guarantee as part of a "lobby day" event touting basic income with MPs and Senators.*

### Selected Meetings with Officials, 2020–2021:

- Check-ins and collaboration with the Director of the Interministerial Women's Secretariat occurred regularly and sometimes formally
- Meetings with the provincial Family Violence Prevention and Community Development Coordinator (May 25, September 24)
- Meetings with Marv Bernstein, the new independent Child and Youth Advocate (check-in June 3, meeting August 20)
- The ED met with Auditor General Darren Noonan regarding gender and diversity and representation (March 15)
- Chairperson Debbie Langston and the ED met with Opposition Status of Women critic Karla Bernard about gender and COVID-19 (October 7)
- Other consultations and briefings with Opposition MLAs and the Opposition Office included feedback on proposed amendments to Non-Consensual Sharing of Intimate Images legislation (June 16 & November 6); and Council's advice regarding sexual misconduct in schools (June 22 & December 14); Chairperson Debbie Langston, Vice-Chairperson Cathy Rose and Council staff took part in a briefing on the Official Opposition's draft Poverty Elimination Act (January 28)
- Federal meetings included participation in a national call with Hon. Maryam Monsef, federal minister for Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), with equality-seeking organizations across Canada (April 17); participation in a National Consultation on Gender and Poverty led by WAGE (March 30); and a meeting with PEI Senator Diane Griffin about basic income guarantee (October 22)

### Selected Correspondence, 2020–2021:

- Letters to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women included a letter regarding commemoration of The Bog neighbourhood (June 18); a letter outlining Council's response to the Land Matters survey (August 20); a letter outlining recommendations for economic recovery following consultations with the Department of Economic Development, and the Sector Champions group of the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth (October 22)
- A letter to the PEI Psychologists' Association outlining Council actions in response to their call for a ban on conversion therapy (April 17)
- Other letters included letters of support for organizations seeking funding for equality projects; letters of reference for women associated with our work; nominations of Island women for awards and honours, including the Meritorious Service Award; and cards of recognition from the Council Chairperson to women who achieve notable things.

### Newsletters & Activities Updates

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women provides a weekly e-newsletter as a free community service. Subscribers receive submitted listings of community notices.

Once a year, the Advisory Council produces an Activities Update with information about the Council's activities and events, published online.

#### E-Newsletter, 2020–2021:

- The Advisory Council on the Status of Women e-news sent out 36 campaigns in 2020–2021, from April to June and September to March. The e-news was suspended as a weekly feature during lockdown. A special edition of the e-news launched the Purple Ribbon Campaign.
- Campaigns included at least 451 notices.
- More than 375 people subscribe to the e-news, an increase of at least 25 people over the previous year.
- Our e-newsletter with community events and notices about upcoming events, activities, or items of interest is sent directly to our subscriber list usually every Thursday and is also available at a link on our website at [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca).
- Subscriptions are welcome at <http://eepurl.com/rQH6P>.

#### Activities Update Newsletter, 2020–2021:

- *Activities Update*, Fall/Winter 2020

### New Media & Social Media



Advisory Council on the Status of Women staff members independently manage content of the Advisory Council's official website at <https://peistatusofwomen.ca>. Whenever possible, news releases and publications are made available on the website as they are released.

The Advisory Council also uses social media to educate and engage. A presence on social networking sites Facebook and Twitter started in March 2012.

#### Website, 2020–2021, [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca):

- The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women website moved to a new site, [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca), at the very end of March 2020.
- Council's previous website ([www.gov.pe.ca/acsw](http://www.gov.pe.ca/acsw)) was retired in 2020–2021 and Council stopped updating the Wordpress blog at [www.wordpress.com/peiacsw](http://www.wordpress.com/peiacsw). All new information, including the weekly e-newsletter, is now posted regularly on the new website. As old and archival information stops being available through former sites, it will continue to be available by request.
- Analytics for the new website are not available for 2020–2021.

#### Twitter, 2020–2021, @peiacsw:

- At March 31, about 75 tweets had been posted the previous year, resulting in an average of 5,000 tweet impressions per month. We had about 2,650 followers, a gain of about 55 over the previous year. Our organization was mentioned in about 78 tweets by others. We continued to be less active on Twitter in 2020–2021 because the platform is too tolerant of trolling and misogyny.
- Highlights included tweets about events such as the Purple Ribbon Campaign and International Women's Day and partnerships such as the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability.



## New Media & Social Media, continued



*A still from the video commemoration of the Montreal Massacre Memorial Service shows Elder Julie Pellissier-Lush singing in memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.*



*A still from Farahnaz Rezaei's contribution to the video banner of community greetings for International Women's Day.*



*Social media meme in support of Mi'kmaq right to moderate livelihood fishery. Source unknown.*

### Videos, 2020–2021, [vimeo.com/peiacsw](https://vimeo.com/peiacsw):

- Council videos received over 4,700 impressions and over 440 views.
  - The 2020 Montreal Massacre Memorial Service video commemoration (December 6): [vimeo.com/487804493](https://vimeo.com/487804493)
  - International Women's Day video banner of greetings from community members (March 7): [vimeo.com/520564718](https://vimeo.com/520564718)

### Facebook, 2020–2021, [facebook.com/peistatusofwomen](https://facebook.com/peistatusofwomen):

- A snapshot of ACSW Facebook page analytics as of March 30, 2021:
  - "Likes": 1,351 (an increase of about 250 from the previous year)
  - Total posts: 353
  - Total reach: 93,987 (number of unique users)
  - Total impressions: 104,918 (# of times an unpaid post was opened)
- Slightly fewer individual posts received more than 1,000 likes this year: 14 in total. Most were ACSW event-related items. Some linked series of posts on specific topics or issues generated strong interest as a group.
- A post in April 2020 profiling local organic women farmers had more than 2K likes (2,567). Chairperson Debbie Langston wrote an op-ed reflecting on the inequalities revealed during COVID-19 that generated 1,372 responses (April 28). The most engagement in April was about the horrific GBV mass shooting in Nova Scotia. Five postings related to the tragedy on April 20, 21, 23, 27, and 28, received a total of more than 3.5K "likes" (3,657).
- Reflecting the pandemic reality of the early fall, a post on September 4 on COVID-19 masking guidelines received over 1K responses (1,203). Also in September, violence in the Maritimes directed toward Indigenous fishers generated a lot of interest and support for Peace and Friendship Treaty rights (1,574, September 20).
- Our *Gender and COVID-19* report was well-received, with more than 1K (1,114) people responding to posts made on October 1, 2, and 6.
- A November 19 issue of the e-news with Purple Ribbon Campaign "Support Survivors" announcements received 1,440 likes. Postings about the December 6th Memorial video commemoration were very well responded to, with the top post receiving 2.5K likes (2,057 on December 2). A December 4 posting that included photos of candle-lighters received a lot of attention.
- In the final quarter of the year, the topic that received the most attention was International Women's Day. The launch of the IWD podcast series on March 8 received 3,661 likes; these with promotions of each of the individual podcast interviews and Chairperson Debbie Langston's op-ed in the *Guardian* garnered nearly 10K additional likes (9,642).

## Media

The Advisory Council regularly submits news releases and opinion pieces to the media. The Council also responds to requests for comment on issues that affect women and families. Ordinarily, approved spokespersons on behalf of the Council are the Chairperson, the Executive Director, and the Program Coordinator.



This painting by Debbie Langston, a leaving home gift for her son Josh, accompanied her front-page editorial, "Dear Lisa: Black Lives Matter."



Freelance journalist Marine Ernault with Actions Femmes interviewing Jane Ledwell for *Féminin PluriElles*.

### News Release, 2020–2021:

- PEI Status of Women Releases Report on COVID-19 and Gender (October 2)

### Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces, 2020–2021:

- What COVID-19 Reveals about Gender Inequality, by Debbie Langston (April 29)
- Survivors Tell Us How to Support Them | À l'écoute des survivants et survivantes : comment faire pour les appuyer? by Debbie Langston & Jane Ledwell (May 25)
- Dear Lisa: Black Lives Matter, by Debbie Langston (June 12)
- Where Violence Persists, What Women Do | Là où la violence persiste, ce que font les femmes, by Debbie Langston (December 5)
- Even in February, December 6th Is Important | Même en février, le 6 décembre est une date importante, by D. Langston (February 12)

### Interview Requests, 2020–2021:

- **CBC Radio/Television:** *Island Morning* re. gender & COVID-19 (May 6); *Compass* re. women's unemployment (July 14); *Island Morning* re. new mandate letter for Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (September 16); *Island Morning* and *Compass* re. Gender & COVID-19 report, including interviews with 3 Council members (October 2); *Island Morning/Compass* re. International Women's Day (March 8)
- **Radio-Canada Radio/Web:** Gender & COVID-19 report (October 5); upcoming events in the women's community (January 20); maternal mental health in the pandemic (March 30)
- **Island Press:** Purple Ribbon Campaign (November 26)
- **Charlottetown Guardian/Saltwire:** participation in International Virtual Hub panel on Islands & COVID-19 (September 1); email interviews re. gendered effects of COVID-19 on women in the workforce (September 8) and women's mental health in the pandemic (February 18); International Women's Day podcasts (March 5); gender issues in debate at the Legislature (March 29)
- **Other Local Podcasts & Multimedia:** "Hidden Island," PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation, episode "Where Are the Women?" (interview June 12); "Dialogue with Drake and Daboo," debut episode, gender and COVID-19 (interview October 17); "Féminin PluriElles," Actions Femmes multimedia profile re. francophile women (interview December 1); Eastlink Community TV "My Voice," interview with D. Langston for Black History Month (February). See page 27 for more about the "Choose to Challenge" podcast series for IWD (March 8)
- **Government of PEI** videos featuring Chairperson Debbie Langston for Family Violence Prevention Week ([twitter.com/i/status/1361655161727438850](https://twitter.com/i/status/1361655161727438850)) and International Women's Day ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkrv9jyW1B4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkrv9jyW1B4) - 679 views)

## Inquiries & Referrals

The Advisory Council responds to inquiries from individuals, groups, and government.

These range from requests for information to crisis calls and requests for advocacy. People make inquiries in person or by telephone, e-mail, or correspondence. Inquiries are often complex and often come from women who have already tried unsuccessfully to get service.

The Advisory Council does not have the mandate or resources to provide services or to advocate for individual women. We offer support with information, referrals, and, at times, interventions with formal systems. The concerns women raise in individual inquiries often lead to policy analysis by Council to address underlying systemic issues. When possible, the Chair raises concerns from inquiries with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.



The Advisory Council's logo in the colours of the Progress Pride flag.

### About Inquiries, 2020–2021:

*Long-term and interrelated challenges of abusive relationships:* Issues callers cited included legal processes perpetuating abuse; need for navigation of supports; loss of income; isolation; system gaps in information-sharing and record-keeping; mental health harm to children and survivors.

*Violence against women ever-prevalent:* Inquiries identified the difficulty of reporting to police and not feeling believed. A man expressed surprise that his report of a serial sexual abuser in the community was not taken seriously by police. A survivor said changes were needed in family law to not further victimize women who have survived intimate partner violence; another offered to tell her story publicly in future. There were inquiries about sexual assault kits in PEI hospitals. A number of women expressed outrage and pain that a local businessman has not been held accountable for his role in sexual assaults.

*Access to physical and mental health care:* One caller had difficulty getting assistance from paramedics; another felt her needs were not met at the Women's Wellness Clinic. A sexual assault survivor was triggered at Emergency when presenting for mental health care. A number of women inquired about supports for adults struggling with ADHD diagnosis; others reported feeling isolated and unable to receive mental health care during the pandemic. An advocate called about healthcare access for a pregnant migrant worker in PEI.

*Poverty a significant, ongoing issue:* Navigating the federal CERB program, EI and provincial Income Support programs was especially challenging during the pandemic. A woman called seeking to address serious gender-based pay inequity/workplace discrimination. Housing issues such as conflict with neighbours were exacerbated by a growing housing crisis.

*Race-related inquiries were more common this year:* Questions addressed challenges of raising biracial kids on PEI and inquiries about allyship and how white feminists and BIPOC women can work together respectfully.

*Other topics of inquiries included* concern about closure of Adult Ed rural campuses; anonymity in communications with government Ministers; requests to recognize a community advocate or unsung pioneer of women's rights; and a request for support for Sen. Julie Miville-Dechéne's Bill S-203 to limit young people's access to sexually explicit material online.

*Referrals:* The new PEI 211 Service resulted in a drop in inquiries. Most referrals are to Family Violence Prevention Services, the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, Community Legal Information, and Victim Services. Council staff also made referrals this year to feminist counselling and/or psychological care (for generalized anxiety and substance use concerns); the Coalition for Women in Government (for advice on diversity on boards); the Black Cultural Society (for advice on systemic racism); IRAC and PEI Fight for Affordable Housing (for tenant support advice); and our own e-news (for event-promotion opportunities).



## Community Consultations

The Advisory Council staff, Chairperson and Council members consult with many individuals, organizations, and sectors on a variety of issues related to the status of women on PEI.

### Community Consultations, 2020–2021:

- The Chairperson consulted with the Black Cultural Society regarding plans for a commemoration of The Bog (June 18); she met with and consulted with BIPOC USHR (August 11)
- The Chairperson and Program Coordinator took part in meetings with the Black Cultural Society and others interested in establishing a BIPOC/Black girls' group, which became Camp Furaha and assisted with funding proposals (May 25, June 16, throughout August)
- The Program Coordinator and the Chairperson consulted with RCMP Superintendent Jennifer Ebert about an RCMP Diversity Advisory Committee (February)
- The ED and Program Coordinator met with migrant workers' rights groups about proposed temporary foreign worker protection legislation (August 13) and followed up with Cooper Institute (February 11)
- The ED checked-in with government and community partners as regularly as possible, including Women's Network PEI (April 7, May 27, September 25, November 4, February 17); Family Violence Prevention Services (April 7, November 26, December 11 & 18); Actions Femmes (May 22, October 23); and EPWIC (September 22)
- The ED took part in Actions Femmes's strategic planning survey for members and potential members (June 22)
- The ED met with the Chairperson of the New Museum Advocacy Group about their plans to advocate for a provincial museum and advised them on how to ensure gender perspectives are included (October 16); the Council endorsed their vision statement for a new museum (March 16)
- The Program Coordinator took part in consultations with the City of Charlottetown's Sustainability Officer with the Social Justice and Public Transit meeting (October 30) and with the PEI Medical Society with the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income (March 10)

### Feminist PRIDE T-shirts, 2020–2021:

- Program Coordinator Michelle Jay coordinated a project to have Feminist PRIDE t-shirts designed and printed, with a portion of the proceeds going to Women's Network PEI
- The t-shirts were designed by Megan Dorrell and printed and sold by Iconic Arts PEI
- A Facebook posting on November 30 that highlighted local celebs modelling the Feminist PRIDE t-shirts (Council family members and pets!) generated more than 2K likes (2,154)



Family members of Council staff modelled Feminist PRIDE t-shirts! Thanks, Gail and Lesley and Teddy, Sam and AnnaSophia, and Bella and Bowie!



## Other Community Engagement



*Council's pop-up banner didn't have many places to pop up in 2020.*



*Council members at the December meeting following a private candle-lighting ceremony in memory of women killed by violence.*

### Panels and Presentations, 2020–2021:

- Debbie Langston presented on a Diversity Panel for the Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce (August 12)
- The ED presented on an international panel "Virtual Hub: Islands and COVID-19 Recovery" for Island Innovation as a warm-up to the Virtual Island Summit (September 1)
- The ED gave a presentation on violence against women and its effects in workplaces, with some additional discussion of the Gender and COVID-19 report, for the PEI Business Women's Association's "Conversation Corner" (November 27)
- Chairperson Debbie Langston presented as part of a panel for a Black Cultural Society Townhall (November 27)

### Participation in Community & University Research, 2020–2021:

- The ED participated in research interviews with a UPEI graduate student doing research on domestic violence and COVID-19 (June 5)
- The Program Coordinator participated in a research interview re. Violence Against Women Migrants and Refugees: Analyzing Causes and Effective Policy Responses, led by St. Mary's University (July 14)
- The ED participated in research on "The Politics of 'Doing': Policy Work and Gender-Based Analysis in Canada," led by Concordia University (July 21)
- The ED participated in the CART Canadian NP medical abortion implementation study, led by Dalhousie University (August 5)
- The ED participated in research on the PEI situations for a LEAF-led pan-Canadian scan of the legal framework for abortion access (September 18)
- The ED completed a questionnaire for research by the federal Human Trafficking Taskforce regarding trafficking in persons (November 28)
- The ED participated in a focus group on "Sustainable Island Futures" led by the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI (December 8)
- The ED participated in an interview by the Muriel MacQueen Fergusson Centre at UNB for WAGE research on equality-seeking organizations (December 11)
- The ED was interviewed by graduate students from St. Thomas University about reproductive rights (February 19)
- The Program Coordinator took part in a focus group and the ED took part in an interview with consultants on local input on a federal Gender-Based Violence Action Plan (February 22 & 26)

## Community Events

The Advisory Council staff, Chairperson, and Council members continue to consult informally with a variety of individuals, organizations, and sectors. The Chairperson, Executive Director, and Program Coordinator played a role in a number of events.



Council Chairperson Debbie Langston speaking at the Take Back the Night march and rally, September 2020.



Marchers at the historic Black Lives Matter rally in Charlottetown. Photo credit: @cbcpei on Instagram.

### Community Events, 2020–2021:

- “Queerness in the Workplace” webinar, PEERS Alliance (April 15)
- “Basic Income: International Response to COVID-19,” hosted by the Tamarack Institute (May 14)
- “How the Stride Program Uses Restorative Justice” webinar, PEI Restorative Justice Community of Interest (May 21)
- Drive-by retirement celebration for Sylvie Arsenault, ED of the Voluntary Resource Centre (May 29)
- Black Lives Matter march and rally (June 15)
- Media conference protesting construction of a large water-holding reservoir, against PEI Water Act recommendations (June 17)
- Indigenous Healing Walk and rally (June 19)
- “Sexualized Violence and Restorative Justice” webinar, PEI Restorative Justice Community of Interest (July 8)
- Virtual “general strike” for a public inquiry on the massacre at Portapique, Nova Scotia (July 27)
- Atlantic Summer Institute, Atlantic Policy Forum on Mental Health Promotion (August 26 & 27)
- Take Back the Night march (September 17) – *Chairperson as a speaker*
- “A Just Recovery for All” Tamarack Institute webinar (October 14)
- LEAF national “Gender Justice” symposium (October 26 to 28)
- Interministerial Women’s Secretariat book launch for *In Their Own Words: Prince Edward Island’s Famous Five* (October 27)
- *Tuesdays & Sundays*, Kitbag Theatre production at Watermark Theatre, in support of Family Violence Prevention Services (November 12)
- Black Cultural Society Town Hall (November 27)
- Video viewing of PEI Human Rights Commission’s video for Human Rights Day (December 10)
- Restorative Justice Network discussion of “Conviction” (December 10)
- “Gender Equity, Human Rights, and COVID-19 Recovery Plans” webinar hosted by YWCA Canada (January 28)
- “Indigenous Fishery: Rights, Resilience, and Revival,” Dr. Andrea Reid and John-Francis Lane, Annual Daniel O’Hanley Lecture (February 7)
- International Development Week presentation on the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, presented by ACIC (February 9)
- “Impact of Domestic Violence on Children: The Role of Family, Friends, and Front-Line Professionals in Helping Children” (February 18)
- “Women Focus” Zoom symposium, which included Dr. Heather Morrison and NZ PM Jacinda Ardern (March 6)

## Partnerships

The Advisory Council is committed to participating in the work of relevant coalitions, task forces, research projects, or other community-led activities. Council contributes in-kind work and expertise in gender-based analysis to our partner groups. Council members gain access to research, new perspectives, follow-up on advocacy, and more.



Collage of women killed by violence in Canada in 2019 from the Canadian Femicide Observatory, [www.femicideincanada.ca](http://www.femicideincanada.ca).

### List & Description of Partnerships, 2020–2021:

- Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI:** In 2014–2015, the Advisory Council became a member-at-large of this provincial association. Together, our two organizations have collaborated on projects including the annual Sisters in Spirit vigil, two study groups, a focus group for the Equality Report Card, content for the Purple Ribbon Campaign, and ceremony for the Montreal Massacre Memorial Service.
- Abortion Rights Network:** Council's ED and Program Coordinator sit on this committee, which came together to advocate for equitable abortion services and to ensure women have accurate and accessible information about where and how to access abortion services.  
*ACSW role:* Attending meetings, examining provincial policies; assisting with communications; participating in projects and events.
- Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment:** Council's Program Coordinator joined the CCFWE's National Working Group on Economic Abuse in 2020. The Centre is a national organization, based in Ottawa, dedicated to empowering domestic violence survivors through advocacy, mentorship, and economic empowerment, particularly to create education and awareness about the impact of economic abuse.  
*ACSW role:* Consult on current activities and communications of the CCFWE, especially as they relate to Prince Edward Island.
- Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability:** Council's ED was appointed in 2017 to serve on the national expert panel of this observatory. The CFOJA is a web-based research and information centre which aims to conduct, mobilize, exchange, and promote research and knowledge to prevent femicide and other forms of gender-based killings in Canada.  
*ACSW role:* Consult on current activities and communications of the CFOJA, especially as they relate to Prince Edward Island.
- International Women's Day (IWD) Committee:** Council's Program Coordinator brings together and leads this committee to plan and present events for International Women's Day.  
*ACSW role:* Coordinating the committee and leading IWD planning.
- IWS Grant Adjudication Committees:** Council's ED sits on this committee to review applications and advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women on violence against women prevention grants and community grants, awarded by the Province where the organizations, principles, objectives, and activities of applicants support the legal, health, social, and economic equality of women.  
*ACSW role:* Adjudicating applications and reviewing communications.



## Partnerships, continued



*Jill Kilfoil with Women's Network PEI and Dawn Wilson with Justice Options for Women, sporting Feminist PRIDE tees.*



*Danya O'Malley is the new Chairperson of the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention. Photo credit: CBC PEI.*



*Coalition for Women in Government ED Sweta Daboo, left, with Council's Debbie Langston, Jane Ledwell, and Michelle Jay.*

### List & Description of Partnerships, 2020–2021, cont.:

- **Justice Options for Women:** The Council's Program Coordinator serves on the advisory committee for this project. Justice Options creates opportunities for community dialogue and input into justice policy regarding the issues of violence against women and the impact on and of restorative justice. Justice Options developed Circles of Safety and Support for women at high risk of violence and is currently working on a project on government/community response to violence against women.

*ACSW role:* Participating in meetings; helping develop project plans and funding applications; reviewing products and publications. The Program Coordinator participated in hiring a new coordinator.

- **National Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women:** The National Coalition was formed in 1995 to provide a venue for strategic action on issues of concern to Canadian women. The Coalition formed when the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women ceased that same year, leaving a gap in national advocacy. The National Coalition did not have an annual in-person meeting in 2020–2021.

*ACSW role:* Check-ins with members, including a meeting with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women Chairperson, Maura Ryan (August 20).

- **PAC—Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention:** The Council's ED is appointed by the Premier to sit on this committee and its Administrative Group. PAC's mandate includes coordinating implementation of the provincial Family Violence Prevention Strategy. The ED also serves on PAC Admin and chairs the Evaluation Working Group. The Program Coordinator serves on the Youth Engagement Working Group.

*ACSW role:* Attending full group, administrative, and working group meetings; reviewing documents; advocating for a focus on violence against women and children; providing insights on gender equality roots of violence; participating in projects and events; serving as a distribution hub for Family Violence Prevention Week resources.

- **PEI Coalition for Women in Government:** Council's ED sits on the Board and steering committee of this non-partisan intersectional feminist organization dedicated to advancing women's leadership in the political, civic, and democratic life of PEI.

*ACSW role:* Helping to develop and execute workplans; contributing to creating and disseminating research, media work, and publications; assisting with evaluations; participating in meetings and events. Council's Chair sat on a hiring committee for a new ED.



## Partnerships, continued



*Council's new Vice-Chairperson, Serena Smith, also serves on the Board of the PEI Literacy Alliance.*



*Above and below, participants in the Take Back the Night march and rally organized by the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and partners, September 2020.*



### List & Description of Partnerships, 2020–2021, cont.:

- **PEI Literacy Alliance:** The Council is a member of this provincial alliance dedicated to creating a culture of literacy and learning and delivering programs to support adult learners, families, and children in improving their literacy and essential skills.

*ACSW role:* Attending annual and semi-annual meetings when possible; support and collaboration in our shared office space.

- **PEI Working Group for a Livable Income:** Council's ED and Program Coordinator serve on this coalition of a dozen community organizations that are active in working to eliminate poverty and advocate for a livable income for all Islanders to live in good health and with dignity. The Working Group is actively advocating for a pilot project on basic income guarantee (BIG) for PEI.

*ACSW role:* Participating in meetings and special events; contributing perspectives on women's poverty; taking our turn with other organizations to take minutes and draft publications, correspondence, media releases, and briefs to government.

- **Social Justice and Public Transit Project:** Council's Program Coordinator took part in this 2020–2021 Cooper Institute–led project to hear from the community and develop recommendations to improve and expand public transit, with a social justice lens.

*ACSW role:* Providing gender analysis and perspectives to inform surveys and consultations.

- **PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre "Take Back the Night" Project:** Council's Program Coordinator sits on the advisory committee for this PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre–led, Interministerial Women's Secretariat–funded project to make sustainable Take Back the Night events in Prince Edward Island to prevent and address sexualized violence.

*ACSW role:* Participating in meetings and contributing advice and analysis; promoting and participating in events.

- **Victim Services Advisory Committee:** Council Treasurer Chris MacPhail represents Council on this committee. The Advisory Committee's purpose is to exchange information on current and emerging issues related to victims and to help develop policy, programs, services, and legislation and report to the Attorney General and government officials on the needs of victims of crime.

*ACSW role:* Sharing information, especially from a gender perspective; identifying and bringing issues to the table for discussion.

## Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence

November 25 is the annual International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action to commemorate the murder of 14 female engineering students in Montreal in 1989 and other women killed by gender-based violence. Every year, the Advisory Council's Purple Ribbon Campaign involves volunteers Island-wide in an effort to distribute purple ribbon symbols and information. Islanders are encouraged to wear the purple ribbon symbol on or near December 6, and again during Family Violence Prevention Week in February, to remember all women who are victims of violence.



### Purple Ribbon Campaign Highlights, 2020–2021:

- In this pandemic year that required many ongoing adaptations, the theme of “Support Survivors” was revisited. A task team of Council members helped re-imagine how best to deliver the message of violence prevention.
- 10,000 purple ribbon 1.5” badges were ordered and distributed via contactless pick-up along with small hand sanitizers and display boxes.
- This year’s Multilingual poster featuring ten commonly spoken or traditional languages of PEI included nine translations provided last year by the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, the Aboriginal Women’s Association, and provincial translation services, and a tenth translation provided by the Association for Newcomers.
- Hard copies of the multilingual posters in 10 languages and purple ribbon temporary tattoos were made available by request. Badges, posters, and tattoos were also distributed through public access points that had approved operational plans.
- Resources for Teachers were not offered in hard copy this year but made available online. Resources outline explicit links to curriculum outcomes for various grades in Social Studies, Health, and Family Life classes. Staff created Google slideshows with the English and French content of the five most requested resources:
  - Background: Purple Ribbon Campaign | Historique : Campagne du ruban violet
  - How to Support Survivors | Comment appuyer les survivantes
  - What Is a Healthy Relationship? | Qu’est-ce qu’une relation saine?
  - Consent Is ... | Le consentement c’est ...
  - Ways Youth Can Help ... | Les jeunes peuvent aider ...



*A slide from the slideshow “What Is a Healthy Relationship?” one of the Purple Ribbon Campaign’s Resources for Teachers.*

### Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence, continued



Top: Council Chairperson Debbie Langston lights a candle at the ceremony to remember women killed by violence. Middle: Hon. Natalie Jameson lights a candle. Bottom left: Council members following the candle-lighting ceremony. Bottom right: Jenn Grant in a still from her video performance of “Mauve” in remembrance of victims of the April 2020 massacre in Portapique, Nova Scotia.

#### International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 2020:

- The ACSW annual Purple Ribbon Campaign officially launched on the UN’s International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 25, 2020. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Hon. Natalie Jameson, read a supporting statement in the PEI Legislature on November 25, and numerous other MLAs acknowledged the day and the Purple Ribbon Campaign in comments and responses during the day’s debate.

#### Montreal Massacre Memorial Service, 2020:

- For decades we have gathered as a community to honour the lives of women who have been lost to violence. Because we could not be together physically in 2020, we contracted Tish Brown of Zenith Pictures to help us create a memorial video that incorporated many of the elements that make the Memorial Service so meaningful – participation in candle-lighting by family members, community leaders and Council women; a compelling speaker; brave poetry from a survivor; Indigenous art; the Silent Witnesses; and beautiful performance pieces. All of these poignant elements were woven into an online video commemoration that was broadcast on December 6th [vimeo.com/peiacsw](https://vimeo.com/peiacsw).
- Special guests appearing in the video were:
  - Debbie Langston, Chairperson of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women
  - Roxanne Carter-Thompson, guest speaker
  - Elder Julie Pellissier-Lush, Indigenous Opening
  - Singer-Songwriter Jenn Grant, Sirens Choral Ensemble, and pianist Todd MacLean
- Chairperson Debbie Langston’s commentary “Where Violence Persists, What Women Do,” was published in *The Guardian* and at [peistatusofwomen.ca](https://peistatusofwomen.ca).





## Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence, continued



Guest speaker Roxanne Carter-Thompson and Debbie Langston in a video still from the commemoration.



Council members bear witness to candle lighting on December 3.

### Purple Ribbon Campaign Sponsorship and Thanks, 2020:

Many thanks to sponsors and supporters:

- Funding sponsors: the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention and the City of Charlottetown.
- In-kind partners: Women's Institutes (Purple Ribbon badge distribution) and FilmPEI (video support and recording venue) as well as volunteers and supporters across PEI.
- Venue sponsor: Confederation Centre of the Arts.



### Family Violence Prevention Week, February 14–20, 2021:



Screenshot from the Women's Network PEI and Council's collaborative virtual Lunch & Learn for Family Violence Prevention Week. On Zoom! Jane Ledwell and Michelle Jay from the Advisory Council staff, and Jillian Kilfoil from Women's Network PEI.

- ACSW staff work closely with the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention (PAC) to support Family Violence Prevention Week.
- During Family Violence Prevention Week most of the remaining purple ribbon badges were distributed, on request and by contactless pick-up or by post, across PEI (4,000+). Additionally, thousands of PAC resources were distributed across the Island.
- Also, we joined with Women's Network PEI to offer an online Lunch & Learn exploring survivors' healing, "From Surviving to Thriving." (February 19), with over twenty participants.



## International Women's Day – March 8

United Nations-declared International Women's Day (IWD) takes place on March 8th each year. Events on International Women's Day and the week surrounding it recognize women's ongoing struggle for equity.

PEI's IWD activities balance advocating for equality with celebrating the resilience and achievements of women globally, nationally, and locally.

### International Women's Day 2021

The International Women's Day organizing committee brought advocacy and celebration online this year in a special podcast series featuring five exceptional women and gender-diverse people sharing their perspectives and experiences of "choosing to challenge." Each person was interviewed by another inspiring member of the community, celebrating Island leaders who are contributing their passion, skills, experiences, and choices to advancing gender equality.

Although unable to gather in person for the usual celebratory and participatory event, "Choose to Challenge" was an especially relevant theme as we reflect back on the year of challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inequalities that our responses to the pandemic exposed. Many of the most glaring inequities worldwide have the greatest impact on women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Generous financial and time resources were contributed by local unions, women's and social justice organizations: UPSE, CUPE, PSAC, and PEI Federation of Labour; Women's Network PEI; Actions Femmes I.P.É; Cooper Institute; Voluntary Resource Centre; PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada; Family Violence Prevention Services; Coalition for Women in Government; and the Interministerial Women's Secretariat.

- EPISODE 1: Sweta Daboo in conversation with Malak Nassar
- EPISODE 2: Julie Bull in conversation with Debbie Langston
- EPISODE 3: Marie Burge in conversation with Josie Baker
- EPISODE 4: Marie Antoinette Pangan in conversation with Farahnaz Rezaei
- ÉPISODE 5: Michelle Arsenault, interviewée par Marine Ernoult



### More Highlights from International Women's Day:

- *IWD Video Banner:* The organizing committee invited the public to submit videos about the ways they #choosetochallenge on IWD March 8, and every day.
- *Government and ACSW Media Messages:* Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Natalie Jameson and Chairperson Debbie Langston also shared an IWD message to invite participation on social media using the hashtag #IWDPEI.
- *Chairperson Debbie Langston's op-ed "Women Are Superheroes!"* was published in the *Guardian*, March 8.

### Bursaries for Women

In 2015, the Advisory Council revised and updated the criteria for its bursary program for women. The deadline to apply for bursaries is October 15 each year. Forms are available in English and French from [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca). The University of Prince Edward Island also administers an internal bursary named in our honour, awarded to a woman studying Engineering.

#### Bursary Recipients, 2020:

- **Diane Kays Memorial Bursary** (\$500) is available to a woman-identifying student who is a resident of PEI and registered full-time at the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, or Collège de l'Île. 2020 Winner: Melanie Callaghan
- **Inge Blackett Memorial Bursary** (\$500) is for a woman-identifying PEI resident who entered Canada as a refugee and is pursuing further education. 2020 Winner: Sofia Mohamed
- **PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women Engineering Bursary:** Administered by UPEI, named in our honour, and awarded to a woman studying engineering. Information about this bursary is available from the University of Prince Edward Island. 2020 Winner: Elly Elizabeth Arsenault



Debbie Langston, left, PEI Status of Women Chairperson, with Sofia Mohamed, right, winner of the Inge Blackett Memorial Bursary, December 2020.

## PUBLICATIONS

The following is a summary list of publications mentioned in this report. These publications are usually available in hard copy from the Advisory Council or in electronic copy on its website at [peistatusofwomen.ca](http://peistatusofwomen.ca).

- *Gender & COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island: In the Words of Women-Identifying Islanders, March to July 2020* (Oct. 2020). A 36-page report featuring experiences of members of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women and past Council Chairpersons, during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excerpt "Perspectives pour les politiques" available in French.
- *Purple Ribbon Campaign Resources for PEI Teachers | Ressources pour les enseignant(e)s, Campagne du ruban violet* (November 2020). Bilingual, multi-grade resources for teachers, for use with the 2020–2021 Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence. Linked to provincial curriculum outcomes. Our most-requested resources were posted as Google slideshows, ready for presentation:
  - Background: Purple Ribbon Campaign | Historique : Campagne du ruban violet
  - How to Support Survivors | Comment appuyer les survivantes
  - Consent Is ... | Le consentement c'est ...
  - What Is a Healthy Relationship? | Qu'est-ce qu'une relation saine?
  - Ways Youth Can Help ... | Les jeunes peuvent aider ...





*Collage of Council members and staff in Summerside, June 2020.  
From top left: Debbie Langston, Cathy Rose, Gaylene Carragher,  
Serena Smith, Emily Rutledge, Caroline MacRae, Chris MacPhail,  
Barb McDowall, Gina Younker, Michelle Jay, Becky Tramley, and  
Jane Ledwell.*

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**For additional copies of this report:**

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**9,700** BADGES  
DISTRIBUTED

**29<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PURPLE  
RIBBON CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST VIOLENCE**

**5** BILINGUAL SLIDESHOWS  
MADE FOR EDUCATORS



IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL  
**COUNCIL  
MEETINGS**

1 RETIRING MEMBER (CHAIR)  
1 NEW MEMBER APPOINTED



POST-SECONDARY  
**BURSARIES  
AWARDED**

**15 COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

30+ ENGAGEMENTS WITH  
COMMUNITY GROUPS

23 EVENTS ATTENDED

EVEN IN THE FACE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC



INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY  
**PODCAST  
EPISODES**



**COMMUNITY  
NOTICES  
DELIVERED**  
IN 36 E-NEWSLETTERS



**250+**

PARTICIPANTS IN AN ADAPTED  
MONTREAL MASSACRE  
MEMORIAL SERVICE



**ENGAGEMENTS  
WITH MEDIA**  
(NEWS RELEASES,  
OPINION PIECES,  
AND INTERVIEWS)



REACHED BY 18  
**FACEBOOK  
POSTS & TOPICS**



**INQUIRY &  
REFERRAL  
THEMES**



**15+ CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
PROVINCIAL  
GOVERNMENT  
CONSULTATIONS**

(WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS, SURVEYS,  
COMMITTEES, AND TASK FORCES)



**45<sup>years</sup>  
ans**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

CONSEIL CONSULTATIF SUR LA SITUATION DE LA FEMME DE  
L'ÎLE-DU-PRINCE-ÉDOUARD

1975-2020