

Breast Cancer Action Montreal

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011

for presentation at the

Annual General Meeting September 21, 2011

The fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2011 proved to be productive and stimulating. As we go about our mission to educate, advocate, support and network about the effects of environmental toxins on breast cancer, we are now reaching a wider audience through our workshops, presentations, collaborations, media contacts and now, for the first time, through social media. Yes, BCAM is on Facebook and Twitter and counting its viewers and followers keenly. We have successfully engaged a new, "wired" population that we sincerely hope will carry our message into their lives and help spread the word.

We said *adieu* to our Executive Administrator, Janice Melanson, long-time office organizer and the driving force behind our innovative FemmeToxic project, and we added two new board members, Lannie Mayo and Deborah Ostrovsky, this year who are committed to advancing our message,

Although Rosanne Cohen resigned as president of the board of directors, she will continue to be involved in BCAM as its newly-minted Executive Director beginning July 25, 2011. She brings her creativity and passion to the position and will take BCAM into the future with the confidence of the board.

Office news

The office continues to receive and respond to inquiries regarding breast cancer resources and news. This year the office received 13 email requests and 57 phone requests for information about breast cancer.

Saul Rose read about our request for a donation of a laptop computer and offered us a used cleaned desktop, which we gratefully accepted. The donation added a third workstation to the office, which is used by our interns and students. We have sent several electronic "mini-bulletins" (in lieu of the newsletter) out to members alerting them of both BCAM and FemmeToxic events and other news of interest. We now have 594 contacts receiving our electronic mini-bulletins, up 180 since September. Visits to BCAM and FemmeToxic sites increased, and our popularity through social media (Facebook, Twitter) grew.

Former administrative assistant Ania Nestorowicz moved to Toronto in March and we hired Viorica Lorcencova for the position. She is handling the administrative duties for the organization extremely well.

Intern and Safe Cosmetics Campaign assistant Angela Day moved from Montreal. Intern Anne Thibault took over Angela's duties until the internship term was completed and Erika Jahn, project coordinator, moved on as a freelancer and still consults for BCAM.

Website

This year BCAM upgraded our website to a web 2.0 structure. This allowed for a more modern look and feel; interactivity with visitors; and a connection to the wide social media landscape. Three BCAM board members, Carol Sector, Rosanne Cohen and Patricia Kearns formed the committee to deal with the proceedings. The changes and upgrades to the website included the addition of:

- Online petitions and email campaigns
- A Search Engine
- A Video module
- Blogs
- Social networking links – Facebook and Twitter.
- An online newsletter page with sign-up capacity
- An online form to become a BCAM member and link to Canada Helps
- Content subscription – subscribers can be notified of new content updates via an RSS feed.

Penar Musaraj was hired on Aug.18th 2010 as web developer and web designer. Working closely with the committee, Penar built the new website using an open source platform called Drupal.

The new website went live on Dec.8th, 2010. From Dec. 8 to the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2011, we received 7974 visits and 27,373 page views.

We are very happy with the website and will continue to exploit its potential to grow the number of visitors to the site. Thanks to Penar and the BCAM office staff for all the great work that went into making the transition to the new site go so smoothly.

Annual Workshop for BCAM members and friends

On November 22nd, 2010, BCAM welcomed Bev Thorpe of Clean Production Action to lead its annual workshop. Bev is the International Director of Clean Production Action and has researched clean production strategies since 1989. She is a board member of the Green Chemistry Network in the UK, The Story of Stuff Project in the U.S., and Greenpeace Canada. Her current focus is the promotion of Green Chemistry regarding government chemicals policies and business practices. She is also a former BCAM board member. After an introduction by Chris Kupka, Bev began her presentation, *"Is this product safe? Playing chemical detective"*, by providing the participants with the objectives of Green Chemistry, which include: developing safer chemicals and therefore products with little or no toxicity; creating chemicals and products that are biodegradable; and minimizing the potential for accidents such as explosions, fires and chemical releases into the environment. Her presentation stressed the need for green chemicals, sustainable materials and environmentally safe products. The curious and concerned attendees were given useful tips on how to become informed consumers or "chemical detectives".

BCAM is currently developing its own Chemical Detective project that we will begin presenting in the community this year.

Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture April 2011

Samantha King was the guest speaker at our annual Lanie Melamed Memorial Lecture on April 14, 2011. Ms. King is a health and gender studies professor at Queen's University and author of the highly-praised book *Pink Ribbons Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* (2006). Her lecture, "Public Health/Private Interests: Breast Cancer Profiteering and the Struggle for a Prevention-First Approach," discussed the pivotal era when a groundswell of corporate interest changed the way breast cancer would be portrayed in the public sphere.

The location of this year's lecture was the de Seve theatre at Concordia University. Unfortunately, due to the unexpected provincial elections, the turn-out for the event was less than expected as was our usual interest from the press. Samantha King did take part in an interview which can be found on the BCAM website.

We had 7 endorsers for the event:

Loews Hôtel Vogue Montréal
Éco quartier NDG
NOVA Montréal
Coalition des familles homoparentales
Prevention NDG
McGill Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies
Jewish General Hospital

Press

BCAM's involvement with the press and other media outlets was "off the charts" this year. We are enthusiastic about speaking to the public through all mediums and welcomed the chance to share our views on primary prevention, safe cosmetics campaign and all issues related to environmental toxins and health. The following is a listing of the who, what, and where:

- 98.5 Radio - interview from Video Launch press release - with YWCA
- CJAD Radio - Dan Delmare interview re BPA
- Press Conference - Peter Akman, CBC TV, Anne Lange, CBC Radio, Dan Delmar, CJAD and Suburban, Michelle Lalonde, The Gazette, Cindy Sherwin, CTV
- Radio Noon - Pollution links to BC and our prevention message
- Globe and Mail - telephone interview regarding emissions study McGill
- Vital Choices (online newsletter) - link to McGill study
- CJAD Radio - Anne Dowson interview on Alternatives to Pink
- CJAD - Dan Delmar interview re Phalates
- Suburban - Dan Delmar- Alternatives to Pink
- Michelle Lalonde - Gazette(also published in Green Guide and Health section of Calgary Herald and Vancouver Sun, Ottawa Citizen)
- Virgin Radio - Catherine Sherriff's blog
- Macleans magazine interview
- CTV News - Todd van der Heyden - Alternatives to Pink
- University of Regina - Pinkwashing -

- Elle Quebec -Toxic Cosmetics
- The Gazette - Michelle Lalonde: "How I trashed my toxic cosmetics"
- Chatelaine (version française) pink ribbon cause marketing
- CTV - Newsmaker - interview about FemmeToxic
- Toronto Star - interview regarding new Walmart "green" makeup for tweens
- CJAD - Dan Delmar interview: re the heavy metal in cosmetic report released by Environmental Defense
- CJAD - Todd van der Heyden interview re: the heavy metal in cosmetic report released by Environmental Defense

BCAM continues to receive requests for responses on issues relating to breast cancer and safe cosmetics, pink ribbon marketing strategies, toxic chemicals and BCAM's perspective on treatment and prevention. A big thank-you to our media representatives Rosanne Cohen, Nancy Guberman, Janice Melanson, Carol Selter, Deena Dlusy-Apel, and Fiona Hanley who responded to these requests for information or interviews.

October Event

BCAM invited journalists and reporters to a press conference at its office on Monkland Avenue to announce the launch of BCAM's new October initiative "Alternatives to Pink". The aim of this event was to introduce a series of special BCAM activities developed to encourage the public – and the press – to ask important questions about Pink Ribbon cause marketing and related issues. At the office, decorating the walls were two extra large blown up letters to two cosmetic companies asking them to remove carcinogens from their products.

As part of the campaign, BCAM called on non-compliant cosmetic companies to sign the Compact for Safe Cosmetics using a social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter, and other email letter-writing efforts.

During the month of October 2010, McGill University released a report concerning the environment and cancer. A study showing an association between traffic-related air pollution and postmenopausal breast cancer – made public on the eve of our campaign – proved to be a boon to our publicity and generated a great buzz for BCAM, resulting in national exposure in various media including print articles and live interviews with our board members. Visits to the Femmetoxic website, Facebook and Twitter also increased.

BCAM wrapped up its "Alternatives to Pink" campaign with a street theatre performance which was written and performed by members and friends of FemmeToxic. The campaign was deemed a success and we will be doing another type of event for Breast Cancer Awareness month in the coming year.

"Breast Cancer Prevention in Action" / Speakers' Bureau

Between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, seven of our BCAM volunteer speakers were out in the community delivering our "Beast of Beauty", toxins in cosmetics and personal care products presentation to 8 various organizations:

Femme de Monde CDN

EQUIMONDE Plateau Rosemont

Eco cartier CDN

Bureau de la communauté Haitian de Montréal
Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
Office of the Auditor General of Canada (Ottawa)
Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec
Henri Bradet Residential Centre

In addition, our husband and wife volunteer team, Deena Dlusy-Apel and Max Beer, presented *Beast of Beauty* at the 6th World Conference on Breast Cancer on June 7 in Hamilton, Ontario, to an enthusiastic and involved audience.

Nancy Guberman agreed to do a 3-hour presentation to the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec. She also volunteered to create a new PowerPoint for the presentation, which included all the information about BCAM. We continue to try and reach out to the Francophone community with our presentations and are always interested in recruiting other French-speakers to join our volunteer Speakers' Bureau.

BCAM member Donnie Frank continues to volunteer as the presentation coordinator scheduling the workshops. We are preparing another presentation for the public, "Becoming a Chemical Detective: Prevention at Home, Work, and Play", to be launched in the fall of 2011. This project will take us beyond cosmetics to look to our immediate environment in order to help identify toxins in everyday products and make safer choices for ourselves and our families. It aims to highlight the link between hazardous chemicals and cancer, give people tips about how to prevent exposure, pressure manufacturers to disclose the presence of hazardous chemicals in products and to encourage activism. The presentation aims to attract a new demographic, namely young parents and families. While the presentation will be appropriate for all ages and groups, it will emphasize primary prevention options for healthy living from prenatal to young-adult stages of life.

Newsletter

The newsletter committee welcomed a new member, Deborah Ostrovsky.

The committee decided to compose and email a survey questionnaire to our members regarding the newsletter and readership. Thanks to the labour-intensive scoring by member Maureen Lafrenière, who tabulated the responses to our survey, we gained valuable information that will help us in the updating of our publication. The Newsletter Committee decided to cancel the winter edition of the *BCAM Bulletin* pending the results of the survey. We were pleased to discover that for most of those who responded, the indication was favourable regarding content but that the format could be improved upon. There was also a suggestion for more consistency in the French translation of articles. Two revision volunteers, Carine Chopin and Jeanne Duhaime, have tackled the challenge of ensuring consistency among the many translations that appear in each edition of the *Bulletin*.

We published 2 editions this year, fall 2010 and spring 2011. The theme for our fall 2010 edition was Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We are looking forward to highlighting BCAM's 20th Anniversary in the fall 2011 edition.

Susan Hertzberg, managing editor for the newsletter, has appointed Maychai Brown as assistant editor.

Safe Cosmetics Report

The FemmeToxic crew were very engaged this past year, presenting workshops and being involved with collegial organizations in and around Montreal as well as out of town. Our efforts to keep current on Facebook and Twitter have been rewarded by the increasing numbers of visits logged monthly.

New volunteers were recruited who are involved in various activities such as research, articles writers, bloggers, theatre/video team, workshop and outreach event presenters. A framework was developed for researching a database of alternative products.

Anne Thibault, a summer intern hired to take over the presentation role that Angela Day relinquished upon her resignation, accomplished the goals that had been set up for her for the summer. She had 4 day camp presentations, 2 of which were creating media art projects. She booked outreach programs at 3 eco-festivals; the July 31st program being a very large event (6000-8000 participants). Anne gave 7 hands-on workshops at day camps to younger children, aged 8-12. Although the hands-on content was very well received, the central message of safe cosmetics was not well assimilated as the kids were too young, but we have still been receiving requests for information and workshops. Anne successfully recruited new volunteers for theatre and research projects -19 volunteers are on our mailing list.

Through our partnership with the David Suzuki Foundation, we were given the chance of presenting our FemmeToxic workshop at the 100th Anniversary Girl Guides Conference held in Guelph on July 13th. There were 2500 participants that each received our action postcard in addition to 2 workshop presentations of 50 participants each.

A public event video screening was developed in partnership with the Y des Femmes and on July 22nd we co-hosted an event launching the new video being produced by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics - The Story of Cosmetics. We also showed the 2 media-art projects from the day camps, our theatre piece and a new FemmeToxic video.

Janice Melanson as well as board members Deena Dlusy-Apel and Carol Sector attended the Girl's Action Foundation annual retreat for girl's club leaders and participants in October. Janice was both participant and presenter. She offered the FemmeToxic workshop and trained leaders as facilitators. There were 15 participants and the evaluations were very positive. At the retreat Janice announced our intention to present four \$300 subsidies for the GAF National Day of Action in February - submissions for events were made via GAF and BCAM chose the four we wanted to support. They went towards producing videos, presenting the workshop, creating podcasts, etc. all which are posted on the FemmeToxic website.

Janice presented a webinar along with Tatiana Fraser, Executive Director of Girls Action Foundation on March 29th for the Canadian Women's Health Network on "What Does Health Mean to Girls and Young Women?". She reported that it went very well, with 62 participants! Since March we have given 29 workshops to 708 students and 3 public presentations to about 70 participants.

Femme Toxic was contacted by a new student group at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario called "Love the Label" which has launched a Safe Cosmetics Campaign. We sent them postcards and information and they will blog about their campaign and their informal partnership with FemmeToxic.

We have 219 registered users on the FemmeToxic site. We published our Facilitator's page on the website so that group leaders can access our workshop information. At the end of the fiscal year FemmeToxic had 399 members on our Facebook page.

Fundraising

Breast Cancer Action Montreal is an organization with a mighty mission to be sure. BCAM is the only Canadian breast cancer organization speaking out about the serious environmental and chemical links to breast cancer. Thanks to the enthusiastic and ongoing support of our donors, BCAM is able to continue to fulfill its mission, by providing community outreach initiatives and public education programs about environmental toxins linked to breast cancer and primary prevention.

BCAM is enormously grateful to the individual donors, foundations and funding organizations for their support despite the ongoing challenge of our nation's slow economic recovery. We extend a tremendous thank you to the Beaconsfield Golf Club Ladies, the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 94), the Greenfield Park Girl Guides, and CEGEP Vanier College, to name a few. The foundations and funding organizations included the J.W. McConnell Foundation, the Jarislowsky Foundation, La Foundation Solstice, the Abe and Ruth Feigelson Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal as well as donations from various Members of the National Assembly, Youth Employment Services Foundation, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, TELUS Communications Co. and Young Canada Works.

On November 20, 2010 the Shaar Hashomayim Sisterhood hosted the second annual benefit concert in support of Breast Cancer Action Montreal. The outstanding musical evening was entitled "All the Things You Are." Stephen Glass, Director of Music of the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, again donated his time and expertise in assembling the wonderful talent for the evening and by acting as master of ceremonies with his usual wit and charm. Cantor Zelermyer and the Synagogue Choir were joined by singers and musicians performing musical selections from the traditions of opera, Broadway, and Jewish cantorial and choral music. An anonymous donor provided a delicious dessert reception following the performance where attendees met with the performers. This fundraising event was initiated by Peggy Sakow, a long-time member and supporter of BCAM who, along with Stephen Glass and with the assistance of Ted Lazarus, helped organize this 2nd annual event. BCAM would like to express its gratitude to everyone involved who gave so generously of their time and talent.

Turning towards the next fiscal year, BCAM is working on a fundraising campaign on the theme of the organizations 20th Anniversary. Much has been accomplished, but all those involved know we still have a long road ahead.

Acknowledgements

The Board wishes to publicly acknowledge individuals for their outstanding contribution of time and talent: BCAM member Donnie Frank, who continues to organize our successful Speakers' Bureau; Gerry Goodfriend, who insures our newsletter articles appear on our website; Nancy Guberman, presenter and spokesperson for media interviews; Max Beer, co-speaker at the World Breast Cancer

Conference and provider of photographic documentation of all our events; Carine Chopin and Jeanne Duhaime, revisionists for the French translation of the newsletter; Fiona Hanley and Bev Thorpe, former board members who advise us on health issues as well as speaking on our behalf in the community; our former executive administrator Janice Melanson, who kept the organization running smoothly over the past several years and managed and helped develop the FemmeToxic program as well as supervise interns and students; Christine Kupka and Patricia Kearns, for stepping in to bridge the gap after Janice's departure; Erika Jahn, former project coordinator, who brought us into the 21st century by connecting BCAM to the power of social media; former administrative assistant Ania Nestorowicz and current staff Viorica Lorcencova; and all the generous and talented volunteer translators who enabled us to produce information in both languages. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions to this list.

Annual General Meeting 2010

The AGM took place on September 22nd, 2010. Maychai presented the slate for **Election to the 2010-2011 Board of Directors**: Rosanne Cohen as President, Susan Hertzberg as Vice-President, Avis Antel as Secretary, Terrye Perlman as Treasurer, and Rose Alper, Maychai Brown, Deena Dlusy-Apel, Patricia Kearns, Chris Kupka, Lannie Mayo, and Carol Sector as Members-at-Large. Janice moved to accept the slate and the slate was accepted.

There was a brief discussion about Canadians' ability to respond to requests to sign petition to the Eli Lilly Company.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20pm.