

President's Report 2005

The year 2004 was full of programming activities and achievements for the CCNC Toronto Chapter. It is precisely with this sustained growth and continued transformation that we celebrate this year's upcoming 25th anniversary as a leading advocate for human rights in the City of Toronto.

Creating a clear and relevant new mandate for CCNCTO has been both challenging and rewarding. The board of directors has worked diligently and strategically in building organizational capacity despite limitations due to that lack of core funding. Many recent achievements have been obtained largely in part to our community partnerships with other socially driven organizations and individuals.

The directives of CCNCTO are not simple to implement or understand. Nor are the markers of progress easy to identify or evaluate. I believe the overall successful determinants of whether or not our efforts in promoting civic engagement and equality through public education, human rights advocacy and social planning will be revealed in future societal actions and policies. In essence, time will tell and history will reveal whether or not we have made lasting and meaningful impact on the lives of those who, for a myriad of reasons, can not speak for themselves.

CCNCTO has been witness to some impressive projects from the Research and Social Planning Committee, the youth driven Monkey King Collective, and the persisting development of the Homeworkers' Association. Some of their initiatives are used to incubate future programs and strategic direction and such results will be forthcoming in the future. However, there are some markers of progress that are easier to identify than others and I will cite two of our recent successes.

Firstly, CCNCTO, through our partnership with the Alternative Planning Group and other social planning organizations; has been invited to become a founding member of the newly proposed Social Development Network. This is the City of Toronto's initial response to better co-ordinate the various and diverse social planning bodies after determining that the existing model of social planning can be more equitable by incorporating more community voices. This has been an objective of CCNCTO since 1999. If successfully implemented, this can be a new model of community based social planning that can be adopted by other cities in Canada and around the world.

Secondly, CCNCTO is a founding member of a new coalition of community groups and individuals called Asian Canadians for Equal Marriage (ACFEM). Recent media images have directly racialized homophobia towards the Chinese Canadians and other visible minority communities. ACFEM was primarily formed to counter the racist stereotypes that visible minority or immigrant populations are ALL socially conservative and that we are ALL opponents to lesbian and gay marriage equality rights. We held several press conferences and even went to the Supreme Court of Canada to support the pro-equal marriage legal interveners in Ottawa. Where there was once no voice from the Chinese Canadian community to support this human rights issue, now there is and will continue to be.

Of course, community building is done in successive stages over a period of time and with the contributions of many individuals. Mobilizing a movement for equality and change will continue to need the mass participation and involvement of people.

I want to acknowledge that CCNCTO is driven by some of those selfless and visionary people. From the executive board to the administrative office, much of what we do is done by our dedicated volunteers. There are too many people to recognize individually but I still want to extend a personal note of thank you to Dr. Izumi Sakamoto, Dr. Jane Ku, Dr. Amoy Ong and the Research and Social Planning Committee; Dr. Roxanna Ng, Hing Tse and the HWA advisors; Freda Sze, Janice Kun, Wil Chung, Katie Yumol, Amy Yee and the art auction committee; Ben Loc, Denise Ho, Yoko Tsuyuki and other office volunteers.

Of course, none of these accomplishments would have been possible without our invaluable and talented staff. Namely our recently departed Executive Director, Chung Tang, his esteemed successor Dr. Helen Lai Man Poon, our Youth Co-ordinator, Barnett Chow, our Researcher Carolyn Goossen, and our accounting consultant Teresa Ng.

In addition, I also want to express my gratitude to our funders who have supported our vision and continue to do so over the years. Namely, City of Toronto, Health Canada, the Laidlaw Foundation, Ministry of the Attorney General, the Maytree Foundation, the Wellesley Central Health Corporation, the Union of Food and Commercial Workers Canada Local 175 & 633.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their perseverance, wisdom and courage. I am proud to have served as your President for the past three years. I know that as I step down from this position, we have greatly and collectively contributed to the legacy left by the founders of CCNC. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for the many experiences, opportunities and blessings of friendship that you have bestowed upon me.

In Solidarity,
Kristyn Wong-Tam