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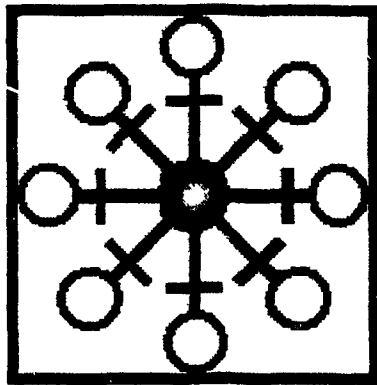
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**The Invisible Weavers:
Women Volunteers Creating
Community Fabric**



By: Lorie Ann Fioze

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, University of Waterloo, 1985

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
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Abstract

In this study I examined women's caring in community volunteer work in the context of a neighbourhood community centre. More specifically I studied what women's volunteer experience at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre (CMCC) revealed about:

1. **Motivators** - what motivated women to participate in community volunteer work,
2. **Facilitators** - what personal, family organizational, community and social factors facilitated women's involvement in volunteer work,
3. **Barriers** - what personal, family, organizational, community and social factors inhibited women's involvement in community volunteer work,
4. **Positive and Negative Impacts** - what the positive and negative impacts of women's volunteer involvement on the women themselves, their families, organizations, community and on social factors, and
5. **Strategies** - what ideas and suggestions did women have to improve Community Centre development.

Drawing on community psychology and feminist methodologies this study considered the experiences of 26 women and three staff who live and work in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood. Telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews and focus groups were held with volunteers and non-volunteers who reside in the neighbourhood as well as with staff who work closely with the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre.

The research process that I used was sensitive to the overall context of women's lives and was based on an ecological perspective, as women's participation in community volunteer work has multi-level interactions: the personal, the family, the organization, the community and social factors. Although the research process was sensitive to the ecological perspective, the results indicate that not all levels were considered b 7

volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC. The results obtained from this study might shed some light on the ways in which women volunteers and the CMCC can attain a balance between these levels.

The data gathered also provide information on the reasons or motivators women have for volunteering. The caring expectations of women and their own sense of obligation to this role were identified as some of the prime motivators for their participation in volunteer work. Facilitators and inhibitors of volunteer work were also discovered and strategies were suggested by participants to help create change in the Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood.

Like other feminist critics on women's role in society, I suggest that caring work, unpaid labour and providing service to others has become a predictable and common dimension of women's lives, that reinforces traditional notions of femininity. Although women provide an invaluable service to our communities, there are strong indications that women's role in unpaid labour continues to remain unrecognized. At the same time I also look at the positive outcomes that women's volunteering has on their personal lives, their families, organizations, and the community.

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Introduction

In the winter of 1993 I became a mother for the first time. I quit my job so that I could concentrate on the nurturing and caretaking of our daughter Taziah. Putting my career on hold was a difficult decision for me. The thought of leaving my daughter at daycare in order that I could continue working was also emotionally difficult. I could not help but wonder if I would be selling out to patriarchy and the traditional notions of femininity if I stayed at home to do the primary caregiving of our daughter. Would I lose all that I had worked for in my career by staying at home with our daughter?

To prevent this from happening I kept up with my studies in the Masters program in Community Psychology at Laurier, and I began to volunteer with my neighbourhood Community Centre. As I grew more experienced in my role as a mother, I was constantly reminded of the lack of respect, recognition, and worth others placed on the work of mothering. As I became more involved with the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre (CMCC) I also felt the lack of recognition and value the neighbourhood placed on the work of a small core group of women volunteers. It soon became evident to me that both the role of volunteer and the role of mother shared three common denominators: 1) they were both unpaid; 2) the work was completed primarily by women, and 3) there was little respect or value placed on the work. I watched women give their time and energy endlessly to both their volunteer and mother work, while listening to comments of others who felt we were not being productive in either role.

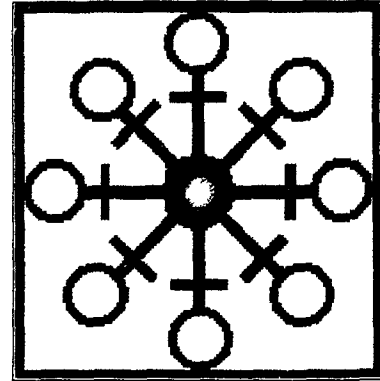
In some ways it really did feel like I was following the traditional expectations of femininity as I was serving others (in both my mother and volunteer roles) and receiving little recognition for my efforts. As time progressed I began to wonder why some women

were so motivated to volunteer at the CMCC when their workload at home was already so full and when their efforts were not appreciated by others. Therefore, I became interested in completing a feminist analysis of women's motivators in unpaid work. A thesis topic was born.

Parallel to my personal process, the House of Friendship was beginning a strategic planning process for the CMCC. The House of Friendship is a non-profit, community-based organization, which began working with the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood in 1989 to assist low-income residents. In 1993 they expanded their focus to include all members of the neighbourhood. But due to impending budget cutbacks to social service agencies, as well as an agency philosophy of developing neighbourhood self-sufficiency, the House of Friendship wanted to pass total ownership and responsibility of the CMCC to neighbourhood residents. If they were to succeed in meeting this goal, it would mean that the responsibility for the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre and its programming would fall on this small, already overburdened core group of women volunteers. Therefore it became essential to develop a process that would include women volunteers in the development and implementation of future plans at the CMCC.

In order to plan for the future we must first find out what motivates women to be involved in volunteer work, what factors would help their involvement, what are the barriers to their involvement, what are the impacts of their involvement on our community, and what strategies for neighbourhood development could be created from the information collected. The House of Friendship's goal of strategic planning appeared to be so relevant to gathering this information that to do strategic planning without learning about women's experiences would foster the process to fail from the beginning.

Therefore, a committee was formed to ensure that both the strategic planning process and my thesis work would be undertaken and intertwined within the next two years. Some of the work from both processes will be reported in this study.



Review of the Literature

Laura Balbo (1987) used patch work quilting as a metaphor for women's work, arguing that the analogy is as valid today as it was in former times.

Piece bags, sorting out, piecing and patching and quilting, are all words which suggest parallels to concepts that have been used (by myself and others) to describe women's work in contemporary society: the servicing, the pooling and packaging of resources, the self-help activities, emotional work and survival networks, how women keep at their endless tasks, how they put their vision into the planning and design of their own and others' lives whose responsibility they carry.
(Balbo, 1987, p. 46)

The patchwork is not noticed because many of the pieces are ignored (Land, 1991).

Concepts such as caring, unpaid labour, and volunteerism are very appropriate to this research project and will also be useful when analyzing and developing the project's outcomes. Therefore, it seems appropriate to discuss the literature that defines these concepts and provides a framework that is relevant to this research process.

Women's Unpaid Work

Volunteer Work

The term volunteerism implies giving time freely, with little or no remuneration for work completed. Volunteer work is not a salaried job, and it does not provide the security or benefits that go with a paid position. However, volunteering provides women with skills, experience and self confidence, especially when they are not in a paid position (Abrahams, 1993; Duchesne, 1989; Kaminer, 1984). Women volunteers are found throughout society and fulfill many important roles (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Duchesne, 1989; Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Women typically are not recognized for their role or contribution as they are trained to serve and sacrifice their personal careers for their family and others. Given the role of women in our society it follows naturally that women volunteer.

Historically, volunteering was an alternative to paid work for married middle to upper-class women (Kaminer, 1984). Volunteering did not take away from their role in the home and was a way for women to work without disruption to their husbands or children (Baxandall, Gordon, & Reverby, 1971). Today the volunteer career is the exception, as working for money has become a necessity as well as a desire for women (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990).

In a Canadian volunteer study, *Giving Freely, Volunteers in Canada*, Duchesne (1989) found that women were more likely to volunteer than men: 30% of the female population did so as compared to 24% of males, for all age groups. Of all volunteer jobs reported in the survey, some 57% were held by women and 43% by men. The type of volunteer work chosen also differed by gender. For example, the number of women

volunteers was much higher in jobs that were related to health, over 77% of women volunteered, whereas men dominated the volunteer job market in the economic and sports and recreation organizations. In the Duchesne (1989) study, volunteer work was often associated with formal organizations such as hospitals, social service agencies, recreation facilities, churches or schools and did not include informal volunteer activities that one did in their neighbourhoods and communities. Since women are more likely to engage in informal caring work than men (O'Donnell, 1985), it can be argued that the statistics presented in Duchesne's study were low for women since informal volunteer hours were not included in the study. Also one's definition of volunteer work could differ dramatically depending on one's ethnic background (Abrahams, 1993). In some countries formal volunteer organizations do not exist, instead volunteer work is completed on an informal basis. In such cases volunteer hours may not be accounted for, limiting the accuracy of the volunteer statistics collected in the Duchesne (1989) study. Unfortunately the Duchesne study (1989) is the latest comprehensive government publication on the status of volunteers in Canada, therefore, some of the statistics may be outdated.

In the 1970's there was a heated debate concerning the long-term impacts of volunteering. Some feminists attacked volunteering as it represented a tradition of public housewifery which was usually controlled by men (Kaminer, 1984). To some feminists, volunteering was seen as having negative impacts on the communities they were serving, as social services would never be adequately funded as long as women were willing to work for free (Kaminer, 1984). It was also believed that volunteering kept women in

unpaid positions, reinforcing them to stay in a subordinate role to men and therefore felt it should be eliminated (Finch, 1984). Garkovich (1989, p. 215) stated that:

A critical evaluation of community development efforts over the last two decades, then, would have to conclude that many of these efforts have produced passivity and dependence on external agencies and have failed to empower the citizens of local communities.

Proponents of volunteerism argued that this was a radical stance because there were women whose needs were being met by volunteers and to eliminate volunteering would be to abandon those women in need (Flexner, 1973). Supporters of volunteers advocated that they provided real support and resources for women, and without this support these women would never be able to create real change as their basic needs would not have been met. Supporters also believed that volunteer work or unpaid labour was something that could not be measured by money and was something that did not adhere to typically male-dominated values (Waring, 1988). Through volunteer work, women would also receive training and skills, meet new friends and serve others in the community, while raising children in the home. Women leaders in the black community stated that this negative attack on volunteers was serving the middle to upper-class white feminists who were really fighting for the right to work. Sandra Wells, president of an organization of professional black women in the United States, stated that black women have always worked for money, very few stayed home, and many volunteer because if (they) didn't take care of (their) own no one else would (Kaminer, 1984).

Clearly, there are two sides to the debate on volunteerism. Some would argue that volunteer work keeps women powerless and dependent on men (Finch, 1984) as it perpetuates sexism and keeps women in traditional roles of serving others for no money

or recognition. On the other hand others are proud of the volunteer tradition, as they feel volunteering is a necessary part of keeping our communities healthy and safe (Flexner, 1973; Walker, 1982), and gives women support, work experience and skills necessary to compete in the job market. This is important for women experiencing powerlessness, as gaining confidence, learning new skills and contributing to a cause, are all key components in the personal empowerment process (Lord & Hutchison, 1993).

Unpaid Caring Work

Caring refers to the mental, emotional, and physical efforts involved in looking after, responding to, and supporting others (Baines, Evans & Neysmith, 1991). Caring is what community volunteer and mother work is all about, and something that women throughout time and across cultures have been involved in (Scott, 1978). It still appears that women are more heavily involved than men in the heavy end of care-giving (Green, 1988). Unfortunately women's caring work is largely invisible and thus is not considered part of our society's definition of labour, leisure, and parenting (Pascall, 1986).

Community volunteer work involves hard work, skill and dedication as one cares for, supports and responds to others. Yet volunteering is not defined as work, as there is no salary for one's efforts nor is it respected or recognized as legitimate work (Waring, 1988).

Caring traditionally has been identified as women's work and there has been a nearly universal tendency to place lesser value on unpaid caring than paid work, regardless of its contribution or complexity (Taylor, 1990). Marilyn Waring (1988) found that if one was not earning a salary then one was not considered a contributor to our society, and therefore non-wage earners were not counted as being productive in the

national census. This would make child care and volunteer work invisible and discounted because a salary is not earned in either of these two roles. Even though volunteer work and mother work are reproducing and caring for human life, there is little value given to them in our system.

When one looks at the whole notion of volunteerism and gender stereotypes, it follows that women have been the main contributors of community volunteer caring work, as typically women are socialized to care for others (Scott, 1984). One can conclude that women's caring work in the community has become an extension of the work they do in the home, perpetuating the inequality and subordinate treatment of women (Miller, 1986).

Mother Work

The situation of women in our society must be understood in relation to motherhood, as women are still considered in terms of their roles as childraisers and caregivers (Abrahams, 1993; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1990; Callahan, 1993; Rossiter, 1988). According to Callahan (1993), women who care for children are more likely to be disadvantaged (whether married or single), than those who do not care for children. This division is largely because of the impact children have on women's participation in the work force and the devaluation of the caregiving in both the private (unpaid) and public (paid) spheres (Febbraro, 1994; Rossiter, 1988).

Motherhood is a well-known ideology in our culture today and is encouraged to be a part of every woman's life (Chodorow, 1978; Oakley 1992). Motherhood is often unnoticed and undervalued because it is seen as a natural attribute of women (Rossiter, 1988). With the societal perceptions that motherhood is inevitable and natural to women

only, women forgo their own needs to take care of their children. This holds women to the private sphere (Chodorow, 1978; Rossiter, 1988).

Even though motherhood is expected of women, it is not recognized as part of everyday life. Instead it is made invisible in the day-to-day realities of our world (Rossiter, 1988). Motherhood is treated as an interruption to real life which is to be carried out under special or private conditions only (Rossiter, 1988), which discourages and inhibits women from participating in the public world. When entering the public sphere, children are not accommodated or included in the spatial or social arrangements of society, which further isolates women. For example, restaurants, public transit, movie theaters and learning institutions do not have the facilities nor the tolerance for the presence of children. This general discomfort with children in public spaces restricts women and keeps them in the private sphere which is invisible from society. In the paid public sphere most workplaces are not supportive of women when they are pregnant, nor do they have adequate supports in place for the accommodation of childrearing (Cooke Report, 1986).

Paradoxically the ideology of motherhood is described in glowing terms so that mothers feel guilty, unnatural or ashamed to complain about their invisible status. These conditions isolate women which helps to keep them invisible in society. Since unpaid work (volunteering and childraising) is not valued in our society, it becomes difficult for women to feel visible or equal in either of these two roles. Mother work gets little respect and yet it has incredible implications for the future of our society (Chodorow, 1978; Febbraro, 1994; Rossiter, 1988).

Social Context of Women's Work

The Family Structure and Paid Work

When looking at the role of women and men within the family structure some typically think of women as the “houseworkers” and men as the “breadwinners.” Women have been socialized to be the caretakers of children, and therefore, are usually dependent on men’s financial support (Pascall, 1986), even though women’s participation in the paid work force has increased over the past two decades. A Statistics Canada Study, *Women in Canada* (1995) reports that in 1994, 52% of all women ages 15 and over were active in the workforce, up from 42% in 1976. In contrast the proportion of men with jobs decreased in the same period, dropping from 73% in 1976 to 65% in 1994. It is important to note that these figures vary across Canada. There has also been rapid growth in the employment of women with children. In 1991, 63% of mothers with children under age 16 were employed, up from 50% in 1981.

The most consistent feature of women’s work is the low pay (Edgecombe, Robb & Gunderson, 1987). In 1991, women working on a full-time, full-year basis earned an average of \$26,800, 70% as much as comparable to men (Statistics Canada, 1995). This figure has changed little since 1981 when women’s earnings had been 64% of those of men (Statistics Canada, 1995). If women work in low paid professions, it stands to reason that they are financially dependent on their husband’s income.

Although there has been a shift in paid work for women, women still are not equally paid; they still take on the majority of household responsibilities; they face oppressive conditions in the workplace (Pascall, 1986); they work fewer hours in the labour market; and they tend to have a longer work week than men (Edgecombe, Robb &

Gunderson, 1987; Statistics Canada, 1995). Women's labour market earning potential is also affected as women are left primarily responsible to juggle both household and paid work responsibilities (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990). Statistics Canada (1995) reports that when women are employed, they still spend two hours more per day on household activities such as cleaning, child care and shopping, than their male counterparts. Even if women have fewer hours in the paid workforce, their work day is much longer than their husbands' especially if they have young children, as husbands spend less time on housework and childcare (Meissner, Humphreys, Meis & Scheu, 1975; Statistics Canada, 1995).

Due to these obligations many women choose to work part-time in order to accommodate family responsibilities (Duffy & Pupo, 1992). However, part-time work is usually lower paid and does not provide women with the same benefits or security as full-time work (Duffy & Pupo, 1992). Statistics Canada reports that in 1994, 12% of all female part-time workers, indicated that they wanted full-time employment, but could only find part-time work due to their personal and family responsibilities. Another piece of evidence which indicates that women remain primarily responsible for childraising is the fact that they are twice as likely as men to be absent from work because of family responsibilities (Statistics Canada, 1995).

Women's paid work is also segregated from men's paid work (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990). Women work in a limited range of occupations, most of which are the most monotonous, and in the least secure jobs (Luxton, 1980) which men will never take (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990; Smuts, 1971; Statistics Canada 1995). Women's work in the paid workforce also reflects their work in the unpaid

workforce, and quite often takes place in the home (Martin & Roberts, 1984). For example, Statistics Canada reports that in 1991, 71% of women were employed in professions such as clerical, sales, services, teaching, and nursing. These professions are similar to women's traditional responsibilities in the home such as cleaning, cooking, teaching children, and caring for families and households.

Childcare becomes an important factor when analyzing women's paid work, because women are primarily responsible for the caretaking of children (Baines, Evans & Neysmith, 1991; Callahan, 1993; Rossiter, 1988; Statistics Canada, 1995). Many jobs are not accessible to women (e.g., jobs with long hours, or jobs where commuting is involved) as they conflict with childrearing responsibilities. Inadequate childcare has also been noted by numerous task forces, studies and government commissions (Cooke Report, 1986). Canada has poorly developed support policies for families with parents in the labour market (Cooke Report, 1986). The labour market has not been structured to accommodate childrearing needs (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990), and since women have been socialized for childrearing (Rossiter, 1988) the lack of childcare options has a stronger impact on women when making choices concerning employment.

Employment equity has been uniquely adopted in Canada by the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (the Abella Commission, 1984). They adopted employment equity to describe programs that improve the situation of individuals who because they are identified as being in a particular group, find themselves affected by certain systems or practices in the workplace. Four groups have been identified as disadvantaged. These groups are: women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and people with disabilities. It should stand to reason that employment equity legislation,

also known as affirmative action or the quota law, be expanded and further developed in our society, as we need to spread around and take away some of the privileges that men have been given in our society. As Michele Landsberg (1982, p. 37) stated in her book *Women and Children First*, “men have been enjoying affirmative action all along... now it is time for the de-privileging of men.”

Our current provincial government - the Progressive Conservatives - has repealed all legislation that protects and supports women of any such rights. Instead of protecting women through provincial legislation, complaints of employment inequity now are filed federally with the Human Rights Commission. However, this has proven to be inadequate as they have received major cutbacks in funding, which has limited their services. It is also important to note that compensation for inequitable employment treatment cases has also been reduced. Therefore, men will continue to enjoy their informal yet strongly enforced affirmative action benefits, while women are not guaranteed any such privileges.

Women's paid work must be understood in terms of the family and society at large. Voluntary organizations such as the CMCC could play an important leadership role in advocating for change or enforcement on legislation and policies such as affirmative action, as the Centre has connections and ties with women who live in the neighbourhood.

Women in Social Policy

Social policy that is made available to women is mostly aimed at women's roles as mothers and wives (Sapiro, 1986). Social policy follows a traditional family model of a husband, wife, and children. Social policy is targeted at wives and mothers and it

benefits those who depend on wives and mothers for nurturance and domestic service (McCannell, McCarthy & Herringer, 1992). Social policy does not adequately support middle-aged single women (spinsters), single mothers, lesbian women, or women on social assistance (McCannell, McCarthy & Herringer, 1992) as it does not address women who live outside the confines of marriage. Therefore, women need to fit into traditional patriarchal molds in order to receive the few benefits that are provided through social policy. As an example, single parent families are not adequately supported by social policy assistance (McCannell, McCarthy & Herringer, 1992). According to the Statistics Canada report, *Women in Canada*, (1995), 60% of female one-parent families in 1993, lived in low income situations. Gunderson, Muszynski, and Keck (1990) found that the likelihood of poverty for women living in single-parent households was 44.1 %. It is important to note that while employment reduces the incidence of poverty among women (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990), women's unequal status in the workforce and the lack of available childcare, is limiting their working potential more so than it is limiting men's potential

The likelihood that women will be on welfare is much greater than men, and this income security system keeps women dependent on the system and living in poverty (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990). The welfare system has been set up according to the traditional notions of women's dependency on men. Welfare typically was available for women who did not have men to provide for them for whatever reasons (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990). Because dependency is assumed, single mothers were not expected to work, thereby creating a structure that provided an income without any earning potential. However, the government in Ontario - the Progressive

Conservatives - is creating new "Workfare" legislation which will legislate women on welfare to work (in paid positions) for their social assistance. Women currently on social assistance will have to work with all of the accompanying barriers: unavailable childcare, low paying positions, lack of health benefits, lack of pensions, inequitable salaries, unaffordable housing, threats to personal safety, lack of education, racism, and the responsibility for child raising. Even with employment supplement programs for people on social assistance, income levels will still be below the poverty line (Gunderson, Muszynski, & Keck, 1990).

Women who are divorced or widowed or are no longer in the active stages of motherhood face barriers as well. Part-time work histories, departure from the labour force to raise children, and lower paid positions do not create ample income for women who are in their 60s. Divorce is also an act that threatens the traditional mold of the two parent family. Since the courts are part of the patriarchal state, there are still social policies that are based on the notion of male as breadwinner and female as homemaker and child caretaker (Eichler, 1988). The rules for determining support payments are also vague (Statistics Canada, 1995). As a result women are usually significantly poorer after divorce as social policies do not recognize their loss of earning potential they receive in their roles as mothers and wives (Haskey, 1989). Considering that 37 per cent of all marriages end in divorce, many women are negatively affected by this reality (Haskey, 1989). As McCannell, McCarthy and Herringer (1992, p. 176) state, "women's everyday lives are shaped by policies that serve the interests of our patriarchal and capitalist system."

The Motivators - Why Women Volunteer

Personal and community motivators. Many researchers have suggested that few people actually participate when given the opportunity (Peattie, 1968; Warren, 1978). This leads us to wonder what types of situations or individual characteristics motivate people to participate in community volunteer work. There have been studies that have found a relationship between social class and participation in volunteer work (Alford & Scoble, 1968; Hyman & Wright, 1971), between race and participation (Orum, 1966; Hyman & Wright, 1971), and between gender and participation (Booth, 1972; Verba & Nie, 1972). Carr, Dixon and Ogles (1976) found that favourable attitudes toward a neighbourhood were positively related to participation levels. The more the neighbourhood was viewed as a nice and friendly place to live, the more people wanted to volunteer. These studies, however, have been criticized for their sole use of quantitative data and the narrow range of explanatory variables that were examined (Smith, 1975).

Wandersman (1979) developed a framework for participation in community organizations that includes several different dimensions: individual; environmental; ecological; and social characteristics. Wandersman's (1979) framework suggests that the interaction of the characteristics of the individual with environmental, ecological and social characteristics influence whether people will participate in community volunteer work. Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) used this framework in a study of a Tennessee neighbourhood and found that a combination of community and individual difference variables are important factors that influence participation. The perception of problems, the neighbourhood atmosphere, and the willingness to get involved were all

important factors in motivating people to volunteer. Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) concluded that the social climate of the neighbourhood is an important factor to assess when looking at the potential for participation in community volunteer work.

Neighbourhood problems can serve as a motivator for participation in volunteer work, especially when the volunteer work creates action and change within a neighbourhood (Florin & Wandersman, 1984). However, when neighbourhood problems are perceived as insurmountable by residents, community action will be hindered because people will be too overwhelmed to develop solutions (Weick, 1984). Weick (1994) therefore proposes that we change or redefine the scale of the social problem in order to motivate community members to create change. He calls this the “small wins approach.”

Clark and Wilson (1961) present a typology for classifying incentives to volunteer in community volunteer work. These include material benefits, which refer to tangible rewards or monetary value and which include wages, increased property value, and information. They also include solidarity benefits which are largely social interaction, status, group identification, and recognition. Lastly are the purposive benefits which are derived from personal goals of the organization and include improving the community, doing one's civic duty, and fulfilling a sense of responsibility. Clark and Wilson however, omit an important incentive for involvement in community volunteer work, and that is gender socialization.

Social motivators. Women's caring has traditionally been viewed as a form of relating to others that comes naturally for women, arising from the biological differences between men and women (Taylor, 1990). These differences have provided a pervasive and persistent rationale for assigning women's roles and responsibilities to the home. It is

women who learn to take their place in society as caregivers to children and elderly relatives. It is women who transfer this caring to the public sphere by providing formal caring services such as cleaning, teaching, childcare provision and community volunteering. Unlike males, females are encouraged to identify with others and to develop altruistic patterns of interaction (Noddings, 1984), making them prime candidates for community volunteer work. By examining the socialization of women, we may begin to understand the processes by which girls and women assimilate the expectations and norms that surround caring in our society (Ferguson, 1984). It is anticipated that the socially constructed caring expectations of women, and their own sense of obligation to this role, have been identified as some of the prime motivators for women's participation. This was evident in the study *Giving Freely, Volunteers in Canada* (Duchesne, 1989), which listed women's top reasons for volunteering as helping others, and doing work that benefits one's own children, family or self.

Facilitators to Involvement

Neighbourhood programs need to be organized in such a way so as to support and facilitate participation from the citizens or residents of the neighbourhood (please note that in this section of the document I use the term "citizen" as opposed to "women" as the relevant research is reflective of both genders). Citizen participation has been defined as "a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs and environments that affect them" (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984, p. 339). Facilitating citizen participation is essential in community volunteer caring work. Garkovich (1989, p. 215) stated that:

If community volunteer efforts are to be enduring and produce maximal results, they must engage all the people and organizations of a community in coordinated activities to improve their quality of life.

She also recognized that in practice, citizen participation often falls short of the ideal.

While much lip service is given to the importance of citizen participation, it has not always been emphasized in reality. Too often, community development has been done to a community of citizens rather than with them...

Consideration should be given to the facilitating factors which improve participation, as they assist in building community capacity (Garkovich, 1989; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Krupa, 1994). In order to accomplish this, strategies need to be developed which foster citizen involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project (Christenson & Robinson, 1989, Garkovich, 1989; Hall, 1984; Krupa, 1994; Littrell & Hobbs, 1989).

Cameron, Peirson and Pancer (1994) found that there has been little research completed in the area of encouraging and supporting participation from citizens in community development. They suggest a few important methods for facilitating citizen involvement, and these include:

- policy driven participation - specific policies that enforce minimum numbers of citizens to participate in decision making bodies;
- accessibility and concrete supports - financial and practical assistance for citizens with childcare, transportation and compensation for time spent on committees;
- training people for their roles and responsibilities - workshops and seminars to enhance the skills of citizens; and
- improving communication - the use of everyday language, and the provision of communication training and clear job descriptions.

Garkovich (1989) writing about neighbourhood development states that action research, Neighbourhood Associations, enhancing the leadership pool, and expanding the

information base are all strategies that facilitate citizen involvement in neighbourhoods. Action research that is designed to identify needs, services and strategies facilitates citizen involvement. Ideally action research involves the citizens and staff equally when determining decisions and project outcomes. Neighbourhood Associations are also a strategy in facilitating citizen involvement in community life (Warren, 1978). Garkovich suggests that the larger the leadership pool in a community, the greater the opportunities for facilitating citizen involvement, thereby making it easier to make things happen in the neighbourhood. Most people have within themselves the ability to lead and create change if given the proper training and tools. Therefore, Garkovich (1989) makes a case for expanding citizens' information as the final strategy for facilitating citizen participation in community life. All of these strategies need to build on the existing talents and skills within a community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) in order to successfully facilitate citizen involvement.

Barriers to Women's Involvement

In order to secure women's involvement in community organizations, barriers need to be identified and removed.

Personal barriers. The literature suggests that both citizens and professionals lack faith in the abilities of citizens to make important decisions (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Capponi, 1990; Chavis, Stucky, & Wandersman, 1983). Women have a variety of education and employment experiences that they bring to community volunteer work. Some may have little or no experience with the day-to-day operations and procedures of a human service organization. Without the knowledge, experience, or confidence, volunteers have difficulty making informed choices or actions (Checkoway, 1979;

Wandersman, 1984). Most organizations do not fully train their volunteers and therefore do not provide them with the resources or skills needed to make decisions (Capponi, 1990; Checkoway, 1979). It is very difficult for a volunteer to feel comfortable and confident in the decision making process when she/he has not been oriented to the issues that have been presented. Even though many professionals may want to involve volunteers, they may not have the training to effectively involve volunteers in meaningful ways (Davis & Specht, 1978). Without training or the resources, it is not surprising that both professionals and citizens lack confidence in their decision making abilities, which in turn prohibits citizens from meaningful participation in community volunteer work.

Family barriers. Other factors have limited and even prohibited the participation of women in community volunteer work. Meeting times and the location of the meeting place have created barriers for women's involvement. Meetings held during business hours require that women need daycare or time off from work in order to attend (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Graves, 1972). Community meetings are usually held in small group rooms which do not give women the option of bringing children with them to the meetings. Spouses are not always supportive of women's participation in community volunteer work, to the extreme that they have been reported to forbid and threaten women from any future participation (Taylor, 1990).

Organizational barriers. Traditionally, professionals have held the power in program participant and staff relationships, as professionals were perceived as the experts and program participants as the person in need of help (Capponi, 1990; McKnight, 1980). In some settings professionals may feel threatened by volunteers who have control as they may perceive this as a challenge to their authority (Capponi, 1990; Checkoway,

1979). In order to regain their power, professionals may belittle citizens' efforts, question their decisions, give them token responsibilities, and doubt their abilities (Cameron, Peirson, & Pancer, 1994; Chavis, Stucky & Wandersman, 1983; Checkoway, 1979). This treatment creates barriers for women's involvement in volunteer organizations.

Ineffective communication, such as big words, complicated documents, acronyms, and parliamentary procedures have created major barriers to women's involvement (Capponi, 1990). Lack of communication has also been cited as a major block for women to become actively involved in activities and events (Capponi, 1990). The language of the communication may also be a barrier for involvement. Meetings held in English only eliminate the participation of non-English speaking women. Meetings are often held in inaccessible locations which also prevents people living with physical challenges from participating.

Community barriers. Troubled neighbourhoods have vast amounts of work to be completed (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and women can be intimidated by the amount of work involved (Ahlbrandt & Cunningham, 1979; Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman & Chavis, 1990). This may, in fact, deter women from participating or may cause them to terminate their involvement as the amount of work seems daunting. Chavis and Wandersman (1990) found that a sense of community was a crucial factor for participation in community development volunteer work. If there is no sense of community within a neighbourhood, people are not motivated to change the problems they face. A sense of community is positively related to change one's sense of group or personal power (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). Without personal or group power, a

sense of hopelessness and apathy sets in, which could be a barrier for women's volunteer involvement.

Social barriers. As mentioned in the previous section on women and social policy, social policy plays an active role in creating barriers and limiting opportunities for women (McCannell, McCarthy & Herringer, 1992; Sapiro, 1986). In light of the recent cutbacks to social assistance and changes in social policy by the Progressive Conservative provincial government, financial security and prosperity will be difficult to achieve for many people. It may be difficult to concentrate or participate in community volunteer caring work when one's own personal life is upset by personal crisis or inadequate financial resources. The Progressive Conservative government is also in the process of creating legislation that forces individuals to work and volunteer in order to receive their financial assistance. How motivated will people be to volunteer when they are forced to volunteer in order to put food on the table? This strategy only further creates barriers to women's participation in community volunteer work. All of these factors are barriers to involvement in community volunteer work.

Outcomes of Volunteering

Positive Impacts of Volunteer Involvement

In a Canadian survey (Duchesne, 1989), volunteers were asked what they had acquired from their volunteer involvement with human service organizations and other agencies. Results show that the abilities most acquired from community volunteer work were interpersonal, communication, organizational and managerial skills (Duchesne, 1989; Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Evidence suggests that from involvement in community volunteer work there are strong interpersonal relationships and social fabric

developed (Wandersman & Florin, in press), feelings of political efficacy (Cole 1974, 1981), and feelings of individual competence and confidence developed (Bandura, 1986). In order to capture the full impact of volunteer work, it is necessary to identify its relationship on all levels: personal, family, organizational, community and social.

Personal benefits. Individual empowerment has been associated with participation in human service organizations and has been related to higher competencies, confidence, sense of duty, and decreased feelings of helplessness (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) constructed a measure of psychological empowerment which they tested on college students and community residents. They found that there was one single factor that contributed significantly to personal empowerment, and that was participation in community volunteer work. Volunteer work can provide women with respite, as they may be busy with young children, elderly parents or they may be out of work. Community volunteer participation provides women with a break from their regular routines, helps them to establish a new routine, and also provides them with the opportunity for enhanced social contact and support. Volunteering is a convenient and practical opportunity to meet other women and make new friends. Involvement also serves as a form of mutual aid, as one has opportunities to meet others who have similar problems and issues.

Provision of proper resources and training for volunteers enhances skills and knowledge as women acquire new tools through their involvement in community volunteer work. Experience in community volunteer work is attractive to prospective employers, not to mention that through their volunteer involvement there is the

possibility of being hired as a staff member by the organization (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994). Volunteer work assists women in their personal empowerment process, as involvement decreases isolation, enhances skill development, initiates participation and increases self-efficacy (Lord & Hutchison, 1993).

Family benefits. Much of volunteer work is based on the possible family benefits that can be obtained from such efforts (O'Donnell, 1985). Many become involved in this type of work because they want more services and a better life for their children and for other children in the community (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Some children are proud that their parents are involved in the community. Parents' involvement in volunteer work also provides children with a positive role-model to follow in years to come. Pancer and Cameron (1994) also found that as a result of women's participation in volunteer work many of the children experienced the same benefits as their mothers had experienced themselves. For example, some women in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Prevention Project reported that their volunteer work helped their children to develop friendships, self-confidence and increased their social supports.

Organizational benefits. Community organizations benefit from women's participation, especially if women volunteers are involved in all aspects of the organization (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich & Chavis, 1990). Volunteers can assist the organization with endless activities (e.g., program and policy development, providing support to clients, providing administrative support, assisting with program implementation, providing reception services, assist with program evaluation, developing and implement needs assessments and so forth). Contact with service providers and professionals also brings women closer to social service agencies and institutions within

their community. Pancer and Cameron (1994) found that participants in the Better Beginnings, Better Futures project were able to relate to the service providers on a more equal basis because of their volunteer participation in community volunteer work.

Community benefits. Participation in volunteer work has many positive impacts on the community or neighbourhood (Garkovich, 1989; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Pancer & Cameron, 1994). For example, there have been positive impacts on the physical environment in programs ranging from simple cleanup and beautification programs, home repair and improvement programs, to more ambitious building projects (Berkowitz, 1984). Burgess (1990), a neighbourhood block president in the United States, comments on how volunteer caring work has influenced his neighbourhood:

Even though volunteer service is a lot of hard work, it enhances the quality of life and is quite rewarding. Four years ago our block was run down and dilapidated. There were drug sales in the shop on the corner, the street was in bad need of repaving. Now crime has decreased immensely on the block and the block speaks for itself. (p. 160)

Through participant involvement information about program activities and resources are disseminated to community members. This creates greater public awareness, and the organization is able to reach out to a larger portion of the community. Through participation, an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration is created, which helps to build a sense of community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Community action is also more of a possibility once women get to know one another and identify common issues. Community change is more likely to be created when community action takes place (Lord & Hutchison, 1993).

Social benefits. Through volunteer work, communities can discover their capacities and assets and create a commitment to rebuild their own lives and their

neighbourhood (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Some neighbourhoods, communities, and nations experience many problems and difficulties (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) which create and impose images and words such as “needy”, “dysfunctional” and “problematic.” These images are placed on the neighbourhood as well as neighbourhood residents. The residents come to believe in these images and think that they are problematic and needy and therefore believe they need to be fixed by outside professionals. Thus creating vast numbers of service consumers (McKnight, 1980). The literature suggests that significant community volunteer work can create social action, change negative images and government policies, and build community self-sufficiency (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). With strong volunteer commitment, communities can discover their capacities and assets and rebuild their communities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Prilleltensky and Nelson (in press) go one step further by stating that many positive impacts can be achieved when communities place their efforts on social justice issues, therefore creating transformative change in the community.

Negative Impacts of Volunteering

Personal costs. Apart from uniforms, equipment and supplies, volunteers may have to pay for other expenses incurred during the course of their volunteer work (Duchesne, 1989). In half of all volunteer jobs, volunteers reported spending money in order to carry out their activities (Duchesne, 1989). There are not only financial costs (Klandersmans, 1984), but there are also emotional and mental costs resulting from involvement in community volunteer work. In the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Prevention Project some women volunteers reported that their volunteer work resulted in

feelings of frustration and inadequacy, as they did not feel appreciated and that they were not being heard in the project's early development. Personal stress and burnout have also been reported as personal costs or consequences that women experience in their work as community volunteers (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Other personal costs include the following: material and individual costs, such as giving up personal and family time (Friedmann, Florin, Wandersman, & Meier, 1988; Pancer & Cameron, 1994; Silloway & McPherson, 1986; Wandersman, 1984), and skills and knowledge (Oliver, 1984), which would be paid for in a salaried position.

Family costs. In order to give time and energy to community volunteer work, other aspects or commitments are put on hold and suffer to some degree. Pancer and Cameron (1994) found that the great majority of individuals who participated in the various Better Beginnings, Better Futures projects were women. Since childrearing responsibilities have been delegated to women in the majority of families (Eichler, 1988), the time spent volunteering takes away from the time women spend with their children. Pancer and Cameron (1994) even found that some of the women volunteers were so busy volunteering that they were not able to participate in the very programs they helped design, which were created to bring children and parents together. Children are not the only ones to be affected by women's involvement in community volunteer work. Partners have been found to be upset and resent the amount of time that women spend in their volunteer work (Pancer & Cameron, 1994).

Organizational costs. The level of women's involvement can have a negative impact on organizations. For example, personal agendas, lack of commitment, and busy lifestyles can affect the amount and quality of volunteer work completed (O'Donnell,

1985). These factors have a negative impact on the organization. The fact that volunteers are willing to work for free may decrease or remove any possibility for future funding sources (Kaminer, 1984).

Community costs. There can be negative impacts that affect the community should difficulties between volunteers and staff arise while volunteering. Because of these difficulties, tensions and divisions can occur between community citizens (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Pancer and Cameron (1994) found that difficulties were caused by non-volunteer perceptions of the volunteer group, which viewed volunteers as a special or elite group. This caused negative feelings between neighbourhood residents and their children. Pancer and Cameron (1994) also found that competition for jobs amongst neighbourhood residents was another factor that created community tensions and divisions.

Social costs. The pattern in which poorly paid women provide care to vulnerable populations has been evident throughout community volunteer and health services (Waerness, 1990). Committed to the belief that it is their duty to care, women express their individuality and follow life paths that are very limited. This is of great cost not only to women themselves, but to society as well. Women are caught juggling the needs of family, work, and community volunteering and this takes an incredible toll on their lives, both emotionally and materially. The demands placed on women and the lack of support and recognition they receive seriously impedes the relationship between women and those in need of care (Waerness, 1990). This devaluation of caring, coupled with its invisibility, can place those who care and who are cared for, in a position of dependency on one another.

There are other possible implications that may come about because of community volunteer work. Prilleltensky and Nelson (in press) discuss five values that guide community psychology concepts and principles. These values are: health; caring and compassion; self-determination/participation; human diversity; and social justice. Prilleltensky and Nelson (in press) indicate that we need to have a healthy and appropriate balance of these values in order to create transformative social change. Without a healthy and appropriate balance of values, volunteer work may actually have a negative impact on our communities. Volunteer work both past and present has had a strong and effective focus on caring, support and compassion (Duchesne, 1989; Gottlieb & Peters, 1991). However, volunteer work has not had a particularly strong focus on social justice issues (Duchesne, 1989). This unbalanced focus on health, caring and compassion, and to some extent self-determination and participation, puts the services that volunteers provide at risk of crumbling because there is “an indispensable building block missing” (Prilleltensky and Nelson, in press, p, 16). This indispensable building block is social justice. By providing this caring and compassion to disadvantaged communities, it could be argued that volunteers are actually helping to keep people they serve in the same place, rather than helping people to advance.

Research Objectives

This research focuses on the experiences of women who are involved in community volunteer work within a neighbourhood organization. There are four main objectives (See Table 1 for the specific research questions, rationale, methods and information needs):

- **First, the research aims to increase our understanding of what influences women to be involved in community volunteer work.**
- **A second objective is to identify the process for women's participation, including inhibitors and facilitators for participation in community volunteer work.**
- **Thirdly, the research will reveal the impact participation has on women's lives (both the costs and benefits).**
- **Fourthly, since this research will be action-oriented, it will strive to identify strategies and suggestions for neighbourhood development that will assist women who reside in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood.**

Table 1

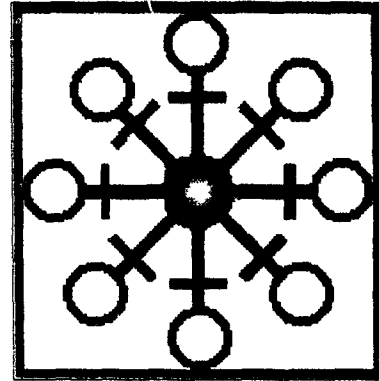
Research Information Matrix

Research Question	Rationale	Methods	Information Needs
<p>1. What motivates women to participate in community volunteer work?</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u> * to increase our understanding of what influences women to participate in community volunteer work</p> <p><u>Action</u> * to suggest strategies to women to participate in community volunteer work</p>	<p><u>Focus groups</u> * staff * volunteers</p> <p><u>Telephone interviews</u> * volunteers</p> <p><u>Person-to-person interviews</u> * volunteers</p>	<p>* volunteer statistics gathering (local and Canadian) * literature review on women's feelings, opinions and perceptions of initial and ongoing motivators for voluntary involvement * descriptive information from volunteers and staff who work at the CMCC</p>
<p>2. What personal, family organizational, community and social factors facilitate women's involvement in volunteer work?</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u> * to identify the factors that facilitate women's involvement in community volunteer work at the personal, family, organizational, community and social levels</p> <p><u>Action</u> * to present strategies that would help to increase women's participation in volunteer work at the CMCC</p>	<p><u>Focus groups</u> * staff * volunteers</p> <p><u>Telephone interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p> <p><u>Person-to-person interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p>	<p>* descriptions of the factors which facilitate volunteer involvement from volunteers/non-volunteers and staff * descriptions from the literature of factors that facilitate volunteer involvement</p>
<p>3. What personal, family organizational, community and social factors inhibit women's involvement in community volunteer work?</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u> * to identify factors which inhibit women's involvement in community volunteer work at the personal, family,</p>	<p><u>Focus groups</u> * staff * volunteers</p> <p><u>Telephone interviews</u> * volunteers</p>	<p>* literature review on the factors that inhibit volunteer participation * volunteer/non-volunteer and staff descriptions of</p>

Table 1

Research Information Matrix

	<p>organizational, community and social levels</p> <p><u>Action</u> * to present strategies that would help to remove obstacles for women's participation in volunteer work at the CMCC</p>	<p>* non-volunteers</p> <p><u>Person-to-person interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p>	<p>factors which inhibit volunteer participation</p>
<p>4. What are the positive impacts of women's volunteer participation on the women themselves, their families, the community and on social factors?</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u> * to identify positive impacts from women's involvement in volunteer work</p> <p><u>Action</u> * to present strategies that would help to increase the positive impacts volunteer work has on women's lives</p>	<p><u>Focus groups</u> * staff * volunteers</p> <p><u>Telephone interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p> <p><u>Person-to-person interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p>	<p>* descriptive information from volunteers/non-volunteers and staff on the positive impacts of volunteer work</p> <p>* literature review on the positive impacts of volunteer work</p>
<p>5. What are the negative impacts of women's volunteer participation on the women themselves, their families, the organization, the community and on social factors?</p>	<p><u>Understanding</u> * to identify negative impacts from women's involvement in volunteer work</p> <p><u>Action</u> * to present strategies that would help to decrease the negative impacts volunteer work has on women's lives</p>	<p><u>Focus groups</u> * staff * volunteers</p> <p><u>Telephone interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p> <p><u>Person-to-person interviews</u> * volunteers * non-volunteers</p>	<p>* descriptive information from volunteers/non-volunteers and staff on the negative impacts of volunteer work</p> <p>* literature review on the negative impacts of volunteer work</p>



The Design and Methodology of the Study

Neighbourhood Context

The Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood was the case study examined for this thesis. The Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood is located in Kitchener, Ontario. The neighbourhood has experienced difficulties and challenges in the past, and due to the conflicts amongst neighbourhood residents, a sense of community has not been established. The neighbourhood is densely populated and has a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. It has been documented by the Planning Department of the City of Kitchener (1991) that the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood has no less than 15 identifiable ethnic groups. Many residents have recently immigrated to Canada and do not speak English. The local Neighbourhood Association has estimated the population to be over 2000 residents, in an area covering approximately one square kilometer. According to City of Kitchener (1991) Census data there are approximately 580 private households with the following income levels: 164 households with under \$10,000 -

\$30,000; 247 households with \$30,000 - \$60,000; and 169 households with \$50,000 - \$70,000 and over. Although housing makes up the major composition of the neighbourhood, there are also two parks, a nursery, the Kitchener Transit maintenance offices, the Utilities Operation Centre, and a Community Centre.

The Family Support Program, which is now known as the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre (CMCC), was established in 1986 to assist low-income individuals of the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood to meet their basic needs and eventually empower residents to break the cycle of poverty. Initially the program focused on low-income residents in low-income housing, but in 1993 it expanded its mandate to include all members of the neighbourhood. This program is supported by the House of Friendship, a local non-profit organization, which provides resources and staff time to the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre. A large portion of the CMCC's budget is from the House of Friendship's general fundraising budget. The CMCC also receives support from the City of Kitchener - Parks and Recreation Department which has leased two small portables for a 10 year period, at one dollar per year, to the House of Friendship.

Although the House of Friendship provides staffing support, the program could not operate without the hard work and volunteer efforts of a small group of women residents. This core group of women volunteers, organizes, develops and implements program activities, five days per week, eight hours per day (sometimes more), with no salary or compensation for their efforts. As a result of their hard work, children are able to attend summer programs; people are tutored; computer skills are learned; English as a Second language is taught; friendships are developed; physical fitness activities are facilitated; and support and referrals to social service agencies are made.

Currently a strategic planning process has been set in motion to pass ownership, co-ordination and implementation of the CMCC's programs to the neighbourhood. This process is being funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate. Participants of this process include the House of Friendship, Waterloo Regional Housing, the Parks and Recreation Department, and neighbourhood residents. The results from this research study will be incorporated into the strategic planning process.

Community Psychology and Feminist Methods

In order to achieve the project goals, I thought it was necessary to have the research process incorporate community psychology and feminist methodologies. There are many shared ingredients between the two methodologies, but before I begin this, I must first explain how I understand community psychology and feminist methodologies, as there are many definitions available in the literature.

Price and Cherniss (1977) describe a social action model for community psychology research. Some of the definitive aspects of this model include: problem solving is stimulated by community needs; the theory serves as a means and not just as an end; research is a tool for social action; value issues are made explicit; research develops useful strategies to deal with real social problems; the researcher gives to the setting rather than solely taking from the setting; and demonstration must lead to adoption and use. Price and Cherniss (1977) point out that the most important factor of community psychology research is that hypothesis formulation is not decided prior to project initiation, rather the hypothesis becomes evident after the researcher engages in the research process. Keys and Frank (1987) also suggest that community psychology research be attuned to the process as well as the content. Community psychology

researchers using a social action model strive to promote personal empowerment and aim to remove oppressive social conditions for the group.

Many differences exist with the definition of feminism. Depending on one's culture, gender, class, sexual orientation, or feminist identification (i.e., liberal, radical, socialist/Marxist), one's definition can be very different from that of another feminist. In her book *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Shulamit Reinharz (1992) does not define what feminist research is, rather she focuses on the themes of what feminist research includes, which for her is the sum of feminist research methods. She identifies 10 themes for feminist research which provide a framework for this research:

1. Feminism is a perspective, not a research method;
2. Feminists use a multiplicity of research methods;
3. Feminist research involves an ongoing criticism of nonfeminist scholarship;
4. Feminist research is guided by feminist theory;
5. Feminist research may be transdisciplinary;
6. Feminist research aims to create social change;
7. Feminist research strives to represent human diversity;
8. Feminist researcher includes the researcher as a person;
9. Feminist research frequently attempts to develop special relations with the women studied (in interactive research); and
10. Feminist research frequently defines a special relation with the reader.

From community psychology and feminism have emerged new paradigms that are very different than traditional approaches (Dale, 1978; Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984; Rappaport, 1977; Reinharz, 1992). Community psychology and feminism share many similar concepts, values and beliefs. Anne Mulvey (1988) has analyzed these shared characteristics, including a belief in the ecological perspective and the empowerment of citizens.

The ecological perspective looks to the environment to provide us with a broad range of contextual understanding. The ecological perspective provides a useful scheme

for recognizing interaction between the levels of analysis (Belsky, 1980). An ecological perspective stresses the importance of identifying the factors and influences from all the levels in order to fully understand the interconnections and influences on people's experiences (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). Trickett, Kelly, and Vincent (1985, p. 286) summarize the ecological perspective by stating that "to think ecologically is: 1) to consider how persons, settings and events can become resources for the positive development of communities; 2) to consider how resources can be managed and conserved; 3) to approach research so that the effort expended will be helpful to the preservation and enhancement of community resources".

Community psychology and feminism are grounded in an ecological perspective. Community psychology is an approach to helping that works at the personal, group, organizational, community and societal levels (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). Feminism also emphasizes community interconnectedness of women and their environment which suggests that environments can and do contribute to women's social and mental well-being (Mulvey, 1988). Both community psychology and feminism recognize the interdependence and influence of components in a social system, which implies that whenever one level of the system is changed, changes in other levels also occur.

Empowerment has been a central phenomena for community psychology (Rappaport, 1987) and feminism (Mulvey, 1988). Rappaport (1987) suggests that empowerment is a mechanism by which people gain mastery over their affairs. Empowerment seems to be a process that occurs over time and is related to gaining information, greater self confidence, and being part of a shared vision or collective

consciousness (Lord & Hutchison, 1993). Not only does the concept of empowerment address the strengths of the individual, it also deals with the environment and how it interacts with that individual to create a situation where empowerment is possible. The values of empowerment are important ones to foster in community volunteer work as they facilitate women's involvement and promote equal participation within the neighbourhood. Community psychology and feminist methodologies are very congruent with my personal values and beliefs, and, therefore, I have incorporated these methodologies into this research project.

Research Values

Values motivate people to work together and drive the overall process and future outcomes of a project (McGeown, 1993). Therefore it was extremely important for all those involved to develop shared values and beliefs for the research project. The literature on community psychology supports citizen participation as a key value in building community capacity (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Krupa, 1994).

Prilleltensky and Nelson (in press) discuss five values that guide community psychology practices and concepts. These values are:

- **Caring and compassion:** the expression of care, empathy, and concern for the physical and emotional well-being of others;
- **Health:** a state of physical and emotional well-being that is linked intrinsically beneficial and extrinsically instrumental in pursuing self-determination;
- **Self-determination and participation:** the ability of individuals to pursue chosen goals and participate in decisions affecting their lives;
- **Human diversity:** respect and appreciation for diverse social identities and for people's ability to define themselves; and
- **Social justice:** the fair and equitable allocation of bargaining power, resources, and obligations in society.

Values influence how the research is developed, implemented and finalized.

Ideally it would have been preferable to have women of the CMCC develop the list of values for the research process. However, due to busy schedules and other commitments there was not enough time to engage in such a process. Therefore to begin the process, I compiled the following list of values which are a combination of community psychology and feminist values. This list of values were presented to and considered by the Neighbourhood Association. The values guiding the research process as suggested to the Neighbourhood Association included the following:

- Self-determination: the ability of women to choose an informed course of action for themselves;
- Collaboration and stakeholder participation: the provision of ample opportunities for all women to participate in the operations and planning of the research;
- Distributive justice: equitable ways of sharing the burdens and resources of the research;
- Feminist perspective: the equality of women and appreciation of diversity;
- Social constructionist: opportunities for women to define their own problems and issues as well as develop their own suggestions for change;
- Inclusivity: wide range of participation which reflects inclusion, diversity and community empowerment;
- Social action: actively address oppressions such as racism, heterosexism, sexism, classism etc. and that the research is a tool for social action; and
- Researcher role: to give to the community rather than take from the community.

The Neighbourhood Association discussed these values and decided to adopt them for the research process.

Research Participants

The goal of the project was to gather information on the experiences of women volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC. Interviews and meetings were held with 26 residents, 16 volunteers and 10 women who do not participate in the Centre's activities (non-volunteers). A focus group was held for three staff members affiliated

with the CMCC. In total there were twenty-nine people who volunteered to participate in this project, all participants, with the exception of one, were women. There were no male residents who replied to the requests for participation, even though the advertisements and personal invitations were open to both genders. The following section describes recruitment techniques, availability and background of the project participants from all three groups.

Volunteers

Although the House of Friendship provides staffing, program activities could not operate without volunteer support. According to statistics kept by Chandler-Mowat Community staff and volunteers, in 1995, over 26 volunteers gave 1864 hours of volunteer work to the Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood Centre (this number is low as summer statistics were not gathered in 1995). This number also does not include 64 non-volunteers who also gave their time throughout the year, as the CMCC does not record casual or irregular volunteer hours. From the 26 active volunteers of the CMCC, 16 agreed to participate in this study. All volunteers who participated were women. Volunteers of the CMCC were recruited through personal invitation, flyers, word-of-mouth and through staff recruitment. All of the women volunteers who agreed to participate have children, most of whom are pre-school age. Many of the volunteers interviewed live in subsidized housing. Questions about the type and amount of volunteer involvement were asked of participants.

The results indicate that there was a wide range of volunteer time given by each participant. The hours of volunteer work completed each month seemed to vary with each volunteer and with each season. For example, some volunteers gave more time in

the summer, others gave more time in the fall. The amount of time given also seemed to depend upon the person's schedule and other life commitments as well as their interests. A few women could not give specifics about the number of volunteer hours they gave per week as their hours varied each month depending upon their personal schedule as well as program volunteer needs. The participants who did give specifics said that they volunteered anywhere from one hour - 20 hours per week. The length of time that women volunteered with the CMCC ranged from one half year to five years. Volunteer responsibilities were wide and varied and included the following:

- participation on committees;
- development and distribution neighbourhood newsletter;
- plan, organize implement and coordinate summer programs
- plan, organize implement and coordinate pre-school programs;
- plan, organize implement and coordinate after school programs;
- clean and maintain the CMCC;
- organize and implement social events;
- organize and implement open house;
- provide staff relief;
- pack and distribute food hampers;
- participate on the Neighbourhood Association Executive;
- provide reception at the CMCC; and
- facilitate adult programs.

Non-volunteers

Ten women who do not participate in the Centre's activities (non-volunteers) agreed to participate in this study. The non-volunteers who agreed to participate were all recruited through door-to-door canvassing. None of the other methods of recruitment such as flyers, word-of-mouth, or newsletter, proved to be successful. In general, it was difficult to recruit people from the non-volunteer group to participate in this study. In order to recruit non-volunteers to participate in this study, 56 house calls were made

before this 10 people agreed to participate. Some possible reasons for lack of participation could be:

- if they do not have time to volunteer, they may not have time to give to an interview;
- they do not have a vested interest in the CMCC;
- they do not like the CMCC;
- they were not interested in volunteering at the CMCC;
- they believe if they participate in the research they may be coerced to volunteer;
- they do not speak English;
- they were not available when the researcher came to the door; and/or
- did not know who the researcher was and therefore felt uncomfortable or unsafe with participating

The non-volunteers who agreed to participate were from a wide cross section of the neighbourhood. Despite there not being a question pertaining to children in the interview, all participants spoke about their children with the exception of one individual who did not have children. Five of the 10 non-volunteers had children that were of pre-school age and four had children who were of school age.

Staff

The staff of the main sponsoring agencies, The House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation, have been involved in this study from the beginning stages. Due to staff layoffs and cutbacks, there were only three potential staff members who could participate in the interviews. All three were interviewed. One staff member has been involved with the CMCC since its conception 10 years ago. The other two staff members do not work directly out of the CMCC, and both have been with the CMCC for less than one year.

The Researcher

I have been a resident of the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood for the past six and a half years and I have been (continue to be) a volunteer with the CMCC for almost two

years now. Given my obvious vested interest in the neighbourhood, it can be argued that I bring a bias when interpreting the results of this study, as I do not have social distance from the research participants. Anne Oakley (1981) argued that feminist researchers should not maintain an objective distance from the research participants as this is a one-way process in which the interviewer elicits and receives, but does not give information. This one-way process creates a lack of fit between feminist theory and practice. Although some might believe that getting involved with the interviewees compromises objectivity, detachment and proper “science” (Goode & Hatt, 1952), I support the work of Anne Oakley which states that in order to find out about people’s experiences it is best if the interviewer is prepared to invest her/his personal identity in the relationship. The fact that I participate in the CMCC activities and that I am a resident of the neighbourhood suggests that I am invested in the community and the research process, which, in turn, should help women feel more comfortable with the interview process. I believe that my previous relationship with the women decreased the chance of creating a hierarchical relationship in the interviews. In order to implement feminist and community psychology methodologies, I believe that personal involvement between the interviewer and the interviewee is an asset to the research process.

I think it is important to validate and verify the data so that the question of bias can be put to rest. I believe that biases can be discovered and prevented when participants are involved in the process. Monthly meetings and individual consultations were held with women volunteers and staff throughout the research process. Women were involved in the development of interview questions, and research participants were

asked to verify the research data and provide feedback on the accuracy of the research results.

Although this approach is not strictly a feminist one, I believe my personal investment in this study adds to the authenticity of the feminist perspective, which, in turn, enhances the results rather than biasing the data.

Data Collection and Strategies

Research questions were developed in consultation with staff and volunteers of the CMCC. The research questions were very similar for all groups interviewed (women volunteers, non-volunteers and staff), however, they were slightly altered to reflect the group being interviewed. Participants were given a list of the general questions prior to their interviews so they would be aware of the information that was to be collected. The general questions included;

- What motivates women to volunteer?
- What would help women to volunteer?
- What discourages or stops women from volunteering?
- What do you think volunteering does for our neighbourhood?
- Do you have any suggestions or ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?

Although a set of prepared questions was developed, most participants addressed the questions as they came up in our conversation. More detail regarding the interview questions will be provided in subsequent sections of this document.

Research Process

The project process has been a collaborative one, in which women of the neighbourhood were invited to participate in all aspects of the research process. The research process has an emergent design (Lincoln & Guba, 1989), one that developed as

the research evolved. Since it has an emergent design, the research process was determined and finalized as the project progressed. Research questions were developed from the literature rather than inductively derived through the research process, therefore a grounded theory was not utilized in this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Even though the research questions were derived from the literature, feedback from staff and volunteers was enlisted prior to the implementation of the interview questions. A social constructionist framework was utilized to encourage women of the neighbourhood to define their own problems and issues as well as to develop their own suggestions for change. The ecological perspective was used as a way of approaching the data, which Strauss and Corbin (1990) call a sensitized approach to data coding.

A wide range of participation from all women stakeholders of the neighbourhood was encouraged to reflect diversity and promote inclusion (Woodmansee, 1994) within the neighbourhood. The research process was structured to provide opportunities for solving existing and potential problems in an open atmosphere, which will help strengthen and facilitate future neighbourhood connections and community change. Figure 1 outlines the phases that were implemented during the research process.

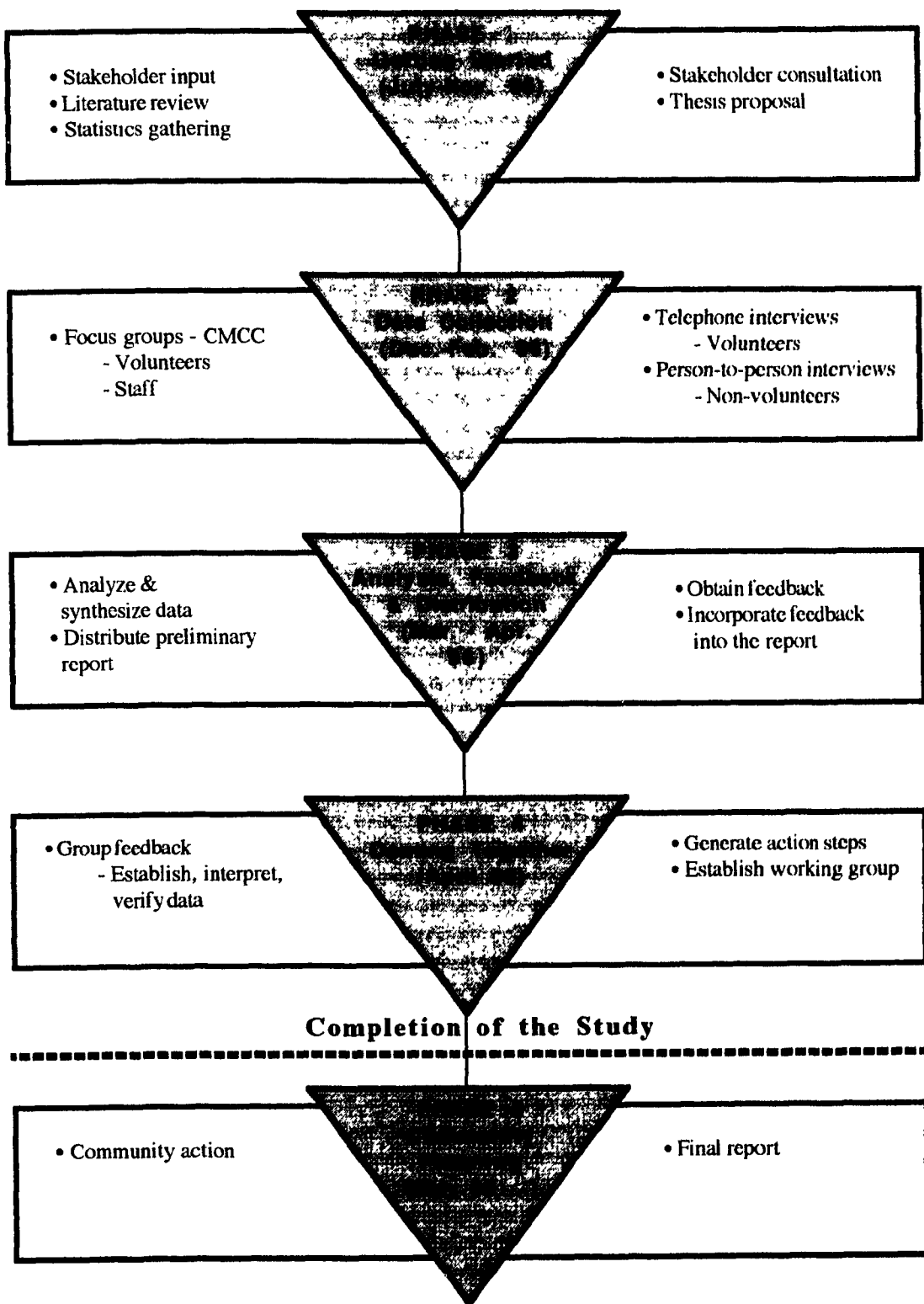
Phase 1. Getting Started (July - November 1995)

The preparation phase was an important phase as it provided the framework for the overall research process and started almost a year prior to the beginning of this study. Originally, a working group with a mandate to work specifically on this project was to be developed. However, due to time commitments and busy schedules on the part of the women volunteers, it was decided that we consult and gather feedback with women through already existing venues (i.e., Neighbourhood Association Meetings, individual

consultation, Operations Committee Meetings, and Race Relations Committee meetings) rather than create a completely new committee.

Figure 1

Phases of Research



Therefore, questions, items to be completed, and issues to be addressed in this stage were brought to the appropriate committee or individual meetings and included some of the following items:

Issues

- racism and classism within the neighbourhood
- literacy levels
- language needs (i.e., will we need interpreters?)
- divided camps among neighbourhood residents
- gender, the differences between men's and women's involvement

Questions

- who needs to be involved in the research process?
- who can we count on for support? (force field analysis)
- what are the resisting forces? (force field analysis)
- what are the methods that will allow for the most input from all women?
- how will we involve those who are not involved in the actual process?
- how will data analysis and collection take place?
- how will the results be reported to the participants as well as the neighbourhood?
- is the CMCC capable of responding to the future plans?
- how do we feel women involved in the CMCC will respond to the future plans?

Items Completed

- orientation to the process
- established roles and responsibilities
- established the values for this process
- established goals and objectives for the process
- established time lines
- establish needs, resources, and wishes of the women
- assessed information needs
- developed phases of the research process (See Figure 1)
- consultation on the interview questions

These are just a few examples of the work that was included in the Getting Started Phase.

Phase 2. Data Collection (December 1995 - February 1996)

Three methods for data collection were identified as appropriate for this research project which included;

1. focus groups
2. telephone interviews
3. person-to-person interviews

Data were collected from women volunteers of the CMCC, women non-volunteers of the CMCC, and staff affiliated with the CMCC (See Table 2). The schedules and research methods utilized were flexible to the groups' and individual direction.

To support equal opportunity and participation in this project, the following challenges were considered when developing and implementing the research methods: gender, cultural sensitivity, disabilities, classism and racism issues, language barriers, literacy levels, lack of financial resources, childcare, anonymity and confidentiality, separation of stakeholders groups, and timing and scheduling.

Table 2 Methods and Numbers of Participants

	Volunteers	Non-volunteers	Staff
Volunteer Focus Groups (2)	5		
Staff Focus Groups (1)			3
Telephone Interviews (12)	10	2	
Person-to-Person Interviews (9)	1	8	

1. Focus groups. Initially it was thought that focus groups would be the main source of data collection for the research process. However, many of the participants chose to participate in telephone interviews. Some possible reasons for choosing the telephone interview could be:

- telephone interviews involved less of a time commitment
- they felt more comfortable talking one-on-one rather than in a group setting
- they felt more comfortable giving negative information over the telephone
- there was less chance of the information turning into neighbourhood gossip
- they were not available for the scheduled focus groups times

Staff and volunteers reviewed all questions for the focus groups before they were implemented. Participants were recruited by word of mouth, personal invitation, flyers and through the neighbourhood newsletter. Three focus groups were held: two groups for women volunteers of CMCC and one group for the staff. Participants of the focus groups included five current volunteers of the CMCC, and three staff of the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation. The focus groups were limited to six to eight participants, in order to keep the groups at a comfortable size and to allow everyone the opportunity to talk. The timing of the focus group sessions were determined by the groups' needs and schedules. Translators were to be recruited as the need arose, however, translators were not requested from any of the participants. It should be noted, however, that one participant of a focus group in need of a translator used another volunteer of the CMCC for assistance. Day care was provided at each of the focus groups. Each participant was also given a gift certificate from the local grocery store for their efforts and contribution. The focus groups took place at the CMCC and were two-and-a-half hours in length.

The focus group for staff was held first. It should be noted that the interview question format was changed after the staff focus group, as the order of the questions seemed awkward at times. A sample of questions for the staff include the following: What personal traits make it easier for people to volunteer at the CMCC?; In your opinion what do families (partners and children) do to help people volunteer at the CMCC?; What does the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation do to help people volunteer at the CMCC?; Is there anything that the neighbourhood does that makes it difficult for people to volunteer at the CMCC? and; In your opinion what are the public

attitudes or government policies that make it easier to volunteer at the CMCC?. (See Appendix 1 for the complete interview guide).

The interview questions and format for the volunteer focus groups were altered slightly to reflect a volunteer perspective and to help with the information flow. A sample of interview questions for the volunteer focus groups include the following: What motivates people to volunteer at the CMCC?; What would help people to volunteer at the CMCC? What discourages or stops people from volunteering at the CMCC?; In what ways do you benefit from volunteering at the CMCC?; Do you think there are any negative impacts on the neighbourhood from volunteer participation? and; Do you have any suggestions or ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the CMCC? (See Appendix 2 for the complete interview guide).

Originally, the goal was to have a community member facilitate the focus groups. However, no one was interested in this role as most women had full workloads and could not take on another responsibility. Therefore, I facilitated the groups. With the consent from all participants, each group was audio taped (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the consent form). All tapes were transcribed to facilitate a more in-depth data analysis.

2. Telephone interviews. Telephone interviews were conducted with 10 women volunteers and two non-volunteers who did not feel comfortable to or could not attend a focus group. The questionnaire was developed in consultation with women volunteers and House of Friendship staff. Examples of questions asked of volunteers include: Why do you volunteer in the activities at the CMCC?; How does it make you feel to volunteer your time at the CMCC?; What types of things does your family do to help you volunteer at the CMCC?; What types of things does your neighbourhood do to help you volunteer

at the CMCC? and; Are there any public attitudes or government policies that help you to volunteer at the CMCC?. (See Appendix 4 for the interview guide for volunteers).

Translators were needed on two occasions, and in both cases the translators were family members. Each participant was given a gift certificate from the local grocery store for their efforts and contribution. Again volunteers were encouraged to assist with the interviewing process but given the lack of interest in this role I conducted the interviews myself. The interviews ranged from 20 minutes to two hours in length. The interviews were not audio taped.

3. Person-to-person interviews. Person-to-person interviews were conducted with eight women who do not volunteer in the activities of the CMCC as well as with one volunteer who did not feel comfortable with or could not attend a focus group. The questionnaire was developed in consultation with women volunteers and House of Friendship staff. Sample questions asked of non-volunteers included the following: Are you aware of the volunteer opportunities offered at the CMCC?; Have you ever participated in any of the activities of the CMCC?; What do you think discourages or stops people from volunteering at the CMCC? and; Do you have any suggestions to increase volunteer involvement at the CMCC?. (See Appendix 5 for the complete interview guide).

Difficulty accessing non-participants was experienced. Strategies to enlist participation in the interviews (i.e., personal invitation, neighbourhood newsletter advertisements) were implemented, but the most effective method of recruitment was door-to-door canvassing. Each participant was also given a gift certificate from the local grocery store for their efforts and contribution. Again volunteers were encouraged to

assist with the interviewing process but given the lack of interest in this role I conducted the interviews myself. The interviews ranged from 20 minutes to one and one half hours in length. The interviews were not audio taped.

General comments about the data collection. The three methods of data collection produced great amounts of data. All three approaches had advantages and disadvantages. The focus groups brought volunteers together which helped to develop connections between participants. The focus group format also helped women to “bounce thoughts off of one another” confirming and generating ideas throughout the session. However, the focus groups did not provide anonymity for research participants. The telephone interviews provided participants with more anonymity, which seemed to help participants discuss challenges of the CMCC. With the telephone interviews it was not possible to watch for body language and develop personal contact. The face-to-face interviews were very quick to administer, which helped to recruit participants, however they did not generate as much information as the other two methods.

Phase 3. Analysis, Feedback and Distribution (March - April 1996)

Analysis. This phase involved analyzing, coding and categorizing of the qualitative data compiled from all the information gathered in the first two phases. I began my analysis by reading over each interview line by line and assigning a code of motivator, facilitator, barrier, positive or negative impact, or strategy. These codes were derived from the research literature which formed the bases of the research questions. After the data were divided into these six categories, codes were assigned to a particular idea or theme that was presented under each category. Each of the codes was placed on a matrix that was organized by the multiple levels of analysis as outlined in the ecological

perspective (personal, family, organizational, community and societal) as well as by the type of participant (volunteer, non-volunteer and staff). Strauss and Corbin (1990) call this approach theoretical sensitivity. The patterns, structures, themes and commonalities of participant responses were identified and coded using the inductive approach; that is, I developed codes from the themes that emerged from the interview data rather than pre-determining codes before the data were gathered (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1990). Over 235 codes were developed for all levels across the research questions, which were then revised and narrowed down to 155 codes. The next step in the data analysis process was to look at the similarities and differences between codes, across the three participant groups.

Feedback and distribution. Two preliminary reports of participants' responses, (both a long and short version) were compiled and distributed to the project participants. Participants were encouraged to call with their comments or suggestions for change. Overall responses from participants were positive, with those who did respond calling to verify and validate the data.

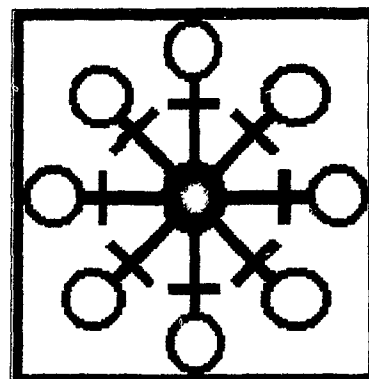
Phase 4. Coming Together (April 1996)

Group meetings. A working group has been established to deal with the results of this study and to begin future planning. This working group consists of women volunteers, House of Friendship staff, Parks and Recreation staff, Waterloo Regional Housing staff and students on placement from Conestoga College. The working group meets monthly and has received money from the Ontario Women's Directorate to complete this work (February 1997). One future goal of this working group is to conduct

a community forum in the fall of 1996 with residents of the neighbourhood. The forum's purpose is to:

- present the results of this project
- develop plans and strategies for community development work
- encourage and recruit more volunteers to sign up with the Centre
- create an emotional connection and a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood

A barbecue will be held as part of the forum's agenda. This will help facilitate meeting the goals of the project as well as attract both women and men to the event.



Results and Discussion

This section of the study is a report of the information gathered from the interviews and meetings that were held with the volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC. There are six categories of results presented in this section which represent the bases of the research questions: motivators, facilitators, barriers, positive or negative impacts, and strategies. Since women's participation in community volunteer work has multi-level interactions (ecological perspective), the results in each of the sections will be presented according to these levels: the personal, the family, the organization (CMCC), the community, and the social factors. Throughout the thesis I have used many quotes from participants in order to capture the flavour of women's responses.

Motivators

In this section of the thesis, I present the reasons or motivators women have to volunteer. It is important to learn about what encourages or motivates women to volunteer, as this information will help the CMCC to recruit new volunteers and it will also help to increase current volunteer's satisfaction in their volunteer roles.

Personal

Friendship. Almost all of the volunteers stated that meeting people, socializing or making new friends were some of the reasons they wanted to volunteer or why they kept volunteering at the Centre. Volunteer participation provides women with the opportunity for social contact and support. It is a convenient and yet practical way to meet other women and make new friends. Some volunteers described this as:

You can walk in cold to this neighbourhood and you will be able to meet new people quickly by volunteering at the Centre.

I enjoy getting out, talking to, and meeting adults.

I think it is because of the social aspect of it that I like to volunteer.

I have all kinds of friends here, it is social, it is fun, I like everyone.

I felt it would be a good way for me to meet other like-minded people in my neighbourhood.

Staff members also said that they thought this was one of the reasons why women volunteer at the CMCC.

I know a lot of people volunteer because it is the only adult company they get in a day.

Almost all of the volunteers interviewed were mothers of small children. Many of these volunteers talked about motherhood as being isolating. Volunteering gave them an opportunity to meet and feel connected with other mothers and this connection also served as a break in routine for women who work in the home.

It is a nice break for me as well as the kids, to get out of the same old routine at home.

I like to get out of the house, away from housework and all the daily chores.

Involvement also serves as a form of mutual aid as one has opportunities to meet others who have similar problems and issues.

I like coming here because there are people who have the same problems as I do, which we talk about.

Learning new skills. In addition to making new friends and breaking daily routines, many of the women and staff saw volunteering as a way of developing new skills for education and future job opportunities.

I had some time so I thought I would give it freely to the community hoping that this will also help me to find a job down the road.

I initially started to volunteer because I thought it would be a resume builder, although now I come because I like the people here.

I thought I would volunteer because it spills over into job opportunities.

I wanted to volunteer because you learn something, you learn about mistakes along the way... they (mistakes) come with it, this will be helpful when I get back into the job market.

Learning new skills for future jobs or educational programs are not the only skills that draw women to volunteer at the CMCC. Learning a new language and adapting to this country are also skills that attracted women to volunteer at the CMCC.

I wanted to do something that would help me and my children learn English. (translated version)

Every person has their reasons for volunteering...for some it is learning a new skill, for some it is learning a new language and finding out how to fit into this new country. (translated version)

For many of the participants, volunteer work seemed to be an important first step in acquiring new skills.

Family

Children. Children in many cases were the main motivators for women to volunteer at the CMCC. Women indicated that their children liked the programs and activities at the CMCC which helped them to get involved in a volunteer position. Some viewed volunteer work as a way to participate and contribute to their neighbourhood at a time when their children were using the services of the Centre. Some women stated that before they had children, they were not aware that the Centre even existed.

I became involved with the Centre when my children began pre-school here.

Before (child) was involved in the pre-school program, I didn't even know that the Centre offered programs or had volunteer needs.

In many instances women volunteers referred to their need to work in this neighbourhood to make it a better place to live for their children. Women reported that prior to having children they were not concerned about the state of the neighbourhood, but once they had children they became interested in the atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

Before I had children I did not think much about the problems of the neighbourhood. Once I had children I realized that there were many problems in this neighbourhood...I really don't want my kids growing up in this type of atmosphere...so now I volunteer to make this a better place for my kids to grow up.

Respite from children was mentioned by some women as a motivator for volunteer participation. Since most of the women bring children to their volunteer work at the CMCC, there are many children to play together. For some this becomes the only time during the day when their children are occupied, giving mothers the opportunity to converse with other adults.

My kids like to come here, they like the other kids that come with the other moms...they really like the toy room, it is any child's dream. I like coming because it is the only time I get to talk to other adults.

Organization

The organization and the people. Many of the women who volunteer with the CMCC stated that they were motivated to volunteer at the Centre because they believed in the organization and wanted to help in whatever way they could.

It is an organization that I believe in and that I want to work for.

Participants seem to have a lot of faith in the organization as well as the people who are currently involved with the Centre. Volunteers reported that it was because of the staff and volunteers of the CMCC that they first began to volunteer at the Centre.

The staff asked me if I was busy on a certain day and if not to come over, sort of an open invitation whenever I felt comfortable.

A staff member came knocking at my door and said bring your kids to pre-school programs, come and get involved.

I first became involved and interested in the CMCC when a staff member came to my door handing out flyers.

I knew bits and pieces about the Centre but it was more a staff member's doing that kind of pulled me along. Without someone actually motivating me I would not of come here.

I found out about the Centre from a neighbour who volunteers, who kept saying come down and help. So word of mouth.

I was first attracted to volunteer through a friend.

Other women stated that their main reason for getting involved was the location of the Community Centre building. The new park location seems to attract many women to the Centre.

I didn't even know that the Community Centre existed until I saw this building go up. Then I waited and waited until a sign went up that said it

was going to be a Community Centre so my kids and I could get involved. If it wasn't for the new location I would never have gotten involved.

Centre activities or special events also seem to attract women to the Centre, for their first visit.

I became interested in volunteering when they had the open house at the new location in the portables in the park, this is really what brought me to volunteer.

Initially many volunteers reported that they became interested in the CMCC because of the staff, volunteers and programs of the Centre. Personal invitation encouraged many women to get involved. Flyers, newsletter advertisements and posters were not as effective in attracting women to volunteer to the CMCC.

Community

Sense of community. The neighbourhood has experienced difficulties and challenges in the past, and due to the conflicts amongst neighbourhood residents, some women reported that a sense of community has not been established. For some, changing this negative atmosphere was their main reason for getting and staying involved with the CMCC.

I felt like it was my obligation and my privilege to help out my community, especially since there are some problems in the area.

I first got involved because I was worried about the problems in our neighbourhood and I thought I could help to make this a better place to live by volunteering.

I started here because together we can help to bring down the walls between the housing complexes so we can improve this neighbourhood.

Others felt that a sense of community could be established by volunteering with the CMCC.

Social

The fact that the pool of volunteers consists mainly of women supports the theory that women tend to be the main contributors of unpaid labour (Baines, Evans & Neysmith, 1991; Kaminer, 1984). As some participants commented:

Virtually all the volunteers that I have run across are women.

All I ever see here is women volunteers, I never have seen men volunteers, unless it is someone's husband who is helping out his wife in some volunteer job.

I have seen the men come over and play shuffleboard and pool but they do not volunteer. They don't even get their own coffee and pop, women volunteers do this.

Men don't really volunteer here they just come out for fun.

The organization of serving others is such a central expectation for women that most of the participant responses bear a close relationship to this general theme. As Carol Gilligan, (1982) the author of *In a Different Voice* stated, women, to a greater degree than men, judge their actions and frame their commitments in terms of their responsibilities to others.

I get a lot out of volunteering, it makes me feel really good to be giving to others.

I can't volunteer as much as I would like to because I have to take care of the house and my children, but I do try to give some volunteer time every month.

Giving is such an ingrained part of women's personalities that women have come to believe that they should give and want to give at all times (Miller, 1986). Descriptions of these caring expectations of women, and their own sense of obligation to this role were identified as some of the prime motivators for women's participation in the volunteer activities at the CMCC. The women communicated their desire to serve others

in many ways, but overall their need was to give to the community so that they could help make differences in their children's and other people's lives. It seems that they have developed the sense that their lives should be guided by the constant need to attune themselves to the wishes, desires and needs of others.

I volunteer because I can help other families in need... it is a good role model for my kids, and my kids like coming to the programs.

In our culture serving others is not a highly thought of quality, and yet serving others is a basic principle around which women's lives are organized, especially in terms of volunteering and mothering roles. For some women they have built their self worth on activities that are defined as taking care and enhancing the lives of others. For example:

My kids are in school now, so I like to volunteer here, it gives me a sense of purpose.

Living and working within the same community provided some conflict and tension between women volunteers. It is interesting to note that even in times of conflict, women felt the need to repair the damage and create solutions to these problems. Once again helping to serve others is very important to the women of the neighbourhood.

There have been problems here (CMCC) with the volunteers...we need to find ways to resolve these problems because the community needs us to be doing our jobs properly. We can't be doing our jobs if we are all caught up in the problems of the volunteers.

At times women would blame themselves or were apologetic for not organizing their time well enough to fit a volunteer position into their lifestyle. Even non-volunteers expressed guilt over the fact that they did not volunteer at the CMCC. This helps to confirm the notion that women are expected to serve others especially if there is a perceived need (Miller, 1986).

I know they need help...I would really like to help others in our neighbourhood, but right now I just can't, and I really feel badly about this.

I know I should give some time to volunteer work but I don't have the time.

In this study volunteering came at a time when the majority of these women were busy at home raising young children. These women already had busy workloads with cleaning, cooking, caretaking and so forth, and yet their workloads were not re-negotiated to compensate for the increase in duties, instead it was just another serving expectation.

I can't always manage to come in to volunteer especially if I don't get a lot done on the weekend...my husband does not do the housework, and my kids are too small to help so at times volunteering seems like something I really can't handle. But you know I usually manage to fit it in.

The fact that women have full workloads when working in the home was not recognized by research participants. Women indicated that when they were at home raising their children "they were not really working." There also was no appreciation for women who work for money, raise children and yet also volunteer at the CMCC. This negative attitude towards women's work is portrayed in the following comments made by non-volunteers, volunteers and staff of the CMCC:

Women tend to take on volunteer roles because they have more disposable time than men do... let's face it, men have to work during the day.

Most women are not working, they are just at home with their kids... men are out there working hard, they don't want to come home and do something else.

It would be really nice to have more men involved at the Centre. If men were involved this would be a good role model for the children.

The only time I see men volunteer here is when there is a potluck or something, then they don't really help out anyway, they come and eat, but I guess they are tired after a long day of work.

It is really not practical for men to volunteer, they work really hard during the day... I think volunteering is a women thing.

Summary and Discussion of the Motivators

Table 3 outlines the motivators or reasons given by volunteers, staff and non-volunteers of the Centre. It is important to note that the hours of Centre operation may limit participation, regardless of individual motivation, as the Centre is only open during prime working hours (nine-five, Monday - Friday). There were some research participants and one author (Duchesne, 1989) who argued that stay at home mothers have more disposable time than men and therefore women are more motivated to volunteer. It is important to note that this mindset reinforces the lack of recognition attached to unpaid work, mainly volunteer and mother work. Women who stay at home do not have more disposable time than people who work outside of the home. Mother work is a responsibility that requires patience, skill, time, and determination and does not allow a lot of flexibility for disposable time (Chodorow, 1978; Rossiter, 1988).

For the women who do choose to volunteer at the CMCC, their through their participation. This friendship provided women with a sense of belonging reasons and motivators to volunteer are wide and varied. The majority of participants were motivated to volunteer as they sought friendship, connection and support from other women and gave them a break in their daily routines. Women also said they were involved as they wanted to gain experience and developed new skills through their volunteer work at the CMCC. This research finding supports the Clark and Wilson (1961) typology in that

social interaction and information acquisition are key incentives for volunteer work at the personal level, as was demonstrated by the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood.

Many of the women volunteers were mothers of small children and stated that their children were their main motivators for participation in the activities of the CMCC. Respite from children, involvement in their activities and making this neighbourhood a better place to live for children were all motivators given by women participants. Having children seemed to make a difference in women's motivation to become involved with the CMCC activities, as it was felt that involvement would help to improve the living conditions for their children (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). However, not much of the literature presented suggests that children motivate women to volunteer. Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) believed that improving the social climate of the neighbourhood was an important factor for motivating people to participate in volunteer work. Although they did not mention the benefits to children, one can assume that improving the problems of a neighbourhood benefits everyone who resides in the area.

Previous research that states there is a relationship between gender and volunteer participation (Booth, 1972; Verba & Nie, 1972) is supported in this research data as it is mainly women who provide volunteer services at the CMCC. It is women who are motivated to be the caregivers of the Centre, almost as if caring work from the home was extended to the Centre (e.g., women provide childcare, cleaning services, social activities, and serve food). By examining women's motivators for volunteering, we witness the consequences of the socially constructed caring expectations of women. Women's sense of obligation to this role is assimilated into everyday life (Ferguson, 1984) and becomes one of the prime motivators for participation in volunteer work

(Abrahams, 1993; Baines, Evans, & Neysmith, 1991; Ferguson, 1984; Noddings, 1984; O'Donnell, 1985).

Table 3 **Motivators or Reasons for Volunteering**

Motivators/Reasons	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<u>Personal</u>			
<i>Friendship</i>			
Meet new people	X	X	X
Sense of belonging	X		X
Like the staff and volunteers	X		
Self-worth and satisfaction	X		X
Something to do/occupy time	X		X
Change in routine	X		X
Feel needed	X		
No one else is doing it	X		
Gets you out of house	X		X
Meet other like minded people	X		
Support on personal issues	X		
<i>Learning new skills</i>			
Good experience for resume	X	X	X
Education placement	X		X
Learn English	X		X
Adapt to this Country	X		
<u>Family</u>			
Children attend programs	X		
Respite from children	X		
Make neighbourhood better place for children	X		
<u>Organization</u>			
Staff invitation	X		
Volunteer invitation	X		
Social events	X		
Belief in organization	X		
Adult programs	X		
Freebies (clothes, bread)	X		
Location of Community Centre	X		X
Volunteer recognition	X		X
Training and support from staff	X		

Table 3 **Motivators or Reasons for Volunteering**

Community			
Problems in the community	X		
Want to create community spirit	X		
Obligation to neighbourhood	X		
Social			
Serving others	X	X	
Obligation to others	X	X	
Gender expectations	X		

Facilitators

Facilitators are factors that make volunteer work easier to complete. It is important to find out what would make it easier for women to volunteer or participate at the Centre, especially since most women reported having very busy schedules.

Personal

Time and inclination. Important initial factors for participation are that women need to have the time and the inclination to volunteer. Without the time or the desire to volunteer, women will not get involved with the CMCC.

You need to have the time to volunteer, most people just don't have it now-a-days if they work.

Some people are lazy and just don't want to do anything but stay at home and watch soap operas all day.

Type of person. Volunteers and staff thought that if you had an extroverted personality it would be much easier to come out and volunteer.

I think people who are extroverted would find it easier to walk into a new situation and introduce themselves as someone who would like to volunteer. People who are shy and introverted might have an extra barrier to walk in here to volunteer.

Family

Acceptance and flexibility of children. The CMCC encourages and accommodates children at volunteer meetings and program events. Since the vast majority of women interviewed were mothers of young children, many comments had to do with the Centre's ability to support the needs of children throughout their volunteer responsibilities.

It is also good that you can bring your kids to the Centre when you volunteer, otherwise I wouldn't do it, I couldn't afford a baby-sitter to

volunteer, as much as volunteering is nice, it is not worth it to pay someone to do a job you don't get paid for.

Children coming to the Centre helps to get people involved and the fact that you can bring your kids to the meetings also helps.

There is a toy room where kids can go to play when we have meetings, this helps me to come and participate.

The kids like each other so this makes it easier to sit through meetings.

Not many volunteer jobs could accommodate a toddler at an organizational meeting, but that is something that the CMCC does really well.

So the children open the door to their parents for volunteering and as a parent, I have to say, that a lot of my volunteering happens around my children, because if they are not involved in some way I don't think I would have the time or desire to volunteer.

I know one thing that people, including myself say that makes it easy for them to volunteer here and that is that they can bring their children, they can help out, they don't have to get a baby-sitter and it is a social getting out the house type of thing.

Husband's support. Husband's support, acceptance and appreciation of involvement in the CMCC volunteer activities seemed to make participation easier for some women.

My husband thinks my work here at the CMCC is really valuable. He is really supportive of the work I do. Not like some husbands I know. I know one woman whose husband told her she could not volunteer anymore because she did not get all the housework done when she came here. Can you imagine that?

Organization

Communication. Volunteers, staff and non-volunteers reported that increased communication and clarification on organizational matters would help women to become more involved in the Centre's activities. Communication is noted in this section of the

thesis because many women stated that increased communication would help women to be involved. Since many of the points provided by the participants were also listed as strategies, this information can be found in the strategy section of this document.

Staff and volunteers of the CMCC. The staff and volunteers at the CMCC have made participation easier for some volunteers of the Centre.

House of Friendship staff have been good, they have been generous and kind so that has made it easier for me to come out and participate.

I personally don't think you could find a friendlier place to come. The people are very friendly, that made me want to come out.

Training. In order to be effective in a volunteer job women need to be knowledgeable in their roles and responsibilities for the position. Many volunteers and non-volunteers believed that in order to be effective they needed the tools and skills necessary to complete the job. Therefore training was suggested as something that would make their volunteer work much easier.

To help volunteers out, new volunteers should have a general orientation session or introductory session that will ease them into their responsibilities and not make them too overwhelmed.

It would be easier to assume a position on the Neighbourhood Association if I knew that I would receive support and training for my responsibilities.

Flexibility. There are a variety of people from different lifestyles who reside in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood. Some of the women interviewed work full-time, some part-time, some work full-time in the home, some are attending educational programs, and some do a combination of the above. With this variety comes the need for flexibility in order to accommodate the diversity of neighbourhood residents' schedules. Many women reported that staff and volunteers of the CMCC were very accommodating

to the needs and wishes of community volunteers. This flexibility made volunteer jobs much easier to accommodate into women's lifestyles.

There are jobs to be done that cater to anyone's schedule. When I wasn't working I did more, and when I started to work I did less.

Location of the CMCC. The vast majority of respondents believed that the new location of the CMCC made it much easier for women to participate in activities than it was with the previous location, although some women disagreed on this point.

When the Centre was located in the townhouses, I felt like I would be intruding because I did not live in that complex, but now that they are located in the Park, I feel much more comfortable going.

It is easier to volunteer when you can walk to the organization, rather than having to worry about transportation.

Most people can walk to the Centre which helps to get volunteers.

Community

Many participants reported that their work in the neighbourhood was not appreciated or recognized. Some felt that more people would want to volunteer if volunteerism were recognized as something valuable and worthwhile.

Why should people want to volunteer here, when they think volunteering is for people who can't get real jobs?

It would be easier to recruit volunteers if people knew they could use volunteering as a good work experience for their resume. I don't think it is that way though, when an employer sees volunteer on a resume, they think that you were only in that job because you were free.

Social

Women's roles. Women's role in unpaid labour is not recognized as valuable, nor is it counted as real work. Because of this lack of appreciation for women's work in the home, many respondents listed this as a facilitator for volunteering.

It makes sense that there are more women volunteers here because they do not have to work during the day. It is easier for them to fit volunteering in their schedule.

Women have more disposable time when they are at home raising their children, because they usually don't work.

Women volunteer because they are not working, they are at home with their kids.

All I do is stay at home with my kids, it is not like I work for a living.

Some also felt that it was easier for women to volunteer as caring and serving others came naturally to women.

There are more women volunteers here at the CMCC. I have not seen a lot of men here, other than if they are fixing something or they are a volunteer's husband. It is really not a male type of thing, it is more suited to women.

Women like to give, they are good at it, so volunteering comes second nature to them.

Summary and Discussion of the Facilitators

Table 4 outlines the facilitators that were given by volunteers, staff and non-volunteers of the CMCC. Facilitators support and encourage women to get involved in the day-to-day operations of the CMCC in an organized fashion. Garkovich (1989) suggests that action oriented research helps to facilitate citizen participation. This research project along with the strategic planning process that is currently in progress are both action oriented research processes which are intended to facilitate as much participation from the community as possible.

On the personal level participants reported that desire or inclination to volunteer facilitated participation in activities and events at the CMCC. For without the inclination one would not be motivated to volunteer, and if they did volunteer they would not be

committed to the job. The type of person was also reported as facilitating participation (e.g., being an extrovert made it easier to come out and volunteer).

Most of the project participants were mothers of small children, therefore, it makes sense that support and accommodation of children were identified as facilitators for participation amongst the volunteers at the CMCC. The fact that children were so much a part of the women's responses confirms the literature that states that women are concerned with the caring of children (Green, 1988). Therefore, efforts to accommodate child raising in volunteer work are helpful for women volunteers (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994). Volunteer tasks have been made easier at the CMCC because they are close to home, easily interruptable and safe (O'Donnell, 1985). Children are welcome at the CMCC, and volunteering occurs at convenient times of the day. In most cases CMCC is very good at organizing, responding to, and taking into account, the daily realities of women's lives. Even though the CMCC does make efforts to accommodate children there are still further steps that could be taken to support women and their children at the CMCC. For example, bigger meeting rooms, convenient meeting times, meeting rooms that are close to the children's play area and communication on policies regarding children's participation, were some of the areas mentioned that would make it easier for women to participate in volunteer work at the CMCC.

If the results from this study were transferable to the overall community then social service agencies could learn from this message. The accommodation and the visibility of children within an agency could help attract more women to volunteer. There will be some who argue that this is just another compromise for women, because to make it easier for women to participate in unpaid work will keep women in a

subordinate position to men. Although in some ways this may be true, I also believe that we need to give women more credit for the choices they have made. And yet at the same time we need to be advocating and creating social change so that women have real and equal opportunities and are supported and recognized for their choices.

Although women have made great strides, men are still in more powerful positions than women (Waring, 1988). Therefore it is not surprising that women listed their husband's support and acceptance as facilitators of their involvement in volunteer work. Taylor (1990) writes about this to the extreme that women have been forbidden and threatened by their partners when involved in community volunteer work.

Communication about staff and volunteer responsibilities and program events were described as something that would help one's volunteer work at the CMCC. Improving communication processes and channels were found as important factors that help women to participate in volunteer work as Cameron, Peirson and Pancer (1994) suggested. However participants did not mention citizen involvement in the decision making and policy driven areas as facilitators as was suggested by Garkovich (1989) and Cameron, Peirson and Pancer (1994).

Derksen and Nelson (1995) found that staff behaviour directly influences the lifespan of an organization. Women volunteers identified the positive relationship they had with staff and how this affected their involvement with the Centre. Their openness, support and flexibility were some of the areas listed as facilitators of volunteer involvement.

Women participants also believed that it would be easier to get involved in volunteer work if the community recognized the importance and value of volunteerism.

The literature provides evidence that the women of the CMCC are not alone with their beliefs as women in general are also not recognized for their efforts in unpaid work (Abrahams, 1993; Baines, Evans, & Neysmith, 1991; Ferguson, 1984; Noddings, 1984; O'Donnell, 1985). Some participants thought that women were more likely to volunteer because they had more time on their hands. There was no recognition of the amount of work involved in childrearing. Others indicated that volunteering came easier to women as caring and serving others is a natural phenomena for women. Because of the biological advantages (breasts and uterus) women possess, there is a pervasive belief that caring and serving others comes naturally (Rossiter, 1993). Since it comes naturally, there is an assumption that caring and serving others requires little or no talent because it is part of women's identities.

Table 4

Facilitators for Volunteering

Facilitators	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<u>Personal</u>			
Time	X	X	
Inclination	X		
Type of person	X		X
<u>Family</u>			
<i>Children</i>			
Can bring children when you volunteer	X		X
Children like the Centre	X		X
Don't have to pay for a sitter	X		
Kids involved makes it easier for parents to be involved	X		X
Husband's support	X		
<u>Organization</u>			
<i>Communication</i>			
Reminders of events	X	X	
Newsletter	X	X	
Increase Centre visibility	X	X	
Get involved with other social service agencies	X		
Outline roles and responsibilities	X	X	
<i>Staff and volunteers</i>			
Flexibility of staff	X		
Support from staff	X		X
Openness of staff	X	X	
Welcoming place	X		
Training	X	X	
Location of CMCC	X		X
<u>Community</u>			
Recognition of volunteerism in neighbourhood	X		
<u>Social</u>			
Women's roles	X		X

Barriers

Discovering what inhibits women from volunteering is an important piece of information collected for this project. In order to secure volunteer involvement in the CMCC, barriers need to be identified and plans put in place to remove these obstacles.

Personal

Schedules. Almost all of the non-volunteers who participated in this project stated that busy schedules played a role in their lack of involvement at the Centre.

There are not enough slices of my pie left to give.

My work schedule is the biggest reason why I can't be involved here at the Centre.

My lifestyle right now, I go to university, I work part-time, I can't do anything else but survive.

A busy schedule was also something that got in the way of participation for some volunteers of the Centre.

There is not enough time to really get involved, people have to work hard and they are busy.

Personality and current life situation. Some volunteers and staff talked about an individual's personality as being a barrier for involvement with volunteer work.

If you are a shy person it is not easy to meet others.

I think there are always going to be the people that are too lazy or just don't want to do it.

I think there are some people that are scared to take the first step.

It appears that a lot of people are not interested when in fact they are too shy to come out.

Staff talked about individual personal lives and how they influence peoples' participation in the Centre. Personal stress, family crisis, job loss, marriage break-up and other personal circumstances all play a role in a person's ability to get involved in the neighbourhood Community Centre. One's own personal life can be a barrier to involvement in volunteer work. In light of the recent provincial government cutbacks to social assistance, financial security and prosperity are difficult to achieve for many people. It may be difficult to concentrate or participate in volunteer work when one's own personal life is upset by personal crisis or inadequate financial resources.

I think a lot of times what is happening in their home life stops people from coming in.

How can you even think about giving to someone or someplace else when you are worried about finding enough grocery money this week.

Family

Children. Both volunteers and non-volunteers reported children as a major barrier for involvement in volunteer activities. Given that women are usually the prime caregivers of children, it stands to reason that there is not a lot of time left to volunteer.

As some participants commented:

Right now nothing would help me to volunteer because I certainly don't have the time to volunteer with three children, and because I am so busy with them I don't have the energy or the drive to even think about taking on something else.

I want to spend quality time with my kids and I do not feel like I give them that when I volunteer at the Centre.

It is hard to get your children dressed, especially in the winter and get everyone here on time.

I don't want my children to pick up on the busyness of life, and if I volunteered then I feel like my schedule would be too busy.

I have my own children, plus I baby-sit other people's children, this ties me down, I don't want to get too involved because this is already a lot to handle.

Children's nap and school schedules make it difficult to get out to volunteer.

It is hard to volunteer with kids, even though you can bring your kids to the Centre, it is hard to listen or to talk when your children keep running in...

Although many women reported the Centre accommodated children, there were still some areas for improvement. For instance, sometimes meetings are held in small group rooms or away from the play area which makes it difficult to bring children to the meetings.

Organization

Staff and volunteers of the CMCC. Although many women reported that the staff and volunteers of the CMCC were some of the main reasons for volunteering, others reported that these people were the reason they did not want to become involved with the CMCC. Personal agendas, difficult situations and unresolved conflicts between staff and volunteers were some of the reasons mentioned by participants for staying away from the CMCC.

I used to feel good volunteering but when I disagreed with some people on certain issues, I was ostracized and excluded from "the group." I felt like I had to cow tow to their agenda and agree with whatever they wanted if I was to volunteer. I really didn't agree with what was going on as I didn't really think it benefited the community...it only benefited certain people. This felt awful so I quit.

There was a problem last summer with some volunteers and it was never really dealt with well. I didn't like the gossip and treatment that came out of this situation because I thought if something like that happened to me I would probably be treated the same way.

Location of the Centre. Volunteers, as well as non-volunteers, talked about how the Centre sets up barriers for women's participation in activities. Although many women stated that the location of the Centre was something that made their participation in the activities easier, there were also some, mostly non-volunteers, who reported that the location of the Centre was actually something that stopped them from participating.

It feels like an exclusive place to go, it is in the middle of the townhouse complexes for Ontario Housing, maybe if it was in Elmsdale Park I would feel more comfortable going there.

Because of where it is located it feels like a segregated facility for Ontario Housing.

Where the Community Centre is located is a barrier because it does not feel like it is for the whole neighbourhood.

Perceptions of the CMCC. Many of the non-volunteers reported that they associated the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre with a charity.

I don't want or need a social service so I don't get involved.

In this particular neighbourhood the Community Centre is associated with subsidized housing and therefore has become known as more of a social service, so I didn't think I was really eligible to participate.

Training. Without the training or the resources, it is not surprising that women lack confidence in their job responsibilities, which, in turn, prohibits them from meaningful participation in their volunteer work.

How are you supposed to do a good job when you don't even know what you are supposed to be doing?

Other examples of organizational barriers are only briefly stated below as they are also discussed in the strategy section of the document.

- hours of Centre operation (nine-five, Monday - Friday)
- lack of volunteer expectations and job descriptions

- lack of organizational structure
- lack of information about volunteer needs and program activities
- communication problems

Community

Neighbourhood. Volunteers and non-volunteers spoke of the negative atmosphere and sense of hopelessness found in Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood and believed that it is futile to get involved because of the present apathy and difficulties experienced between residents. Women also spoke of problems with neighbours as well as problems between housing complexes. One person called the relationship between residents of the townhouse complexes “the war of the complexes.”

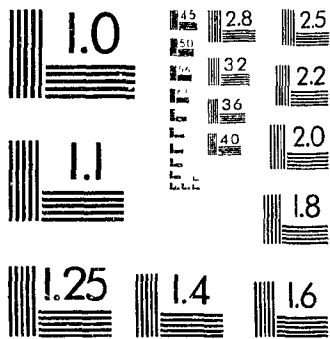
It is difficult to have a positive attitude or want to help in this neighbourhood when all you have is grief with your neighbours or problems with the people in the complex behind you.

Some respondents stated that people move in and out of this neighbourhood so frequently that it becomes difficult to get people involved when they do not stay long enough to develop a sense of neighbourhood or community.

Cultural barriers. Cultural values and traditions make it difficult for some women to participate in Centre activities as their involvement is perceived as going against their cultural beliefs and values. For example, in some cultures it may be frowned upon to participate in activities of a social service as this is perceived as using a charity. Other cultures may not be accustomed to receiving support from formal support services and would not know where to begin this process. The definition of volunteering may also differ across cultures as in some countries there may not be formal organizations to volunteer for, rather volunteer work is completed on an informal basis.

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Therefore, there may be some who care for their neighbour or support others in the neighbourhood, but they would not consider volunteering formally at the CMCC.

In my country we do not use these services, instead our family helps us.
(translated version)

The language of communication has also been listed as a barrier for involvement at the CMCC. Meetings are held in English only, which prohibits non-English speaking residents from participating. The Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood is made up of more than 15 different ethnic groups. Therefore, it does not seem surprising that language was mentioned by some volunteers and non-volunteers as a barrier to involvement with the Centre.

Language is a big problem for me, I don't know if this is also a problem with other people but we should look into this. (translated version)

People who don't speak the language will see people that are different and it will be hard for them to come in. (translated version)

I know many people who don't come out because language is the problem.
(translated version)

Racism between neighbourhood residents was also mentioned by participants as a barrier to community involvement.

There have been teen swarmings on some ethnic groups who live in the neighbourhood. I know that some of the teens responsible for the swarmings attend the youth programs at the Centre so I don't want to bring my kids there in case these teens decide to pick on my kids.

Misconceptions and biases. Many of the non-volunteers made reference to the people who lived in the Ontario Housing or subsidized housing complexes throughout their interviews. Some interviewees mentioned the fact that there were many people on welfare or social assistance who volunteered at the CMCC, and they questioned their

motives for involvement. For some, it was these misconceptions that prevented them from getting involved with the Centre.

I would really like to know the reasons why people volunteer, I feel like some of them just volunteer in order to collect their welfare cheques.

Although women did not label this as classism, it seems to be a problem that needs to be dealt with in this neighbourhood.

The perception in this community is that the low income people are the only ones who participate which keeps other people away because of stereotypes.

Segregation between the complexes keeps people separate and does not connect people together so that we could work on our community problems together.

I really don't want to, or my children for that matter, associating with those people, a lot of them don't treat their children right.

Social

The status of volunteers in the community provides evidence of the lack of value placed on unpaid labour and the women who perform the work. People of the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood and the participants of the programs are not aware nor do they fully appreciate the volunteer efforts of the women who run the programs at the CMCC. This creates barriers for volunteer participation. This is illustrated in the following comments made by research participants:

Women of this neighbourhood are not motivated, they don't work, they don't look after their kids properly, what do they do all day? All they do is stay at home and volunteer.

It is like a coffee clutch (brood of chickens) down there. All they do is gossip and drink coffee, nothing ever really gets done.

It is just a volunteer job to some people...since there is no money involved it is hard to get 100% commitment from them.

No one in the neighbourhood even knows how much we do here for the community, but then again why should they when very few appreciate the work that women do in general.

They (volunteers) are not professionals so it is not like we expect the same caliber of work.

One reason for this attitude may be that such work is usually associated with helping others, rather than with self-enhancement which is not really seen as doing anything in our society. This type of attitude towards volunteering creates barriers and misconceptions for volunteer participation at the CMCC.

Summary and Discussion of the Barriers

Table 5 outlines some of the common barriers for participation in the CMCC activities as identified by volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre. An important piece of this project was to learn about the issues and constraints or barriers that women face in their roles as volunteers as they limit and prevent women from reaching their potential. As Lydia O'Donnell (1985, p. 166) stated in *The Unheralded Majority* "we must continue to tear down barriers which force so many women to pay stiff penalties because of their caring responsibilities."

There were many factors considered to be barriers by women volunteers, non-volunteers and staff participants. On a personal level, busy lifestyles for both adults and children limited the amount of time women had to volunteer at the CMCC. Individual personality styles or life situations also limited participation. Some volunteers and staff believed that shyness or introverted personality styles hindered some from becoming involved with the CMCC. Personal life crisis such as divorce, job loss, and spousal abuse were also mentioned as barriers to participation.

Children were reported in the previous section as something that made volunteering easier. However, in this section, many women mentioned children as barriers to their volunteer participation. The balance between mother work and volunteer work was something that made volunteer work difficult to manage. Family barriers have limited and even prohibited the participation of women in community volunteer work, although there was not much of this mentioned in the literature. There was also no mention of personal life crisis or circumstances as barriers for volunteer involvement as was found in this research.

A possible tension throughout the lifespan of an organization is one between staff and volunteers (Derksen & Nelson, 1995). In this particular neighbourhood setting conflicts between staff, volunteers and program participants prevented some women from volunteering at the Centre. Reasons for the conflict included personal agendas, power and control, and token responsibilities. This is not a new phenomenon, as problems of this nature have been noted throughout the literature (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Capponi, 1990; Chavis, Stucky & Wandersman, 1983; Checkoway, 1979; Derksen & Nelson, 1995).

Day-to-day operations were cited as obstacles by the volunteers of the CMCC. For example, lack of job descriptions, hours of Centre operation, lack of communication and lack of training and support were all listed as areas that caused barriers for women to volunteer. Ineffective communication, such as big words, complicated documents, and English only meetings are consistent with the findings of Cameron, Peirson and Pancer, (1994) and Capponi (1990), who cite these factors as barriers to participation. It is interesting to note that staff listed only one organizational barrier, whereas volunteers and

non-volunteers had made many comments about the organizational barriers they experienced. This, again, supports Garkovich's (1989) philosophy that citizens need to be involved in all phases of action oriented research in order for it to be effective. For without women's input, many of the barriers and obstacles would not have been reported.

Some respondents talked about the difficulties and problems experienced in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood. It is possible that neighbourhood residents perceive the social problems in the neighbourhood as being too large. This creates barriers for people as they are too overwhelmed to develop solutions (Weick, 1984). Another difficulty experienced in this neighbourhood is the perception that the CMCC provides services to the low income housing units only. This perception has created some barriers for participation. Derksen and Nelson (1995) found that this challenges the integration of the various income groups within a neighbourhood, which limits and discourages some women from becoming involved in the CMCC.

It is interesting to note that there were no social factors (e.g., inequity of women in society or recognition of women's unpaid labour) listed by research participants as barriers to volunteer involvement. It seems that staff, volunteers and non-volunteers have not made the connection between personal problems of neighbourhood residents and the oppression of women and children in our society. In light of the financial cutbacks to social assistance, childcare and human service organizations budgets, one would think that this would be evident in the results. However, this is not the case.

Table 5 **Barriers or Obstacles of Volunteering**

Barriers or obstacles	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<u>Personal</u>			
<i>Schedules</i>			
Adult Busy Schedules	X	X	X
Children's schedules (nap time, school pick-up)	X	X	
Work	X	X	X
Education (college, university)	X	X	
<i>Personality or current life situation</i>			
Type of person (shy, lazy)	X		X
Fear of unknown	X		
Depressed re: job situation	X		
Lack of motivation	X		
People's moods			X
Personal life (crisis)			
Self-Worth	X		X
<u>Family</u>			
<i>Children</i>			
Age limits of program activities	X	X	
Too hard to get all kids out and dressed	X	X	
Lack of qualified child care during meetings	X	X	
Laws re: what you can and can't do with children	X		
Children don't like Centre		X	
Would like to be with children		X	
Too hard to concentrate at meetings with children present	X		
Volunteer meetings held in difficult locations for children	X		
<u>Organization</u>			
<i>Staff and Volunteers</i>			
Lack of communication between staff and volunteers	X		
Lack of paid staff		X	
Personal agendas of staff and volunteers	X	X	

Table 5 **Barriers or Obstacles of Volunteering**

Past problems with staff and volunteers	X	X	
<i>Day-to-day operations</i>			
Location of Community Centre	X		X
Lack of consistent volunteer recognition	X		
Lack of training and support from staff	X		
Lack of understanding of the mandate of the CMCC		X	
Playground unsafe		X	
Hours of operation	X	X	
Lack of job descriptions	X	X	
Lack of information	X		
Lack of organizational structure	X		
<u>Community</u>			
<i>Neighbourhood</i>			
Apathy in neighbourhood	X	X	
Classism	X	X	
Racism		X	
Language barriers	X	X	
Transient nature of neighbourhood	X	X	
Negative environment of neighbourhood	X	X	
Misconceptions, biases and stereotypes	X		
Problems between residents	X	X	

Positive Impacts of Volunteering

Volunteers and staff were asked what they thought volunteering did for themselves, the Centre, families, the neighbourhood and for society in general. This question was not asked of non-participants.

Participant's responses suggested that there are many more positive outcomes from volunteering than there were negative outcomes.

Personal

Friendship. Developing friendships and meeting new people were outcomes of volunteering that both volunteers and staff mentioned in their interviews. Because of their participation, women believed that they had developed new connections which helped them deal with the isolation of mothering and broke up the monotony in their everyday routines. This applies to both adult volunteers and children. Volunteering provided women with an opportunity to connect with others who often shared similar values and problems.

I like the fact that when I volunteer my kids socialize and meet with other kids.

Before I started volunteering I didn't even know my neighbour much less anyone who lived down the street, but because of volunteering I now know many people.

Volunteering has helped me meet people I would not have met if I didn't participate here.

What I personally like to see is that when we see volunteers out in the community there is a friendship between people that has grown from their involvement at the Centre. This is also good for the kids too because when they start going off to kindergarten, they already know some of the kids in their class as well as some of the older kids in grade 3 and 4, and this makes them feel really good. Their first day at kindergarten is not so difficult because they know each other from another place.

Learning new skills. Many of the women listed volunteering as a pathway to employment. Volunteers learn new skills and gain experience that open opportunities to jobs or better paying positions (Hybels, 1978; Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Learning new skills was one of the positive outcomes cited by volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC.

Volunteers learn some useful skills at the Centre, whether that is answering phones, working with children, chairing meetings or whatever...

Before I started volunteering I felt like I did not have much to offer, but now since I have been involved I feel like I have lots to offer, so volunteering has been really good for me.

A lot of employers have flat out told me that if there is not volunteer work on your resume then they look twice at the applicant and wonder why not? ...Are they a couch potato, or maybe they are self-centered type who isn't ready to work as part of a team.

Before I began here I had grade 10 education...what do you do with grade 10 now-a-days? With my experience here at the Centre I have chaired meetings, ran the Centre when (staff) are off sick, I have kept the books, ran children's programs...I now feel like I have skills to offer in the working world.

It is an experience where I learn something new everyday, this keeps me going.

It is not a paid position but you get a lot back in return for your efforts.

Volunteering really has helped me to broaden my horizons, while helping others.

Self-esteem and personal satisfaction. Volunteering seems to have created a sense of confidence, personal empowerment and competence for women who have been involved with the CMCC.

People learn a lot about themselves, it helps their self-esteem because they know, for the first time, like hey, I can do something.

Volunteering has really built up my self-esteem which was really low before.

Before working here I didn't know I could do things, it boosted my self-esteem and showed me I do have skills and abilities....so it really has helped my self-worth.

For many women raising small children at home, volunteer work was a way of gaining personal satisfaction and recognition for their efforts which was not available in their role as stay at home mothers. Volunteering seemed to provide some form of external validation for their efforts.

No one at home ever says good job mom, I liked what you did for lunch....here I am told that what I am doing is appreciated, and that feels good.

Family

Children. When asked what they thought volunteering did for them, many women responded that their children benefited from their volunteer efforts. A mother's involvement in volunteer work also provides children with a positive role model to follow in the years to come.

I volunteer so that my children can attend good quality programs. They also make new friends.

I feel that if I volunteer then this community will be a better place to live, and my kids will benefit from this.

My son, I know he benefits from my involvement because he sees my enthusiasm... he also volunteers because of my involvement, he sees me doing things and then gets involved, he thinks maybe it is good to contribute to the community... It doesn't seem like a job to him, it is fun, he just does it without even thinking about it because it is fun.

It is good for the family to see that the mother is doing something that she enjoys, and that she is giving to the community.

Volunteering benefits me and my family as well as other families who live in this neighbourhood.

Organization

The Chandler-Mowat Community Centre benefits from volunteer participation of women, especially when volunteers are involved in all aspects of the organization. Volunteers assist the organization with endless activities. In this particular community, the Community Centre would cease to operate without the support of its volunteers.

Without the volunteers help in the programs there would really be nothing to offer at the CMCC.

The fact of the matter is that we couldn't operate without volunteers, and then there wouldn't be a Centre without the volunteers.

No volunteers, no Centre.

Multiply the total number of volunteer hours by minimum wage, then you get a feeling of what an impact volunteers have.

Community

Information sharing. Participation in volunteer work has many positive impacts on the neighbourhood. Through participant involvement, information about program activities and resources are passed on by volunteers to other community members. This creates greater public awareness of the agency, and enables the organization to reach out to a larger portion of the community. It also helps to create connections between neighbourhood residents.

Volunteering keeps you in touch, keeps you in contact with other people and it helps to keep you in touch with what is happening at the Centre.

Sense of community. Through volunteer participation, an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration is created, which helps to build a sense of community in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood.

Volunteering helps to build community spirit and encourages people to help out in their community.

Volunteering helps to break down cynicism and suspicions, and it promotes a lot more caring and neighbourhood feelings.

Community action is also more of a possibility once volunteers get to know one another. Once friendships develop people are able to identify common issues and develop strategies for change. Neighbourhood changes are more likely to be created when collective action between residents takes place.

Volunteers are the glue of the neighbourhood and without them nothing could be built.

Getting together with others to help our community helps to strengthen our neighbourhood and helps us to develop a common course of action.

Summary and Discussion of the Positive Impacts

Table 6 lists the positive impacts of volunteering listed by volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC. Women received many positive benefits from their volunteer participation at the CMCC. Many women felt that their volunteer participation made a real difference in their personal lives. Because of their volunteer work many felt useful and productive which increased their feelings of self-worth and self-confidence (Lord & Hutchison, 1993; Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Most women commented on how much they enjoyed their volunteer work even though they were not paid for their efforts. Volunteer involvement also helped women make new friends, increase their support networks and break down their isolation (Garkovich, 1989; Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Many women stated that volunteer work helped them to learn new skills which they felt was important to future employment and educational opportunities (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Their involvement made them feel useful and productive which in turn helped

them to feel better about themselves, increasing their self-esteem and personal empowerment (Lord & Hutchison, 1993)

Women volunteers also reported that their children benefited from the volunteer involvement (O'Donnell, 1985). While women volunteer, their children socialize with other children giving them new and different things to do, while making new friends. This break in routine for their children also serves as respite for mothers who work in the home all day. Some women stated that their volunteer work helped to make a better life for their families as well as others in the neighbourhood (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Volunteers and staff both stated that volunteer participation was a good role model for children (Pancer & Cameron, 1994), as children learn to give to their communities by watching their mothers volunteer participation. Three of the volunteers stated that their children were volunteering because of their own involvement in the CMCC.

The CMCC benefits from women's volunteer involvement in the day-to-day operations of the Centre (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich & Chavis, 1990). Since the CMCC operates on a shoe string budget there would be virtually no programs operating in this neighbourhood without the volunteer efforts of these women. It is only because of volunteers that programs can be offered at a low cost which gives everyone in the neighbourhood the opportunity to participate. Volunteers assist with program development and implementation, client support, administration assistance, and the cleaning and maintenance of the CMCC. There are long waiting lists for most program activities and events at the CMCC, which proves there is a great need for the services offered at the CMCC.

Volunteers listed many positive outcomes for the neighbourhood due to volunteer efforts. Many believed that through their volunteer efforts a sense of community can be established which would help to make a difference in the neighbourhood (Garkovich, 1989). Through volunteering, people also get to know each other which helps to remove some of the biases and barriers between housing complexes (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), which in turn also helps to establish a sense of community in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood. Through participation an atmosphere of collaboration is created which helps the community establish common issues and plan for community action on pertinent issues (Lord & Hutchison, 1993) and creating transformative change (Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press).

Some may question how deriving pleasure, skills and satisfaction from volunteer work contributes to the subordination of women. I believe it is not surprising that women receive pleasure and satisfaction from their volunteer work. Mother work occurs in isolation and is not valued in society, therefore women do not receive much external validation for their mothering work. Volunteer work provides mothers with social contact and gives them a personal sense of autonomy and external validation that is not present in their mother work (Abrahams, 1993). Even though volunteer work is satisfying, women still do not have the power or the full range of opportunities that men experience (Waring, 1988).

Table 6

Positive Impacts of Volunteering

Positive Impacts	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<u>Personal</u>			
<i>Friendship</i>			
Socialization with adults	X		X
Breaks down isolation	X		X
Support	X		
<i>Learning new skills</i>			
Learn new skills for employment	X	X	X
Learn new skills for education	X	X	X
Learn English	X	X	X
Keeps you informed of community events	X		
<i>Self-esteem personal satisfaction</i>			
Makes a difference in your personal life	X		X
Keeps you hopeful	X		
Personal enjoyment	X		X
Increase self-confidence/worth and esteem	X		X
Feel useful and productive	X		
External validation	X		
Personal recognition	X		
<u>Family</u>			
<i>Children</i>			
Socialization for children	X		X
Break in routine for children	X		X
Place where kids can get physical exercise			X
Good role model for children	X		X
Respite for mother	X		
Gives children something to do	X		
Benefits families who live in neighbourhood	X		
Better life for their family	X		
<u>Organizational</u>			
Operate activities at low prices	X		X

Table 6 **Positive Impacts of Volunteering**

Staff learn from volunteers			X
Programs for the neighbourhood	X		X
Information sharing	X		
Community			
<i>Sense of community</i>			
Creates community spirit			X
Helps residents to accept differences with each other			X
Makes a difference in the neighbourhood	X		
Makes neighbourhood a better place to live	X		
Creates a sense of belonging	X		
Makes neighbourhood safer	X		
Helps others in your community	X		
Brings people together	X		
Breaks down cynicism in neighbourhood	X		
Breaks down barriers between the housing complexes	X		
Brings out caring qualities in people	X		
Helps to create essential glue of neighbourhoods	X		
Creates a neighbourhood well-being	X		
Reduces problems between residents	X	X	
Social			
Volunteerism more respected	X		
Builds society spirit	X		
Mobilizes communities	X		
Something to do in this economic climate			X

Negative Impacts of Volunteering

Although volunteering has many positive impacts on the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood, there are also some negative impacts of volunteering.

Personal

Burnout. Although volunteer work for many women at the CMCC is fulfilling, there was also discussion about some of the negative outcomes of volunteering. Some of the volunteers believed that they had been overburdened to the point of burnout as their volunteer work became unmanageable. A few women reported that they had become so involved that they felt guilty when they wanted to leave their volunteer position.

People get sucked into volunteering more time when you take on one project... there is the expectation that you take on more because volunteers are so needed there.

People take on too much and then never come back because they are burned out, and that is because a few people do the majority of the work.

This burnout has implications on the individual volunteer as well as the organization, especially when the organization relies so heavily on the efforts of volunteers.

Family

Children. Since the majority of volunteers are mothers of small children, volunteer work added another responsibility or demand on an already full workload. The conflicts and demands volunteers experience as a result of their efforts were evident in some of their comments. Household chores, childcare and paid employment were obviously not re-worked to accommodate women's volunteer work. Other women reported that aspects or commitments of their personal and family lives had to be put on hold to some degree in order to give time and energy to volunteering. In other situations

women had to put up with some tension from their husband for it was felt that volunteering interfered with time spent with them. For some women, juggling paid work, family responsibilities and volunteering negatively affected their families. Some stated that this meant reaching a point where they could no longer volunteer because of the conflicting demands of paid employment, family and housework.

Volunteering can stress your family out because you are so busy with additional responsibilities, so I really don't want to do it at this time.

I find that I get stressed out in my work (volunteering at the CMCC) and then I get stressed out with my family, it really ripples. Is it really worth it then?

Organization

Programming difficulties. The CMCC relies mostly on the good intentions and efforts of volunteers to run program activities and events for the neighbourhood. At times this may be difficult when volunteers have other things happening in their lives. If life gets too busy then one of the first ways to deal with this stress is to cut back on volunteer involvement. The supply of volunteers is not steady. At times there may not be enough women to run the day-to-day programs and activities of the Centre. There have also been times when program participants complain about the quality of the programming, as they want real trained professionals to run the activities of the Community Centre.

The only thing I can say that is negative is that it is very difficult in the mind of the participant or customer to understand when a program is offered by a volunteer and when it is offered by (staff). People complain, why was this handout in writing or why didn't it start on time? So that homey touch that we adore about volunteerism sometimes runs into trouble when the participant feels it should be of the caliber of what they expect of (staff).

I would say that one of the things that might be negative or at least something you have to deal with is, given the nature of volunteerism, the relationship with the volunteer is a little different than the relationship with the paid employee. With a paid employee you have a contract that you are providing service in exchange for a pay cheque, with volunteers you don't have that, so they may not always be reliable.

When other things come up in a volunteer's life usually it is the volunteer work that is the first to go. This makes it difficult to have consistency and continuity in program planning. You also don't have the same level of expectation from volunteers around punctuality and professionalism.

Not in the majority of cases but sometimes you are trying so hard to recruit people that you put up with more idiosyncrasies then you would like to...so that sometimes is negative, having to base your programs on the good will of people... but this may not be the case with all your volunteers.

Community

Problems with volunteers at the Centre have rippled out to the community, which have caused additional tensions and divisions between neighbourhood residents.

There are some negative things about volunteering, you learn things about your neighbours that you wish you didn't know.

It can really affect your personal life too because everyone lives in this neighbourhood who volunteers, so if there is a problem at the Centre then it really becomes part of your home life too.

When things go wrong between volunteers everybody knows about it, then everyone gossips and then you have to live with this everyday. Staff get to go home but we have to stay here.

Negative gossip can make it difficult for people to live in the neighbourhood, if they experience negative things volunteering then they can quit but they still have to live with these people on a daily basis.

Summary and Discussion of the Negative Impacts

Table 7 outlines the negative impacts described by participants. Although participants felt there were negative impacts from community volunteering, the list for

negative outcomes was much shorter than in other categories. On the personal level many of the volunteers stated that burnout was a repercussion of volunteering (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). Most of the women were mothers of small children with busy workloads, and volunteering added another pressure to an already full day. Volunteers also reported that they felt excluded at times as they were not a part of the “everyday” volunteer group (Pancer & Cameron, 1994). It was also felt that volunteer involvement was the cause of gossip, which created problems in the day-to-day lives of some women volunteers.

Time spent volunteering was reported as time spent away from children and partners (Pancer & Cameron, 1994), which was reflected as a negative impact of volunteering. The additional hours of work for some volunteers increased family stress as they became more involved with the Centre. Two volunteers reported that their families felt the negative impact of their volunteering after problems arose with their volunteering. Due to difficulties experienced by volunteers, some women no longer felt comfortable sending their children to the Centre to attend programs.

There were also some negative impacts of volunteering on the CMCC revealed by staff, volunteer and non-volunteer participants. Because volunteers in most cases were “not professionals” in their volunteer jobs, non-volunteers and staff thought that some of the programs may not be as “polished” or consistent due to volunteer turnover, tardiness and participation. Staff also reported that volunteers were not as reliable as paid staff due to personal schedules, lack of commitment and personal agendas (O’Donnell, 1985), which also had a negative impact on the organization. Further, since there are dedicated

volunteers who work for no cost at all, does this ensure that the Centre will never be adequately funded as long as women are willing to work for free?

Volunteering at the CMCC was also reported to have some negative effects on the neighbourhood. It was thought by some participants that volunteer involvement, especially when there are problems, increases gossip, decreases anonymity and makes neighbourhood living difficult (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Pancer and Cameron (1994) found that competition for jobs amongst neighbourhood residents created community tensions and divisions. This has not been a problem for this Centre as there are no jobs to compete for given the financial cutbacks. However, there have been tensions created between volunteers and non-volunteers in the area, as some volunteers feel resentful that they provide all of the CMCC program activities with no appreciation or help from other neighbourhood residents.

There are other possible negative impacts that may come about because of community volunteer work. Volunteer work in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood both past and present has had a strong and effective focus on caring, support and compassion. However, volunteer work in this neighbourhood has not had a particularly strong focus on social justice issues (Duchesne, 1989; Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press). This unbalanced focus could actually be keeping the community in the same place, rather than helping people to advance.

Table 7

Negative Impacts of Volunteering

Negative Impacts	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<u>Personal</u>			
Burnout	X	X	
Feel excluded	X		
Get ostracized from neighbours	X		
Adds problems to your life	X	X	
Makes you too busy	X		
Gossip	X	X	X
<u>Family</u>			
Takes away from children	X	X	
Less time to complete house chores	X	X	
Increases stress in family	X		
Children placed in low quality child care		X	
Children can not attend programs	X		
<u>Organization</u>			
<i>Programming difficulties</i>			
Non-professionals operating programs		X	X
Volunteers late at times		X	X
Lack of consistency in staffing	X	X	X
Put up with idiosyncrasies of volunteers	X	X	X
Volunteers not always reliable	X	X	X
<u>Community</u>			
Problems with volunteers can affect your personal life	X	X	X
Learn things in neighbourhood that you would rather not of	X		
Everyone knows your business	X		
Makes living situation difficult	X	X	
Decreases anonymity	X		X
Few people do all the work for the neighbourhood - creates resentment	X		

Suggested Strategies for Community Centre Development

In order to meet the increase in demands for program services and the impending budget cutbacks, strategies for CMCC development need to be organized and implemented. To gather suggestions and strategies, participants were asked how they thought things should be improved or changed on a personal, family, organizational, neighbourhood and social level. It is interesting to note that most of the suggestions and strategies for change given by participants concentrated on the organization - - the CMCC. No participants gave personal or family or social strategies for change. Participants did not seem to connect the personal to the political.

Organization

Communication. A major area listed for improvement was communication. Communication was described on a variety of levels, from communication about the actual Centre itself, to communication between volunteers and staff.

Staff and volunteer role clarification was also an area that women wanted more information on and, therefore, mentioned as a possible area for improvement at the CMCC. Clarification about the roles and responsibilities of the House of Friendship staff, Parks and Recreation staff, and CMCC volunteers would help to co-ordinate efforts at the CMCC. Many respondents were confused about the roles of the two sponsoring agencies.

I don't know what the staff roles are, what are their responsibilities, this would help if we knew what their roles were.

We need to know who should be doing what, for example who would be responsible for coming up with a flyer of information that would recruit volunteers, would it be the House of Friendship, Parks and Recreation, volunteers or all of the above? If we could find out things like that this would be helpful.

Even though women may be aware of the program activities and upcoming meetings at the CMCC, volunteers and non-volunteers reported that it would be helpful to have reminders of upcoming events.

It is helpful when someone calls you about upcoming events, with young kids at home, work and other personal stuff, life gets really busy, so this helps.

Some women thought that reminders could be sent through the newsletter (if it was sent out once per month) or by telephone. Others believed that it was important to translate information for women in their own language, so that everyone was reminded of upcoming events and activities.

Throughout the interview process it was discovered that many women did not think that the Centre was available for their use. As some non-volunteers stated:

I didn't even realize that my children could attend the programs or that I could volunteer at the Centre, because I thought that it was only for the subsidized housing units.

The CMCC is good at what they offer but many people in the neighbourhood don't know what they offer, we need to get this information out.

Open communication needs to occur at the Centre to help inform people of the CMCC activities, if you don't know, then how can you participate?

Some people including volunteers and non-volunteers, did not realize that additional volunteers were needed.

Often I don't know what is going on or what is needed, maybe I could be used somewhere else but I just don't know about it.

To address this problem, many women suggested that the CMCC advertise the volunteer needs throughout the neighbourhood by a variety of methods.

Someone needs to develop a flyer with all the volunteer jobs on it so we could send it around the neighbourhood and area, and say we are looking for volunteers, this is where we need people, and list what types of volunteer positions are needed at what times, days of week etc. so people can be aware and also know what to expect.

Advertising would really help this Centre to bring in more volunteers.

What about if we advertised for volunteers needed at potlucks, when there are all these people here from the neighbourhood? We could have a poster up by the food table that could get people interested in the opportunities, or we could hand them a volunteer job description or flyer saying we need people to do such and such.

Have social events to attract people, then maybe we could get more of the neighbourhood involved.

Send out a questionnaire to residents to find out what activities or skills they could give to the neighbourhood.

Have an all weather poster board set up in the park advertising volunteers needed as well as upcoming events.

There are a wide variety of programs and activities that occur at the Centre.

There are many women who are involved in operating the programs and activities of the CMCC. Therefore, open communication and input between staff and volunteers was suggested as an area for improvement.

We need lots of opportunity for input, so we can make suggestions to make our jobs easier.

We need structured dialogue between staff and volunteers for example have a monthly meeting to have open talk about what is going on.

We need a forum for discussion to have our questions answered, but I don't think the Neighbourhood Association meeting is the place for this, we could tack this meeting on the end of other meetings or we could have one specific meeting for this.

Have a meeting every once and a while to serve as a verbal suggestion box.

Volunteers also reported difficult situations between staff, volunteers and program participants. It was suggested that a forum or process for conflict is needed to deal with such situations.

We need some sort of conflict mediation process where we can discuss problems or meet to deal with problems between staff and volunteers.

Volunteer co-ordination. There were many suggestions surrounding the area of volunteer co-ordination. Some women suggested hiring one person specifically for this job, others talked about the specific jobs that needed to be done in order to more effectively co-ordinate the efforts of the volunteers at the CMCC.

For example some respondents suggested:

We need to hire a person that would specifically look after the day-to-day and overall management of volunteers. I don't know if that would be a part-time or full-time person but someone whose job specifically it was to look after volunteers.

It would be helpful and reassuring to have qualified childcare available for volunteer meetings. We need someone to co-ordinate this.

I really think that the House of Friendship needs to provide volunteers with proper training.

We need to develop and put in place a plan to recruit more volunteers, and it would be nice if we could pay someone to help us do it.

Rewards or tokens of appreciation in recognition of volunteers efforts is needed to keep volunteers motivated or to get new volunteers to participate.

Women can be intimidated by the amount of work involved in community volunteer work. It is very difficult to complete a job when you do not know what is expected. Therefore, clear roles and expectations need to be made available to women when they are interested in volunteer positions. Many of the respondents mentioned the

development of volunteer job descriptions and volunteer training as suggested areas for change at the CMCC.

We need a job description that would help people to get to know what they are supposed to be doing at the Centre.

The creation of volunteer job descriptions and expectations is really needed for volunteers and potential volunteers, perhaps with a booklet or volunteer manual.

I need to know how much time a job will take because one thing I did find out when you don't know is that if there are not other people involved, you kind of get sucked into doing more then you thought you would. But knowing, having specifics about this is what you are going to do and this is how long it is going to take would be helpful.

We need to have some sort of volunteer training

There were many other strategies that participants suggested which include:

- co-chairs for committees
- social events for the whole neighbourhood
- the creation of a volunteer manual
- training for volunteers
- committees for upcoming events
- more socialization time for volunteers
- individual skills assessment and
- more structure for committee meetings

Community

Larger issues. Only a few suggestions made by participants could be applied to the neighbourhood level. The suggestions at the neighbourhood level seemed to focus on the need to recognize and develop strategies to deal with the racism and classism occurring in the neighbourhood. Without work on these larger issues, a few participants thought that real changes could not be made with this community.

Before we can get anywhere we need to start to look at the racism and classism that are happening in this neighbourhood... before we can ever begin to work together.

I think we need to overcome our biases before we can get people to work together at the CMCC, how can you recruit volunteers when people have all these negative feelings about each other?

Summary and Discussion of the Strategies

Table 8 outlines the strategies listed by volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC. It was important to have women volunteers, non-volunteers and staff of the CMCC identify strategies to help improve volunteering. Suggestions given by project participants seemed to focus mainly on the CMCC organization itself with a few sporadic suggestions for the community. There was no mention of strategies to deal with the social factors (public attitudes, government policies and legislation) that would create community change (Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press) for neighbourhood residents.

Communication was an area that many volunteers and non-volunteers believed could use a lot of improvement. This includes communication between staff and volunteers, communication about roles and responsibilities, communication with the overall neighbourhood and ongoing communication processes and channels. Improving communication was cited in the literature by several authors as a means for facilitating citizen participation (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Garkovich, 1989; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), therefore making this an important strategy to accomplish. Volunteer training with clear volunteer roles and expectations were also suggestions made by many volunteers and non-volunteers of the Centre. Presently there are no formal training, workshops, or job descriptions available to volunteers of the CMCC, which needs to be changed as training and clear job descriptions facilitate community involvement (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Garkovich, 1989).

Some volunteers suggested that volunteer co-ordination was an area that could use improvement. A few participants believed that the CMCC should hire a person specifically for the co-ordination of volunteers. Others stated that more effective volunteer co-ordination could be organized with existing resources, as they felt that most of the work could be completed by volunteers.

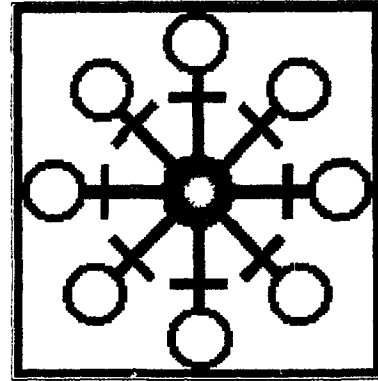
At the community level there were some large issues to be dealt with. Racism and classism were some of the issues identified for this neighbourhood. It was suggested by one participant that before any other work is completed in this neighbourhood racism and classism needed to be addressed. Prilleltensky and Nelson (in press) would agree with this suggestion as they argue that we need to attend to social justice issues otherwise the services are at risk of crumbling. The strategies identified by the staff, volunteers and non-volunteers of the CMCC focus on the organization and the volunteers who provide the caring and supportive services to the neighbourhood. Without the inclusion of race, gender and class in the development of community strategies, the neighbourhood cannot move ahead (Rossiter, 1993). If the CMCC continues to implement strategies that focus on the personal and organizational levels it could be stated that they are actually helping to keep people they serve in the same place, rather than helping them to advance (Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press).

Table 8 **Strategies for Community Centre Development**

Strategies	Volunteers	Non-Volunteers	Staff
<i>Organization</i>			
<i>Communication</i>			
Guidelines to deal with difficult situations mediation process	X		
Clarification of Agency Roles	X		
More opportunities for feedback and input	X		
More structure for committee meetings	X		
Send out reminders of events	X		
Clarification of staff roles for both Parks and Recreation and the House of Friendship	X		
Monthly Newsletter	X	X	
Increase communication between staff/volunteers and neighbourhood	X	X	
Increase visibility of the Centre	X	X	
Structured dialogue between staff/volunteers	X		
Develop a flyer of volunteer needs	X	X	
<i>Volunteer Co-ordination</i>			
Have qualified child care for meetings	X	X	
Create volunteer job descriptions	X	X	
Have more socialization time for volunteers	X		
Assistance from staff with the assessment of volunteer skills	X		
Develop committees for upcoming events	X		
Have co-chair responsibilities	X		
Recruit more volunteers	X		X
Support volunteers	X		X
Hire a volunteer co-ordinator	X		
More ongoing volunteer recognition	X		
Create a volunteer manual	X		
Train all volunteers	X	X	
<i>Day-to-day operations</i>			

Table 8 **Strategies for Community Centre Development**

Have programs for all ages	X	X	
Have social events for neighbourhood	X	X	
<u>Community/Social</u>			
<i>Larger Issues</i>			
Develop strategy to deal with language barriers	X		
Develop strategy to deal with racism in the neighbourhood	X	X	
Develop strategy to deal with the classism in the neighbourhood	X	X	
Need to have more diversity of volunteers	X		
Develop and implement strategies to motivate neighbourhood residents	X	X	
Deal and acknowledge the tension between the complexes		X	



Closing Comments

Methods

There are both strengths and constraints in the methods of this research. The strength of the research is its participatory approach. By talking to the women directly I discovered many points that would not have been discovered if I talked exclusively to staff. This is apparent when looking at Tables 3,4,5,6,7, and 8. In some cases responses from staff were quite different than from volunteers and non-volunteers. If the research was solely based on staff experiences then the results and strategies would not reflect the needs and issues of women from the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood, making the research irrelevant to this community. Another strength of this research is my personal involvement with the neighbourhood residents. I believe that because of my relationship with the women in the neighbourhood, I was able to work more collaboratively, as people knew me as volunteer and resident first, and researcher second.

There were some limitations with the research methods utilized in this study. As mentioned in a previous section of this document, the neighbourhood is comprised of people from 15 or more different ethnic backgrounds. There were some interviews

completed with women of different ethnic origins, but the results primarily reflect a white perspective. Some feminists would argue that serving others and caring for others does not reflect the lives or experiences of women of colour (Hooks, 1981; Lorde, 1984). It also might be argued that unpaid labour is a privilege that is not available to some women due to their financial position in life (Kaminer, 1984). The perspectives of women from different ethnic origins and women who work were not well represented in this study and could be an area for future research.

Further, this research does not reflect the place of men in volunteer work. This omission does not negate the volunteer work that men do in our neighbourhoods and communities nor does it say that men are not affected by the roles assigned to women in our society. Men too are limited by gender role assignment as it limits their participation in the community (Keen, 1992). This also could be an area for future research.

Theory

The ecological perspective stresses the importance of identifying factors and influences from all levels of analysis in order to fully understand the interconnectedness and influences that these levels have on women's lives. Although there is interconnectedness between women, their families, the CMCC, their neighbourhood and their environment, the participants of this study focused mostly on their personal, family and organizational experiences. They did not emphasize social factors or social justice issues. Working with a social justice ethic means to identify power structures and question social arrangements that ensure unequal opportunities, resources, obligations and outcomes for individuals (Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press; Ryan, 1981).

Neighbourhood development needs to be grounded in the values of social justice in order for communities to develop (Derksen & Nelson, 1995).

Most of the interventions and support programs of the CMCC are geared toward the individual experiencing the problem, rather than societal power structures and social arrangements which created the problems in the first place. For example volunteers and staff of the CMCC provide food hampers, respite care, Christmas gifts, free clothing, winter coats for kids, crisis support and emergency financial support to people in need who live in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood. Preventative physical and social support programs geared towards prevention operate at the CMCC and include some of the following: social support to new mothers, pre-natal nutrition courses, spiritual discovery groups, youth sexuality workshops, and so forth. Self-determination and participation are also supported as values of the CMCC. Residents and volunteers are encouraged to participate in the planning and decision making of neighbourhood events through a Neighbourhood Association. Although human diversity is not fully incorporated into the CMCC practices and policies, there are steps in place to change this. For example, a working group has been established to support ethnic diversity and problems of racism. However, there is little being done in the area of social justice. This omission perpetuates the assumption that it is the individual who is faulty rather than the system (Kidder & Fine, 1986). The results from this study confirm Prilleltensky and Nelson's (in press, p. 4) theory that:

Within the present social context the value of social justice has remained in the background. By neglecting to actualize the value of social justice, we reinforce the same unjust state of affairs that led to the disadvantage of many communities in the first place.

Therefore there needs to be a conscious effort to connect all levels of experience - personal, family organization, community and social factors because the “personal is political.” This conscious effort is necessary in order to move the CMCC from a charity based organization to one based on eradicating social injustices (Rappaport, 1981).

Additionally this research does not address the literature on women’s solidarity as a motivator for women to volunteer in community organizations. Since the majority of volunteers in this study were women, this could be an area for further exploration, as the motivation to volunteer may be to connect with other women as opposed to the cause or the institution.

Practice

As stated previously, social justice needs to take some priority at the Centre in order to create real social change in the neighbourhood. If the position of women volunteers is to improve, then we must look at the overall scheme of things: childcare, respect for unpaid work, employment equity, social policies, and the gendered division of roles. The CMCC could play an instrumental role in assisting women to look at these issues while supporting them to find mechanisms that create change.

An incomplete list of thoughts for future consideration. Nothing occurs in isolation. Experiences are complex interactions between the personal, family, organization, community and social factors. This may seem overwhelming to a group of volunteers who already have a full workload. Therefore, I believe that we need to reformulate social justice issues into a series of small steps (small wins) and create a pattern of concrete change in the community (Weick, 1984). To enhance self-sufficiency and create transformative community change I have attempted to present an incomplete

list (Rappaport, 1987) of thoughts for future consideration at all levels of experience. These thoughts were created through a combination of sources. First and foremost they were created from the suggestions given by research participants. Secondly, ideas and suggestions were gathered and adapted from the research literature (Cameron, Peirson & Pancer, 1994; Derksen & Nelson, 1995; Fawcett, Paine-Andrews, Francisco, Schultz, Richter, Lewis, Williams, Harris, Berkley, Fisher & Lopez, 1995; Prilleltensky & Nelson, in press; Rappaport, 1987; Weick, 1984). This list (See Table 9) is not meant to be an exhaustive one; rather it is a starting point for discussion when creating change in the Chandler-Mowat community.

Table 9

An Incomplete List of Thoughts for Future Consideration

Personal

1. Provide training and workshops in communication, conflict resolution, self-esteem, public speaking and assertiveness skills.
2. Encourage involvement and inclusion of specific people living in the neighbourhood (e.g., low income residents, middle-income residents, people of different ethnic backgrounds, youth, etc.).
3. Provide childcare at volunteer functions and during volunteer tasks.
4. Provide financial assistance to people who may not have access to affordable transportation (e.g., people with physical disabilities need to pay for transportation to the Centre as the sidewalks in the neighbourhood are not accessible).
5. Hold meetings at convenient times to enable people to attend (e.g., do not hold meetings during nap times, close to or during lunch and dinner hours).
6. Consider providing compensation for time spent serving on committees.
7. Provide training on organizational procedures and policies.
8. Provide ongoing recognition of volunteer efforts.

Family

9. Support and encourage women to bring their children to meetings, functions and volunteer events or provide financial assistance for in-home childcare.
10. Advertise suggestion # 9.
11. Support women to bring their partners or husbands to volunteer functions and events.

12. Develop volunteer tasks that can be completed by children and youth.

Organization

13. Train staff on techniques involving residents.
 14. Train staff in community development processes and principles.
 15. Help to raise consciousness of professionals and community members.
 16. Help develop an organizational structure which facilitates resident involvement.
 17. Provide assistance in recruiting, developing and supporting volunteers.
 18. Provide technical assistance in securing financial resources (e.g., how to find and write grant proposals).
 19. Reallocate material and human resources.
 20. Staff must recognize that there is not a single method for empowerment; rather empowerment involves a continuous process of learning and development.
 21. Develop (in collaboration with resident feedback) guidelines for selecting leadership and membership.
 22. Encourage involvement from key influential community supports (e.g., public and high schools, churches, businesses, Housing Authority etc.).
 23. Provide assistance and training in community visioning or strategic planning (e.g., the current process that is underway).
 24. Develop job descriptions to clarify roles and responsibilities of volunteers and staff.
 25. Improve communication (e.g., use everyday language, provide definitions when necessary, structure communication processes between staff and volunteers and non-volunteers).
 26. Develop an organizational agenda that attends to social justice issues.
 27. Meet with other neighbourhood organizations who have been successful attending to social justice issues.

Community

28. Conduct focus groups with neighbourhood residents to assess their interests, needs and issues.
 29. Locate meetings in different sections of the neighborhood (e.g., community meeting space of the co-operative housing complexes).
 30. Develop marketing plans and strategies to promote services at the CMCC.
 31. Host neighbourhood social events.
 32. Adapt and create programs and events that fit local cultural traditions (e.g., hold celebrations for cultural holidays).

Social

33. Develop an agenda that attends to locating the sources of social injustice.
 34. Help residents to link their individual experiences to social and economic structures.

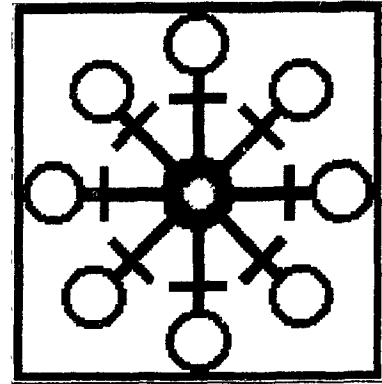
35. Develop collective strategies for change.
36. Help to develop ties to existing sectors, organizations and groups (e.g., local housing authority, welfare and social assistance).
37. Attend local rallies and protests.
38. Help residents advocate for policies and legislation changes (e.g., affirmative action, welfare reform).
39. Provide access to outside experts or power structures in matters of neighbourhood concern (e.g., welfare reform, MPP).
40. Document and legitimize the voices of those affected by social injustice.
41. Provide ongoing feedback and information about community change, satisfaction and outcomes (e.g., decrease in crime rates).
42. Promote and celebrate community change and accomplishment.

Paradoxes. Throughout this document, there are a whole set of paradoxes that surfaced concerning women's community volunteer work. Julian Rappaport (1981) states that "the most important and interesting aspects of community life are by their very nature paradoxical: and that our task as researchers should be to unpack and influence contemporary resolutions of paradox (p. 1)." Below is a summary of the paradoxes found in the research literature and that were presented by research participants.

- Support systems and the caring programs created by volunteer efforts are needed and yet women are exploited and kept in subordinate positions through this work.
- We need to support women in order to bring children into the public sphere (volunteer work) and yet by doing so we keep women in these unpaid positions.
- Women receive many positive outcomes from their volunteer work and yet volunteering is exploitive and keeps women in a subordinate position to men.
- We should stop volunteering altogether to force the government to take responsibility for the programs now operated by the caring efforts of volunteers. And yet to do so would be to eliminate much services for women and children.
- We need to recognize, value and legitimize the efforts of women. And yet by doing so are we reinforcing the traditional roles of femininity and masculinity?
- We should not feel pressured to conform to a cost-benefit analysis of women's roles in order to recognize their work, and yet will women get credit for their unpaid work if we do not conform?
- Do we try to develop strategies to enlist more men into unpaid volunteer labour so that they are also exploited?
- Does the fact that there are dedicated volunteers who operate the programs at the CMCC ensure that the Centre will never be adequately funded as long as women are willing to work for free?

- Does the caring and compassion of volunteers ensure that this community will never move beyond service provision?
- Should institutionalization of community centres be a given in our society? Are they a solution or a hindrance to neighbourhood development?
- Should the volunteers strive to create neighbourhood homogeneity or is it more effective to support small divisions of community development within the larger community, for example, Latin American community, Somalian community, low income housing community versus developing the whole the Chandler-Mowat Community.

There are no easy or single best solutions to these paradoxes, nor should there be. Instead we need to continue to look for the paradoxes and push away from what has become one-sided. “We should not bury paradox, rather we should praise it” (Rappaport, 1981, p. 19). We need to begin dialogue on these paradoxes in order for us to deal with the social injustice which keeps women’s work invisible and unrecognized in our communities. We need to develop an ethic of social justice where “visibility ” of women’s work is commonplace and where “the creation of community fabric” is recognized and valued in our society.



Epilogue

This project is approximately two years old, but has barely just begun. In March 1996, the neighbourhood received funding from the Ontario Women's Directorate to complete the combined research and strategic planning project. The funding from the Women's Directorate is for an eleven month period which is to end in February 1997. The information gathered from this study can be labeled "phase one" of the overall strategic planning process because the data will be used as the foundation or beginning stages in the strategic planning process. Volunteers and staff will be working on the remaining phases of this project after this study is completed.

Presently our working group is in the process of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of affiliated community agencies, CMCC staff, and volunteers. Once we have documented current roles and responsibilities, the committee will visit other successful neighbourhood groups to gather ideas and suggestions for the next stage of the process. At some point in the fall, a community forum will be held for neighbourhood residents in order to develop collective action plans and recruit more people for the community development process.

Although my volunteer work on this project has been an extremely valuable and positive experience, there have been frustrating and negative experiences that have surfaced. I think that these problems emerged because I live right in the neighbourhood and I am constantly reminded of the work that needs to be completed in this community. At times this creates an overwhelming sense of urgency to make things happen faster than they have been. With all of the recent cutbacks to provincial social assistance, I have witnessed extreme stress and tension for some women and their families in our neighbourhood. There are some people in the neighbourhood who do not recognize this stress, and instead they blame and criticize women for their current living situation. Because I live in the neighbourhood I face this dichotomy on a regular basis. At times it feels as if I can never get away from the social problems of life, which is tiring and energy draining. I am currently working on strategies to help deal with this dilemma.

Throughout my work on this project I have gained many wonderful experiences and insights into the lives of women who weave tapestries of community fabric into my neighbourhood. Even though women's volunteer work in this neighbourhood remains invisible to the community, they have achieved a great deal with little support and encouragement from others in the community. They are the invisible weavers; women volunteers who have created an intricate tapestry of community fabric in the Chandler-Mowat neighbourhood.

Appendix 1

Staff Focus Group Interview Guide

Focus Group Questions
For Staff of the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation

First Name of Participants _____

Date _____

Length of interview _____

Background Questions

1. What is your name? What is your connection to the CMCC? What organization do you work for?
2. How long have you been involved in the CMCC?
3. What are some of the responsibilities of a CMCC volunteer?
4. From your experience, what percentage of CMCC volunteers are women, and what percentage are men?
5. Do the jobs that women do differ from the jobs that men do at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?
6. What does the term volunteering mean to you?

Motivators

1. Why do you feel people volunteer in the activities of the CMCC?
2. What do you feel first attracts people to volunteer at the CMCC?

Personal

1. What personal traits make it, or would make it easier for people to volunteer at the CMCC?
2. Is there any personal factor that makes it difficult for people to volunteer at the CMCC?
3. In what ways do you think people benefit from volunteering at the CMCC?
4. Do you notice any positive or negative changes in volunteers since being involved with the CMCC?

Family

1. In your opinion what things do families do (partners and children) to help people volunteer at the CMCC? What else could they do?
2. In your opinion are there things that families (partners and children) do that make it difficult for people to volunteer at the CMCC?
3. In your opinion do you feel families (partners and children) benefit from volunteer work at the CMCC?
4. In your experience have you seen or heard of any negative effects on families due to volunteer involvement at the CMCC? If so please elaborate. Is there anything that can be done to change this?

Organizational

1. What does the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation do to help people volunteer at the CMCC? What else could your organization do to help?
2. Is there anything that your organization does that makes it difficult for people to volunteer at the CMCC? Is there anything that can be done to change this?
3. In your opinion how does the neighbourhood benefit from volunteer participation?
4. Do you think that there may be negative impacts on the neighbourhood from the volunteer efforts of residents?

Neighbourhood/Community

1. What types of things does the neighbourhood do to help people volunteer at the Centre?
2. Is there anything that the neighbourhood does that makes it difficult for people to volunteer at the CMCC?
3. In your opinion does the neighbourhood benefit from volunteer participation?
4. In your opinion do you feel that there are any negative impacts on the neighbourhood from volunteer participation?

Social

1. In your opinion what are the public attitudes or government policies that make it easier for people to volunteer at the CMCC?
2. In your opinion are there any public attitudes or government policies that make it difficult for people to participate at the CMCC?
3. What do you think would happen if there were no volunteers at the CMCC?

Other

1. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already covered in this interview?

Appendix 2

Volunteer Focus Group Interview Guide

Focus Group Interview Form - Volunteers

First names of people present

Date _____

Background Questions

1. As a volunteer what specifically do you do at the CMCC?
2. Can you tell me when you started volunteer work at the CMCC?
3. How much time per month do you put into your volunteer work at the CMCC?
4. Do the jobs that women do differ from the jobs that men do at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?
5. What does the term volunteering mean to you?

Motivators

1. What motivates people to volunteer?

Probes:

1. Why do you volunteer in the activities at the CMCC?
1. What first attracted you to volunteering at the CMCC?
1. What continues to motivate you to volunteer your time at the CMCC?
1. How does it make you feel to do volunteer work at the CMCC?

Facilitators

2. What would help people to volunteer?

Probes:

2. Personally, what would make it easier for you to volunteer in the Centre's activities? (e.g. if I felt more confident in myself)
2. What things do families (partners and children) do to help you to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., my children like to come to the Centre with me) Is there anything else could they do?

2. What do you think the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation do to help you and other women to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., they support me to breast feed during committee meetings) What else could they do?
2. What types of things does the neighbourhood do to help you and other women to volunteer at the Centre?
2. In your opinion what are the public attitudes or government policies around volunteering that make it easier to volunteer at the CMCC? (e.g., volunteer work is recognized as work in job applications)

Barriers

2b. What discourages or stops people from volunteering?

Probes:

- 2b. Is there any personal factor that makes it difficult for you to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., don't have enough time)
- 2b. Is there anything that the neighbourhood does that makes it difficult to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., there is no respect or recognition for the efforts of volunteers).
- 2b. Are there things that families (partners and children) do that make it difficult to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., husband does not like my time spent at the Centre, especially in the evening).
- 2b. Is there anything you can think of that the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation does, that makes it difficult to volunteer at the Centre? (e.g., they meet at 12:00 - 1:00 when my children are at home for lunch).
- 2b. In your opinion are there any public attitudes or government policies that make it difficult to volunteer in the Centre's activities? (e.g., subsidized daycare is not available for volunteer work).

3. Impacts - both positive benefits and negative impacts.

3. What do you think volunteering does for individuals, the Centre, the neighbourhood and our community?

Probes:

3. In what ways do you benefit from volunteering at the Centre? (e.g., good experience for my resume)
3. Do you feel that your family (partner and children) benefits from your volunteer efforts at CMCC? (e.g., I am happier, so they are happier)

3. In your opinion how does the neighbourhood Centre benefit from volunteer participation?
3. Do you think that there may be negative impacts on the neighbourhood Centre from the volunteer efforts of residents?
3. In your opinion how does the neighbourhood benefit from volunteer participation?
3. In the past did your family experience any negative effects due to your volunteer involvement at the CMCC? If so please elaborate. (e.g., takes time away from my husband and children)
3. Do you notice any positive or negative changes in yourself since being involved with the CMCC? (e.g., I feel more confident in myself or I have no time for myself)
3. Has your family commented or noticed any changes in you since you began your volunteer work at the CMCC?
3. In your opinion do you feel that there are any negative impacts on the neighbourhood from volunteer participation?
3. What do you think would happen if nobody did the type of volunteer work that you do?
4. Do you have any suggestions or ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already covered in this interview?

Field Notes

Length of Interview _____ Number of Participants

Comments:

Appendix 3

Participant Consent Form

Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood Participant Consent Form

1. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily participated in the focus group or interview.
2. I understand that this project is being conducted by Lorie Fioze as partial requirements for her M.A. in Community Psychology which is being supervised by Dr. Geoff Nelson from the Department of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University.
3. The overall goals of this project are the following:
 - To understand what motivates people to volunteer in neighbourhood activities.
 - To understand what helps and hinders people in volunteer activities.
 - To create suggestions and ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the CMCC.
4. I understand that results of the focus groups and interviews will be used for planning the volunteer activities of the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre (CMCC). I also understand that some of the information collected will be used in Lorie Fioze's thesis.
5. I have been informed of my rights to pass on any question I do not feel comfortable with, or do not wish to answer.
6. I permit Lorie Fioze to use the information I have provided, with the understanding that she will take all necessary precautions to ensure my anonymity.
7. To capture the true essence of my responses, I will permit Lorie Fioze to use quotes with the understanding that my name will not be attached to the quote. No names will be used in any of the reports.
Yes _____ No _____
8. I permit Lorie Fioze to tape my responses, with the understanding that the tapes will be erased as soon as they are transcribed by Lorie Fioze.
Yes _____ No _____
9. I understand that I will receive a copy of the results once the report has been completed.

Name of Participant _____ Signature _____

Date _____

If I have any questions related to this project I can call Lorie Fioze at 579-4846 or her thesis supervisor, Dr. Geoff Nelson at Wilfrid Laurier University, 884-0710, ext. 3314.

Appendix 4

Telephone or Person-to-Person Interview Form for Volunteers

Telephone or Person-to-Person Interview Form for Volunteers

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Interview Method _____

Background Questions

1. As a volunteer what specifically do you do at the CMCC?
2. Can you tell me when you started volunteer work at the CMCC?
3. How much time per month do you put into your volunteer work at the CMCC?
4. Do the jobs that women do differ from the jobs that men do at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?
5. What does the term volunteering mean to you?

Motivators

1. What motivates people to volunteer?

Probes:

Why do you volunteer in the activities of the CMCC?

What first attracted you to volunteer at the CMCC?

What continues to motivate you to volunteer your time at the CMCC?

How does it make you feel to do volunteer work at the CMCC?

Facilitators

- 2a. What would help people to volunteer?

Probes:

Personally what would make it easier for you to volunteer in the CMCC activities?

What things do families (partners and children) do to help volunteers participate at the CMCC? Is there anything else they could do?

What do you think the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation do to help volunteers participate at the CMCC? What else could they do?

What types of things does the neighbourhood do to help you and others to volunteer at the CMCC?

In your opinion what are the public attitudes or government policies around volunteering that make it easier to volunteer at the CMCC?

Barriers

2b. What discourages or stops people from volunteering?

Probes:

Is there any personal factor that makes it difficult for you to volunteer at the CMCC?

Is there anything that families do that make it difficult to volunteer at the CMCC?

Is there anything that the House of Friendship or Parks and Recreation does that makes it difficult to volunteer at the CMCC?

Is there anything that the neighbourhood does that makes it difficult to volunteer at the CMCC?

In your opinion are there any public attitudes or government policies that make it difficult to volunteer at the CMCC?

Impact - both positive benefits and negative impacts.

3. What do you think volunteering does for individuals, the Centre, the neighbourhood and our community?

Probes:

In what ways do you benefit from volunteering at the CMCC?

Do you notice any negative changes in yourself specifically from your volunteer work at the CMCC?

Do you feel that your family benefits from your volunteer work at the CMCC?

Has your family experienced any negative effects due to your volunteer work at the CMCC?

What do you think the House of Friendship and Parks and Recreation receive from the work of volunteers? Are there positive benefits or negative impacts/ or both?

What type of impact does volunteer work have on the neighbourhood? Are there positive benefits or negative impacts /or both?

What does volunteer work do for our communities?

4. Do you have any suggestions or ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre?

5. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already covered in this interview?

Field Notes

Length of Interview _____

Comments

Appendix 5

Telephone Interview or Person-to-Person Interview
with Non-Participants

Chandler-Mowat Community Centre
Telephone Interview or Person-to-Person Interview
with Non-Participants

Name _____

Address _____

Length of Interview _____

Background Questions

1. Are you aware of the volunteer opportunities offered at the CMCC?
 YES _____ NO _____

2. Have you ever participated in any of the activities at the CMCC?
 YES _____ NO _____

(If yes)

What activities did you participate in?

Why did you stop your involvement with the CMCC?

Would you be willing to answer some questions about volunteering? (explanation re: this does not commit you to volunteer with the CMCC)

YES _____ NO _____

(If no) Thank them for their time.

(If yes) Proceed with the following questions.

2a. What do you think would help people to volunteer?

2b. What do you think discourages or stops people from volunteering?

3. What do you think volunteering does for individuals, neighbourhoods, communities or society in general?

4. Do you have any suggestions or ideas to increase volunteer involvement at the CMCC?

5. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not already covered in this interview?

Field notes

Length of interview

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