

Annual General Meeting
October 2023



Dear S.O.A.R. Members and Guests:

I am honored for the opportunity to be part of “Survivors of Abuse Recovering (S.O.A.R.)” and to serve as your Chair of the Board of Directors. This year has been a year of developing and deepening our Peer Support and expanding into Group Support while continuing to mature our governance.

I recognize the meaningful contributions of the Board of Directors, who put great effort into achieving our goals and moving S.O.A.R. forward, by sharing their talents and adding lasting value to the future growth of S.O.A.R. Thank you to: Peter Kiefl (Treasurer), Margo Stevens (Secretary) and Theresa Redmond (Acting Secretary), Earle Illsley, Mary Myke, Alyssa MacDonald (Directors) and Angela Wallace (MH&A rep). The Board of Directors regretfully accepted the resignation of Gwen Medwid in May, Jill Connors in February, and Ann Marie Powers in March.

S.O.A.R. has the honour to have a leader in community volunteerism as one of our own. In late 2022 Karen Martin received both the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Canadian government’s Canada Volunteer Community Leader Award for the Atlantic Region. Karen has been instrumental in keeping S.O.A.R. going over the past 30 years and we owe her a deep debt of gratitude.

S.O.A.R. has been holding our meetings online using videoconferencing software, although the Youth Portal of Kentville continues to allow us to use their space when needed. We have used it often for Peer Supporter Training and once for a hybrid monthly Board meeting. Many thanks to the Youth Portal for supporting us in this manner.

Jedidja Dziedziejko continues as our coordinator, working remotely from Ontario to take incoming requests for help from survivors and doing her best, with our Peer Mentors, to match them appropriately with our volunteer Peer Supporters. We hired Heidi Kalyani to complete our Peer Mentor project to train members as facilitators and create a group support program. This project continues into this fall with an expected end date in December 2023.

The S.O.A.R. Board hopes to embark on a Strategic Planning exercise in this coming year. The funding is in place and a consultant has generously offered to do it for us pro bono plus expenses.

In other committee work we continue to improve our policies, have reviewed and updated our website, and held a Trauma Informed Care workshop for our volunteers and the public at large.

As we look to the future, some of our key priorities for the coming year include:

- Continuing to provide Peer Support and Group Support services to peers who call upon us.
- Offering another Peer Supporter training.

- Writing a Strategic Plan for the future of S.O.A.R.
- Celebrating our 30th anniversary and all our volunteers who have carried us to it.

The Board of Directors will continue working on these 2023/2024 goals and encourage you to attend our November 8, 2023 regular meeting. Meetings are always open to S.O.A.R. members and take place the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm online using Zoom and occasionally in person at The Portal.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank all Peer Supporters and members for your dedication to S.O.A.R. and I look forward to serving you in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Vey,
Chair