



Chalk Talk

Greetings | Feature | News | Facts & Figures

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

As this International Women’s Week wraps up, I find myself thinking about what it was like to have lived through the tumultuous times of the Women’s Movement of the 60’s and 70’s when debate over women’s rights was at its peak. I sometimes wonder whether in the 21st century, the movement still has relevancy. All the battles have been fought, and won, haven’t they?



It could be argued that most young women in North America take the achievements in women’s human rights for granted while women in many countries around the world still do not enjoy even the most basic rights such as the right to vote, access to education, equality in the workplace or indeed, basic human rights to determine their own destinies. The United Nations’ [Women Watch](#) program documents the struggle for equality experienced by women around the world every day.



At home, the [Status of Women Canada](#) has themed this year’s event as “Beyond Laws: The Right To Be Me” which celebrates Canada’s commitment to equality for women while assessing the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain.

This week’s issue recognizes the extraordinary Canadian female athletes who competed at the 2006 Winter Olympics and many of whom have become ambassadors for the humanitarian organization, **Right To Play**.

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Celebrating Exceptional Canadian Women



Canadians won a record breaking 21 medals at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, thanks in large part to the extraordinary achievements of Canada’s female athletes — Speedskaters Clara Hughes, Cindy Klassen, Kristin Groves, Nordic Skiing Team Member, Beckie Scott, Snowboarder, Alexa Loo, and the entire Canadian Women’s Olympic Hockey Team. Right To Play was especially thankful for the generosity of Clara Hughes who was inspired by Joey Cheek, the U.S. Gold Medalist in speedskating who after winning his two medals donated \$25,000 to Right To Play. Clara, a Right To Play Athlete Ambassador and long time supporter of Right To Play, pledged \$10,000 of her personal funds to Right To Play and [challenged Canadians to do the same](#). To date almost \$200,000 has been raised.

Right To Play went to the 2006 Winter Olympic Games to raise awareness of its programs and to promote the power of *play*. Its strong presence at the Games was a big hit with the international

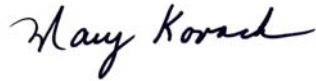


Clara Hughes visits Right To Play in Torino media and with the dozens of Olympic athletes who dropped by their “hub” in the Athlete’s Village to show their support.

Ana Shapiro, Right To Play Marketing and Events Manager, became aware of the impact their presence was having at the Olympics when she

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Thank you to those readers who have taken the time to let us know your views. Please keep them coming!



Mary Kovack

What do your students have to say about the Status of Women? Is the Women's Movement relevant to their everyday lives or has it become the status quo? Send your stories to maryk@coedcomm.com and we may feature your class in an upcoming issue of *Chalk Talk*.

Manager, became aware of the impact their presence was having at the Olympics when she reported that, "The other day, I was walking through downtown Torino wearing my Right To Play clothes, and a fellow came up to me and said 'What is this Right To Play? I keep seeing that Red Ball everywhere I go!' [\[Source: Right To Play at the Olympics\]](#)

Right To Play is an athlete-driven humanitarian organization using sport and play programs to promote opportunities for development, health and peace for children in the world's most disadvantaged places. Guided by the philosophy — **Look After Yourself, Look After One Another** — Right To Play in partnership with [Silken's Active Kids' Movement](#), is launching its first-ever Canadian School Program this Spring— **Learning To Play, Playing To Learn** — for the promotion of educational play and awareness of global issues among Canada's schoolchildren.

Elementary teachers of grades 4 to 6 can obtain the kit and participate in workshops that are currently being arranged through school boards and at educator conferences across Canada. If you would like to join the hundreds of teachers who have already ordered the kit, [click here](#). If you are a school board administrator or conference organizer and would like to arrange workshops for an upcoming conference, PD Day or other educators' event, call 1-877-808-PLAY(7529).

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Women want to be free to choose from the same range of options that men take for granted. In our quest for equal pay, equal access to education and opportunities, we have made great strides. But until women can move freely and think freely in their homes, on the streets, and in the workplace without the fear of violence, there can be no freedom."

— Anita Roddick, Founder, The Body Shop

Facts & Figures—Women's Human Rights



- Canada was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW), adopted in 1979.
- The first International Women's Day was celebrated in the U.S. as early as 1910, but formal recognition came in 1977, when the U.N. Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming March 8 as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.
- The [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) contains a clause ensuring that "the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons".
- Canada initiated the 1993 [UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#).

[Sources: [UNA Canada](#), [Foreign Affairs Canada](#)]

Education News

[Canadian teachers play pivotal role in advancing women's issues in developing countries around the world.](#) — CTF News Release, March 3, 2006

"As women teachers gain confidence and recognize their basic human and labour rights, they can lead the way in addressing social issues within their respective countries to improve the lot of girls, women and society. We are pleased to see the momentum growing as more and more women speak out on violence against girls and women, and campaign on issues such as maternity protection benefits."

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[Close Urban-Rural Dropout Rate, Educators Urged](#) — Canadian Press, The Toronto Star, March 2, 2006

Statistics showing dropout rates in rural areas of Canada are almost double those in cities and towns indicate a critical need for policies aimed at closing the divide, an educational think-tank said today.

[Students Left in Limbo](#) — Canadian Press, The Toronto Star, March 7, 2006

More than 150,000 Ontario college students were without classes Tuesday after their professors went on strike to push for smaller classes and more full-time faculty.

[Wandering Sexual Minefield](#) — Andrea Gordon, The Toronto Star, March 3, 2006

What kids get out of sex ed depends on many factors, including the comfort level of the teacher, what's been discussed at home, their faith and ethnic background, the school environment and their friends. As a result, there's inconsistency across the country in what adolescents are learning about sexuality and sexual health.

[Women Still Struggle to Break Through Glass Ceiling in Government, Business and Academia](#) — UN Women Watch, March 8, 2006

Beyond the high profile elections of women of Heads of State and Governments in Chile, Liberia and Germany, progress into bringing women into leadership and decision-making positions around the world

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