REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Riding the Wave

Throughout our amazing 26 year history, the Victoria Women’s Sexual Assault Centre has never shied away from leading social change against sexualized violence. From the earliest days working with two paid staff and volunteers who had grown to employ- ing 3 paid staff and a cadre of volunteers as Board Members, SART members and administrative clerks. Today WSAC is leading the way to bring evidence that sexualized violence must be addressed. Through innovative programs emphasizing trauma treatment practices, crisis counselling and long-term counselling, we work hard to try to meet the demand for service.

The Women’s Sexual Assault Centre had many transitions this year, but because of the tremendous efforts of the staff and volun- teers, we weathered the changes. Our move to View Street was a posi- tive event, and staff settled into their new home regardless of the tight quarters. The atmosphere and the neighborhood have created a comfort- able and safe environment for the important work that is done to promote healing.

In 2008 we bade farewell to Sandy McLellan and the staff welcomed me as the new Executive Director. The transition in leader- ship was relatively smooth and the staff and volunteers have set a course to put a new strategic plan into action. Setting strategy is the activity of understanding the environment and organizational competen- cies, identifying opportunities and threats, and articulating a high- level map of the direction to take in order to achieve, sustain, and ad- vance organizational purpose in a competitive environment. Several new committees have arisen to promote the agency in the community and to enhance services. We intend to build public awareness of the wonderful services offered at the Centre and of the need to address sexualized violence in our communities. Additionally, we will be examining growing accessibility, program enhancement, and service delivery to assure quality services are being delivered at the Centre. Efforts will be made to support those employed by WSAC by providing a well- ness program. We are also exploring ways to diversify our funding resources even further including possibilities of creating a social en- terprise.

We repeated our awareness campaigns. Our 1 in 3 Campaign in the fall builds awareness of the prevalence of sexualized violence, ways to prevent violence and the available services. Our Walk a Mile in Her Shoes was held in early summer to enlist men as allies of women. In Her Shoes was held in early summer to enlist men as allies of women.

We rely on the generous financial support of the community to sustain our services. Thank you to all of our donors whose gifts make a difference in the lives of many. We extend special recogni- tion to the following:

Jill Ainsley, Anthony T. Floor Inc., Raymond Berry, Dresden Black, Bruce Bryant-Scott, Lori Bulmer, Andrea Carey, Club Phoenix, Chris Eve, Executive Place Services, George Ferdin- ands, Fort Street Cycle, Linda Frimer, GiveMeaning Founda- tion, Ellen Godfrey, Kathy Gose, IBM Employees’ Charitable Fund, Josie Irwin, Carole James, Don James, KB General Con- struction, Louise Langlais, Mel McDonald, Avis Michalovsky, Monk Office Supply, Needs of Victorian Society, Rose Maria Plasterer, Dr. Elain Powell, Professional Employees Associa- tion, Valerie Pusey, Christopher Raynham, Adrian & Janet Rim- mer, Royal Canadian Legion #292, Royal Canadian Legion #91, Royal Oak Lions, Runners of Compassion, Sacred Heart Chris- tian Charities, Eugene & Heather Sander, Wendy Smith & Ar- lene Skagfeld, Swiftsure Drywall, Norma Wuester & Julian Young.

2008 - 09 WSAC Staff

Makenna Rieyll, Executive Director

2008 - 09 WSAC Board

As Makenna’s report from the Executive Director makes clear, 2008/09 was a year of huge accomplishments and changes for WSAC! Makenna is proving herself a dedicated and skilled leader, effectively managing WSAC’s relocation to View Street, hiring some new great staff members, and leading us through the rewarding proc- ess of developing a strategic plan. In addition to participating with WSAC staff in strategic planning, the Board began development of a much-needed Board policy manual. Board members also devoted a lot of hours to strengthening WSAC’s relationships with other agen- cies and raising the Centre’s profile in the community, representing WSAC at numerous meetings and events.

Undoubtedly our largest project at the end of the fiscal year was the recruitment of new Board Members. This was an unprecedented suc- cess, resulting in six wonderful additions to our team: Allison Beardsworth, Ann Evans, Heidi Exner, Michele Haddon, Eliza- beth Morrison and Katie Shaw. We look forward to introducing all of them to you at WSAC’s annual general meeting in September, where they will take their official seats. Until then, you can read more about them and all our members at www.vwsac.com/board-of- directors.html. The Board also elected two new members to its ex- ecutive: Mike McLellan, our past Secretary, and Sally Gose serves as Co-Chair. Sadly, we said goodbye to two mem- bers. Andrea Titterness, elected at the last AGM, resigned to focus on completing her doctorate, while Emily Ellingsen, a Co-Chair and former SART volunteer, stepped down so that she could dedicate all her energies to surviving cancer. We thank both of them for their service to WSAC, and we continue to send Emily and her husband, Aaron, heartfelt wishes for a full recovery.

We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished in the preceding year, and we’re looking forward to what 2009/10 holds.

Sincerely,

Jill Ainsley (Co-Chair), Sally Gose (Co-Chair), Kimberly Brown (Treasurer), Natasha de Klerk (Secretary), Yvonne Haist, Shannon Schauss and Shelley Spring

Women’s Sexual Assault Centre
Women's Sexual Assault Centre

Responding to Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault
- Justice Institute of British Columbia and Victim Service Branch

The Victim Services Branch delivers curriculum for all Victim Service Workers across the province through the Justice Institute of BC. In September 2008, WSAC was invited to revise and deliver the module, Responding to Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault. In March 2009, we delivered the training at the JIBC campus in New Westminster to 18 victim service workers, incorporating current best practices and providing opportunities to discuss challenges and successes with a panel of community partners (Police, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Crown Counsel). The feedback from this first delivery was very positive and we have been asked to deliver two modules in 2009/2010.

Project Respect Program Highlights
Project Respect reached almost 2000 youth through its workshops and presentations in 2008-09. We presented in all the alternative schools in SD61 and in high schools and middle schools throughout SD61, SD62 and SD63. Among the highlights were our workshops in every single ninth grade class at Oak Bay High, training peer helpers at Victoria High and St. Michael’s University and orienting all the eighth graders at Pacific Christian Secondary into high school.

Conferences and Community

We were invited to present the workshops in 2008-09 in various conferences including the Honour Youth Conference in Duncan, the Youth Impact Conference organized by the United Way Youth Advisory Council, the Age to Engage Conference and the Speak Out Conference (both organized by various high school youth). We worked in long-time community partners Boys and Girls Club, Artemis Place and the Youth Custody Center, as well as formed some exciting new partnerships with organizations like Antidote: Indigenous and Racialized Multigenerational Women and Girls’ Network and VOYCL (Victoria Opportunities for Community and Youth Leadership).

Male Allies Group

A new initiative of the Prevention Team in 08-09 has been the Male Allies Group. We work with male mentors and facilitate sessions aimed at preventing and responding to sexual assault.

Male Allies Group - Project Respect

Skills for Healing Revisions - Minerva Foundation

The Skills for Healing Group is a four-session foundational group for youth and adult female survivors developed by WSAC and offered for the past five years. This group encourages focus on skill-building rather than self-disclosure, and contains information about how trauma affects our physical, emotional, social and psychological selves, as well as sharing skills for managing the common effects of traumatic experiences, increasing personal safety and accessing appropriate supports.

In June 2008, the Minerva Foundation provided WSAC with a grant to revise the Skills curriculum and prepare it to be shared with other Stopping the Violence programs. We completed a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum review to make this innovative curriculum most relevant for the women we work with, most effective for adult learners and ready to share with other STV Counselling programs. We are currently preparing the package of materials, including the Skills for Healing Facilitator Manual, Participant Workbook and Skills Practice Audio CD, to market to anti-violence programs throughout British Columbia.

Expense Breakdown

- Program Costs 4%
- Direct Service Sessions 25%
- Admin 12%
- Fees 10%
- Staffing 75%
- Government Contracts 25%
- Funding Sources
- Grants 10%
- Direct Funding 37%
- Fundraising 9%
- Fee for Service 1%

Direct Client Services

Number of Services Provided

April 08 - March 09

Crisis Line - calls received 1292
SART - responses 109
Victim Service Program - direct service 521
Crisis Counselling - direct service sessions 765
Information Meetings - attendees 69
Intake Appointments - direct service sessions 685
Individual Counselling (STV) - direct service sessions 1494
Group Counselling - attendees 284
Family/Supporters Workshop - attendees 12

Award and Recognition

The Prevention Educators and our workshops continue to receive recognition from the Victoria community and beyond in the form of awards, media interviews and multi-media collaborative opportunities from other professionals.

- Annie Banks won the United Way 2009 Big Change Award for her positive role-modeling and tireless work in the community.
- Billy Bingaman was asked to participate as a male working in a successful prevention program in a documentary on drug facilitated sexual assault created by Dissolve (a Vancouver-based production).
- Project Respect was asked to address the audience on working to end gender-based violence on the Day of Remembrance event organized by the Ministry at the Legislature.
- CUVF interviewed Project Respect and aired a one-hour program about the Walk A Mile event and why men should support the Women’s Sexual Assault Centre to end sexualized violence.
- Other media and professional publications that featured Project Respect were Shaw TV and Current Health (a U.S publication for school students).

Community Partnerships - Victoria Native Friendship Centre and Her Way Home

Over the past four years, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre has been host to a WSAC counsellor one day per week, where we have offered individual and group sessions to urban aboriginal women. This outreach allows us to connect with a group of women who historically have not been well represented in our client population. Our counsellor can meet a woman literally 'where she is at' and act as a bridge for those who choose to access other services here on site at View St. Building on the success of the past partnerships, we are now looking for more opportunities to get out of our offices and into the community. In early 2010, Victoria anticipates the arrival of a new, multi-sectional service centre for prenatal families called Her Way Home. In addition to primary health care, this Centre will have many different community service providers on-site, such as addiction services and a WSAC counsellor for a half-day per week, further extending the accessibility of our services to women in Victoria.