

Annual Report 2011-2012

Women's Sexual Assault Centre



healing, education
& prevention

Contact Information:

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Business Line: (250) 383-5545

Crisis & Information Line: (250) 383-3232

24 hour Crisis Line service made possible through
partnership with the Vancouver Island Crisis Line

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Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Center



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REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In my fifth year as the Executive Director we will be celebrating our 30th year serving the Capital Regional District of British Columbia. This year we will not only be acknowledging the leaders, staff, volunteers and our community partners that have brought us to this point in time, but also the continuous support of our community of donors. We know that no matter how hard we work we would not be able to maintain our level of services to survivors of sexual assault without the ongoing support of our donors.

We began our work in December 1982 when a committed group of women applied to incorporate the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre Society. The Society, two paid staff and a group of trained volunteers, provided a 24 hour crisis line, accompaniment to hospital or police, and counselling for survivors of sexual assault.

Now in 2012, we have 18 paid staff and roughly 100 volunteers who provide award winning services. We are proud to partner with many community agencies including VIHA's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners; Crown Council; Municipal Police Departments and RCMP Detachments in the Greater Victoria Region; and Central Vancouver Island Crisis Line Society. We refer people on the basis of need to other community partners as well as work collaboratively to enhance services to our clients.

Healing, education and prevention have always been the goals that drive the society's work. Among our current services we offer:

Crisis & Information Line (250) 383-3232

SART – Sexual Assault Response Team

Short-term Crisis Counselling

Long-term Counselling

Victim Service Worker Support for family & friends

Youth Specific Counselling (ages 13-19)

Project Respect - Youth Prevention Program

(For detailed program descriptions please visit our website www.vwsac.com)

In thirty years we have emerged as a leader in treating sexualized violence through trauma informed practice. We learned that we can enhance and maintain best practices through collaboration and innovative practices. Our dedicated staff and volunteers work hard to develop the skills and expertise to offer top quality services, and our aim to educate and inform youth and the community is part of our important work to prevent sexual violence.

As always, we thank all of our funders and donors for their ongoing support. There is no possible way to thank each one – but you can be assured that each donation strengthens our ability to provide needed services. We continue in every way to value the gifts you provide to support those affected by sexualized violence - gifts of money, time, and needed items. Thank you for assisting us to make a difference in many lives and supporting our work in our community.

Sincerely

Makenna Rielly

Makenna Rielly
Executive Director



REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As we celebrate 30 years of WASC providing services to survivors of sexualized violence in Greater Victoria, we honour the many women who built the centre over the years: current and former staff and volunteers, community partners and the women who came to heal. You have all made the centre what it is today – compassionate, vibrant and responsive.

This past year has been a busy one! Probably the most ambitious project the Board took on was the exploring with Victoria Women's Transition House about working together that might generate new ways of creating efficiencies and effectiveness for both agencies. The talks soon became formal discussions involving a Negotiating Committee with Board representatives from each agency. The end result was the development of an Administrative Consolidation of the two agencies and in October 2011, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed. The term of the agreement goes until March 31, 2013 which allowed for 6 months of start-up time and a year of operations under the consolidation. Regular meetings of the Negotiation team have been taking place to monitor and evaluate the impact on the two agencies, with a consolidated year end evaluation taking place in December 2012. The evaluation will look at financial, social and educational impacts, as well as unexpected outcomes.

Board recruitment was also a priority during the latter part of this term. Due to the negotiations with the Victoria Women's Transition House, the WSAC had purposefully not recruited new Board members until there was certainty on the details of the partnership. In January, the Board along with the Coordinator of Volunteers, revised the volunteer recruitment procedure – to minimize the steps and create a more welcoming and inclusive process – and by May recruitment was in full swing. Our intention was to diversify board representation, ensuring a broader voice with respect to marginalized populations. The WSAC Board was successful in recruiting seven new Board members, who we look forward to presenting to you at the AGM.

No doubt the most engaging work this year has been exploring the potential of broadening services to explicitly serve members of the Transgender community. Consultations with several resource people, along with a number of staff/board trainings enabled us to collectively explore the tenets of anti-oppressive practice with a specific emphasis on ways that the transgender community is inadequately served on Vancouver Island with respect to sexualized violence. While some Transgender clients have been receiving services from the WSAC over the years, the creation of a policy signifies an explicit and intentional decision to be inclusive of the Transgender community. This work over the past year represents a tremendous effort by the staff and Board. This is still much work to do as we maintain our commitment to women identified clients whilst broadening services to a broader community. Further research and consultation will ensure integrity of the evolving policies and practices.

We conclude by acknowledging the Board members who resigned this year: Allison Beardsworth, Ann Evans Locker and Tyler Schaus. We thank you for all your commitment, your vision and hard work over these past few years.

Sincerely, Kim Brown (Treasurer), Heidi Exner & Sally Gose (Co-chairs), Yvonne Haist & Natasha de Klerk.

STAFF CHANGES

We want to recognize some amazing staff that left the agency this year and pay tribute for their contributions and dedication to WSAC. Stephanie Capyk, DCS Manager, served as a leader here for over 5 years and brought her professionalism and expertise as well as her gentle wisdom. We wish her the best in her new marriage and new babe who is on the way. We also said farewell to Tracy Lubick, Resource Development Manager, who after 12 years of successful fundraising campaigns that kept WSAC on its feet and wish her the best of luck with our sister agency Victoria Women's Transition House. Also we will miss Jen Cooper, STV Counsellor, who provided crisis and stopping the violence counselling, and counselling support at the Native Friendship Centre. We will miss her dedication to the people we serve and her contributions to work towards a more diverse work culture. We also bid farewell to our interns and staff Danielle Nelson, Vanessa Bailey, Rae Bundla, and Whitney Archer (thanks Whitney for your contributions to the crisis line and youth programs.) With a whole set of big shoes to fill then, we are happy to welcome new team members. Judith Pratt, DCS Manager, bring her counselling expertise and administration skills, as well as organization skills to enhance our polices and procedures. Gagan Leekha has joined our Resource Development Team with Lenore Kennedy as new Resource Development Manager. Together they bring WSAC forward in competing for grants, organizing events, and working with donors in meaningful way. We also welcome Sharon Smith, Kelly Sherwin and Linda Isarasakdi in administration who are all filling in for Constance Sheffield-Reith, Administrative coordinator, who is on maternity leave, and yes Constance is hard to replace! We welcomed back Lindsay Pomper, Volunteer Coordinator, from her trip abroad, we are happy to have her home.

NEWS FROM RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Victoria Foundation hosted the 75-Hour Challenge from November 15th to 18th. Out of the fifteen charities who participated, WSAC ranked 5th for total fundraised dollars. Combined, nineteen donors contributed \$9249, which allowed WSAC to receive an additional \$4914 from the Victoria Foundation's Challenge Fund. Through the 75-Hour Challenge, a total of \$14,163 was donated, almost doubling the endowment fund! Gifts to the endowment fund are held as investments for future years and anyone may give at any time (call the Victoria Foundation at 250-381-5532).



As part of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, four grade nine students from Brentwood College in Mill Bay visited WSAC for a tour and meeting to learn about services offered at the Centre. The students made several presentations at their school and were the winners of a \$5000 grant from the Toskan Casale Foundation that helped fund Project Respect's Social Action Summer Camp.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & GRANT PROVIDERS

♦Ministry of Justice - Stopping the Violence & Victim Services contracts ♦Province of British Columbia - Community Gaming Grant – Project Respect & Youth-Focused Counselor ♦Provincial Employees Community Services Fund – Crisis & Information Line, Information Meetings, Workshops for Supporters ♦RBC Foundation – Project Respect ♦Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program – Office Improvement ♦United Way of Greater Victoria – Project Respect & Prevention Educators Alliance ♦Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Brentwood College School via Toskan Casale Foundation – Project Respect Social Action Summer Camp ♦Zonta Club – Sexual Assault Response Team transportation costs

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE/VICTIMS OF CRIME

Given 30 years of direct client service, this past year offers time for reflection on the frontline work of WSAC and the societal norms around sexual assault. It is important to recognize that our services support victims of crime. When we talk about survivors of sexual assault or historical child sexual abuse what comes to the forefront of the average person's mind? It may be that people know these acts perpetrated upon survivors are unacceptable or it may be that people still hold to stereotypes about women needing to be more careful about how they dress. Does the average Canadian really know that what we are talking about is actually criminal behaviour and is a Criminal Code offense?

Earlier in 2011-12, there were many media queries received by WSAC about stranger assaults in Victoria. Media stories pointed to the still prevalent perception that survivors of sexual assault are somehow responsible for this act of violence against them. Public events such as the Canadian SlutWalk and WSAC's Walk a Mile engaged communities in public dialogue about how stereotypes continue, and emphasize the need for communities to take a role in changing this norm. WSAC's work on the frontlines continues to connect survivors to the knowledge that they are not to blame, and through this knowledge individual survivors and their supporters become part of that larger body of dialogue for social change.

Perhaps change is coming. When we look at the statistics over the past three years (see Direct Clients Services Summary), sexual assaults appear to be declining, a trend also occurring in the lower mainland. However, this may not be an accurate reflection of fewer sexual assaults but, rather, an indication that of the one in three women who experience sexual assault in Canada, perhaps it is victim blaming that prevents survivors from coming forward. Still, survivors need to be supported through WSAC services, community partners, police and medical partners, and through the generous support of funders who continue to commit resources to the cause of assisting survivors of sexual crimes.

When cases are prosecuted, a team of professionals work in partnership including WSAC, Police/RCMP detachments, the Forensic Nurse Examiners' program at the Victoria General Hospital and Crown Counsel. Through this partnership, known as Team Victoria, a Sexual Assault Response Team continues to provide a level of specialized service to survivors of sexual assault. In addition, this year we co-facilitated a training on community response at the *Ending Violence Association of B.C.*'s annual conference where we offered our expertise to frontline anti-violence workers from across BC. Most importantly, special recognition must also go forward to survivors for their courage and willingness to give voice to their experiences.

2011-2012 WSAC STAFF

Makenna Rielly, Executive Director

Lorinda Allix, Whitney Archer, Vanessa Bailey, Rae Bandia, David Boffa, Mareena Buchanan, Stephanie Capyk, Catherine Charton, Samantha Claver, Brianna Cook-Coates, Jennifer Cooper, Tracey Coulter, Katy Craig de Boer, Catherine Day, Kate Fleming, Lara Graves, Paulina Hakkarainen, Amanda Lynn Halldorsen, Kim Hamilton, Erin Harvey, Quetzto Herejk, Linda Jennings, Jasmine Kambo, Lenore Kennedy, Nadia Khan, Gagan Leekha, Elicia Louisele, Tracy Lubick, Jude Marleau, Tyler Morden, Paula Murphy, Danielle Nelson, Lindsay Nicholson, Gordon O'Connor, Flora Pagan, Barb Peck, Judith Prat, Savannah Peekeekoot, Lindsay Pomper, Yuko Sakima, Connie Sheffield-Reith, Jen Spiistead, Sharon Stewart, Kelsey Strudwick, Vince Tertappen, Robyn Tomaz, Karen Wickham and Melissa York.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES SUMMARY

WSAC continues to operate a broad spectrum of programs and services. We are able to provide 24/7 coverage for sexual assault with our **Crisis and Information Line, Sexual Assault Response Team** (SART) volunteers, and after hours support from the Vancouver Island Crisis Line. Through our **Victim Services Program** we assist survivors as they navigate the justice system, providing police and court accompaniments and assisting with forms and updates. In the **Healing Program** immediate emotional support is provided by our **Crisis Support Workers** and longer-term counselling is available from our **Stopping the Violence Counsellors**. These programs and services are made possible through funding from: The Ministry of Justice, PECSF, and our generous donors. We thank our staff, volunteers and funding partners for their contributions toward much needed change in our society and in recognizing the needs and rights of survivors of sexualized violence.

We've seen a reduction in crisis calls and SARTs over the last three years, but need for counselling, crisis support and victim services remains strong.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES ANNUAL SERVICE SUMMARY

2011/12 2010/11 2009/10			
Crisis and Information Line Calls	917	1329	1506
SART Responses	80	115	113
Victim Services Program Direct Client Contacts	738	739	632
Crisis Support Sessions	1026	1202	1031
Stopping the Violence Counselling Sessions	1947	1866	1531
Group Support (Information Sessions & Therapy)/ Number of Participants	113/443	90/	96/

TRIATHLON OF COMPASSION:

160 athletes participated in the 2012 Triathlon of Compassion and 45 people raised \$17,110 in pledges! Special thanks to Race Director, Thalia Castillo, for her leadership and to the Royal Canadian Navy for hosting the event. Sponsorship from Fort Street Cycle, Cameron Law, Front Runners, Peninsula Co-Op, and Breadstuffs Bakery made the event possible and publicity from media sponsors such as CTV and CFX 1070 helped fill the field.



Biane, Barb, & Cheryl

WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES 2012



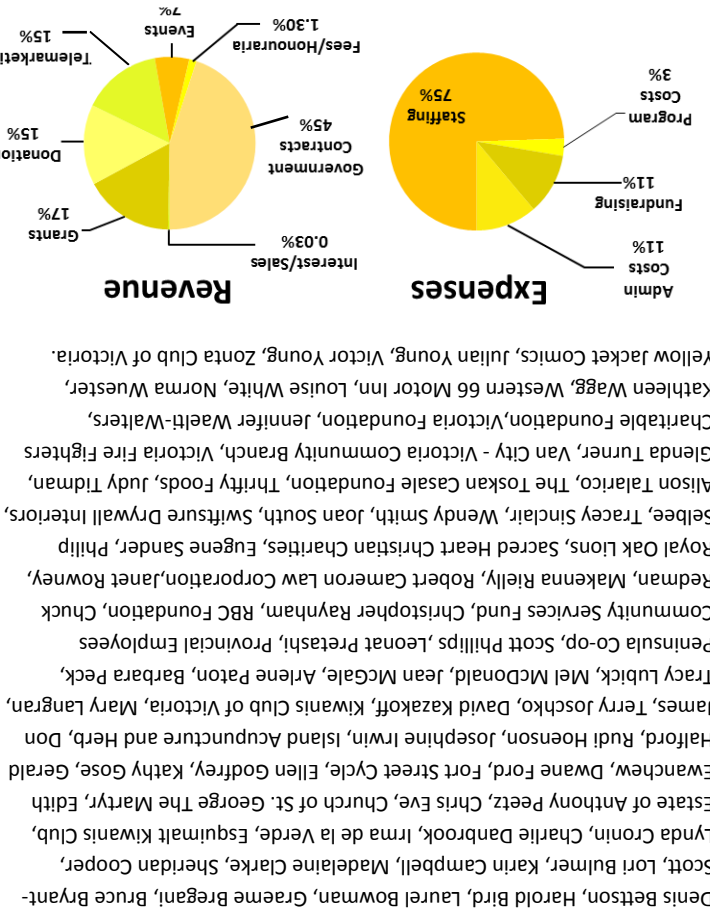
Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Vanity, our volunteer organizing committee and ambassadors, and everyone that participated and supported our 6th annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® on May 17th, 2012. We were blessed with sunshine, a very warm welcome from Angie Thomas and his family from the Esquimalt Nation, over 600 attendees, almost \$30,000 in donations, great activities from our prevention educators with Project Respect, and moving speeches from Quetzto Herejk and Allan Wade. This year's top individual fund-raisers were: Mike Kroeger, Rome Carot and Paul Huxtable; and top teams were: Vanity, Royal Roads University's A Few Good Men, and CFUV's Stumbling Stiletos.

PREVENTION TEAM

In the summer of 2011, we hired our first youth summer staff through a partnership with the Students Commission of Canada and funding from the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs program. Seventeen year old Samantha Claver was hired into this position as the Youth Community Developer. Sam's work was integral to the development of the new format for Project Respect's youth-led social action program. Based on her work with us and with Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre, Sam was awarded the BC Representative of Children and Youth's Award of Excellence for Youth Leadership. Project Respect's success over the past year is due to its incredible facilitators and youth leaders, who bring amazing skill, knowledge and energy to engaging the community in difficult discussions about sexuality and violence. Our facilitation team includes: Elicia Louisele (Prevention Coordinator), Quetzto Herejk (Prevention Educator), Kelsey Strudwick (Auxiliary Facilitator), Gordon O'Connor (auxiliary facilitator), Whitney Archer (auxiliary facilitator), and Tyler Morden (auxiliary facilitator). Many youth were involved in creating our various social action projects this year. Our core team of awesome youth leaders kept the momentum of the projects going throughout the year: Rowan Hébert, Paloma Pontt, Eunice Rasmussen, Genevieve Nevin, Ian Leslie, and Becky Lambert.

THANKS TO DONORS

For the past thirty years WSAC has been sustained by the generous financial support of community members. Last year donations accounted for 55% of WSAC's operating budget, allowing for a breadth and depth of services un-obtainable with government funding alone. Maintaining quality services for survivors of sexualized violence is truly a collective effort. Thanks to all those who have given their time and dollars this year. We extend special recognition to the following:



PROJECT RESPECT – PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Project Respect works to prevent sexualized violence among youth aged 12-19 by providing safe and skillfully facilitated spaces for young people to begin to think critically about, act to resist, and create positive alternatives to the harmful (yet normalized) messages they receive about gender, relationships, sexuality, and violence. Programming addresses individual, relationship, and societal level influences by focusing on knowledge change, skill-building, attitude change, and social change. Project Respect reached 1025 youth during the 2011/12 school year through: 82 workshops in schools and community-based organizations; multiple youth-led social action projects; and, key community events.

This year, Project Respect adapted its high school curricula to deliver interactive workshops to more middle school students than in previous years. We worked with three middle schools (St. Michael's University School, Artbus Middle School, and Bayside Middle School) to provide sexualized violence prevention education to most, if not all, grade 8 students in each of these schools. These workshops were highly successful from the perspectives of teachers, counselors, students, and Project Respect facilitators. Additionally, Project Respect provided workshops to: high schools in school districts 61, 62, and 63; alternative education programs serving marginalized youth; community-based youth groups; Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre's Youth Strides camp; and more.

YOUTH-LED SOCIAL ACTION

In the summer of 2011, Project Respect restructured its youth leadership program. Prior to that time, the Respect Revolution Campaign was run with a group of youth from one school each year and consisted of a multi-week training program followed by a school-based action designed and delivered by the youth. The new format is designed to engage youth from across Victoria in exploring how and why violence happens in our community and creating community-based social actions to address this violence. The first phase of this new format began in July 2011 and saw the delivery of multiple youth-led social actions throughout the subsequent year. The Project Respect youth team produced a short film, called The Imperfection Project, exploring the silencing of young women's experiences of sexuality and violence. They also created the Revolution Letters Project as part of the Girls Action Foundation National Day of Action on February 14. This project engaged community members in writing more than 200 alternative love letters that explored love as social justice. 2000 copies of the letters were then hidden all over the city for people to find and enjoy. You can see the letters on the project blog: <http://revolutionletters.wordpress.com/>. This project was covered by the Times Colonist and Monday Magazine. Additionally, the Project Respect youth team created a bystander intervention comic to assist community members in standing up against homophobia and transphobia. The team also developed and facilitated education activities for participants of WSAC's annual Walk-a-Mile in Her Shoes event.



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To celebrate all of these amazing projects, we had a very successful social action showcase at soisjce café in June 2011, which included the launch of the youth team's film. At the showcase, the youth team and Project Respect facilitators performed a collectively written spoken word piece, screened The Imperfection Project, answered questions from the audience, and the youth facilitated a world café to engage the community in discussions about gender-based violence prevention. It was an evening of building transformative community connections – truly awesome!