Triathlon of Compassion Raises $14,620

We welcomed 202 athletes and over 100 volunteers to the Triathlon of Compassion at CFB Esquimalt in July.

A special thank you to Jules Wilson, first-time participant from Vancouver, for being the top fundraiser at $3,015. Jules was supported by his employer, Mercer Human Resource Consulting, who matched every donation that he raised.

Warmest thanks to George Ferdinands, 80-year-old former athlete and WSAC supporter, who spent the duration of the race reclining in a donated La-Z-Boy and raised over $1,000 for his efforts. The newly added Project Respect Youth Race (for ages 10 to 15) prompted a group of phenomenal young athletes called Kelly’s Kids to raise over $1,300 and they brought a wonderful level of energy and enthusiasm to the day.

This event could not take place without the amazing talents of a very special organizing committee. Thank you to Fort Street Cycle and Frontrunners for all that you do to make this event a success. And a special thank you to Runners of Compassion for your many hours of dedication and hard work and your very generous $2,000 donation.

Join us for the 4th Annual Triathlon of Compassion on Sunday July 15, 2007!

Upcoming Events

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes – Saturday, April 28, 2007

There is an old saying, “You can’t really understand another person’s experience until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” Walk a Mile in Her Shoes asks men to literally walk one mile in women’s high-heeled shoes. It’s not easy (figuratively or in reality) but it’s fun and gets the community to talk about something that’s really difficult to talk about: gender relations and sexualized violence.

Volunteers are needed to help organize the event. Please contact Tracy at 383-5545 or tracyl@vwsac.com for information on how you can be a part of rallying the community to take action to prevent sexualized violence. The benefits of everyone working together are endless!

Thank You for Your Support

Belmont Community Connections and St. Michaels University School – Victoria Foundation’s Students Who Care – Youth in Philanthropy Program, Canadian Women’s Foundation, Centre for Sustainability, City of Victoria, Fort Street Cycle, Frontrunners, GiveMeaning Foundation, La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries, Ministry of Community Services, Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Safety, Jeff Patrick, Mary and Gerald Patterson, Province of British Columbia, Provincial Employees’ Community Services Fund, Royal Canadian Legion-Trafalgar/Pro Patria Branch 292, Runners of Compassion, Saanich Fire Fighters Charitable Foundation, United Way of Greater Victoria, UVic’s presentation of “The Vagina Monologues”, Victoria Foundation, and the Victoria Hope Society.

The Women’s Sexual Assault Centre is proud to have a diversified fundraising base. We thank you for being one of the many loyal individuals, businesses, service organizations and foundations that support us. Building and maintaining donor relationships is key to the foundation and future of our organization. Through newsletters and our annual report, we are committed to keeping you informed while keeping costs to a minimum. When you choose to donate directly to us, you are also helping to minimize our fundraising expenses.

Falling Light into a World of Darkness 25 Years of Compassion

We are very pleased to invite you to join us in commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Centre at an event in June 2007. Our new website, partially funded by a grant from the Victoria Foundation, will be unveiled and we will be welcoming many of our long-time supporters and partners in the community. Date and location will be announced soon. We hope to see you there!

WSAC Board of Directors

Jan Trainor, Chair
Kimberly Brown
Jen Cooper
Emily Ellingsen
Mary Heppner
Ingrid Kirk
Ilka Thiessen
Shelley Spring
Sandy McLellan, Executive Director

Thank you for your support and dedication. If you have any requests or questions, please contact Tracy Lubick, Development Officer, at 383-5545 or tracyl@vwsac.com.

**Vital Services for Young Women**

We continue to see a steady increase in the number of young women (ages 13-19) accessing services at the Centre. In fact, 40% of the recent sexual assault survivors that we supported were in this age group and they comprise 10% of our long-term counselling clients. Research shows that the provision of information and support from a qualified trauma counsellor significantly reduces the likelihood of post traumatic stress symptoms and facilitates the healing process.

We feel the urgency to provide effective, accessible service early in young women’s lives and avoid the long-term, devastating effects of sexualized violence. Funding and resources are needed in order for us to expand our outreach to young women and to provide appropriate services that are specifically designed for them. Please consider increasing your support so that together we may bring light into a young woman’s world sooner rather than later.

Women’s Sexual Assault Centre

healing, education & prevention

**FALL 2006**

**It is our Mission**

To support, empower and advocate for women who are survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse; and to work towards the prevention of sexualized violence against women.

**Jan and Jules**

Jan and Jules

**Thank you WSAC**

(‘The woman who wrote this letter is now a successful artist and designer.)

**Vital Services for Young Women**

We continue to see a steady increase in the number of young women (ages 13-19) accessing services at the Centre. In fact, 40% of the recent sexual assault survivors that we supported were in this age group and they comprise 10% of our long-term counselling clients. Research shows that the provision of information and support from a qualified trauma counsellor significantly reduces the likelihood of post traumatic stress symptoms and facilitates the healing process.

We feel the urgency to provide effective, accessible service early in young women’s lives and avoid the long-term, devastating effects of sexualized violence. Funding and resources are needed in order for us to expand our outreach to young women and to provide appropriate services that are specifically designed for them. Please consider increasing your support so that together we may bring light into a young woman’s world sooner rather than later.
Project Respect

Engaging Youth in Victoria to Educate their Peers

Eleven students from Lambrick Park and Mt. Douglas Secondary Schools dedicated over 320 hours of their time to participate in the Respect Revolution Campaign this year. After eight weeks of training on issues related to sexualized violence, the youth group created innovative and interactive presentations which were delivered to over 300 of their peers. Designed to raise awareness, these presentations were well-received and opened up discussion around an issue which is often not talked about. In recognition of their contributions to the community, the Respect Revolutionaries received a Solicitor General Crime Prevention and Community Safety Award in September.

Working with Young Men

Project Respect’s Young Men’s Program has received special recognition by being asked to partner with the Boys and Girls Club and Pacific Centre to deliver a specialized program for young men in the West Shore. This program combines Adventure Based Learning with the young men’s curriculum that was developed two years ago for Project Respect. The program will provide young men an opportunity to learn about traditional masculinity, its relationship to sexualized violence, its impact on them as young men and also experience the excitement of rock climbing, ropes courses and other outdoor activities. This is an exciting opportunity for Project Respect to work in partnership with other agencies as well as develop a connection with the West Shore community.

Seeking Safety Program Provides Support for Survivors Struggling with Substance Use

In collaboration with Vancouver Island Mental Health and Addictions, the Centre is facilitating a group for women who are experiencing post-traumatic stress reactions and struggling with substance use. The 16-week Seeking Safety program welcomed nine survivors at the end of September and will be offered again starting in January. The program’s focus is on learning about the connections between trauma symptoms and substance use, and developing skills to help cope and find alternatives to substance use. This program was made possible by community donations and a grant from the Victoria Hope Society.

“A collaborative and Effective Response to Sexual Assault

The Women’s Sexual Assault Centre, in collaboration with Victoria, Saanich and Oak Bay Police departments, West Shore RCMP, Ministry of Attorney General and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, organized a two day training forum on responding to sexual assault. Approximately 100 police officers, crown counsel, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, victim services workers and counsellors attended the two day training forum. The training offered a wide range of speakers presenting on the elements of a coordinated and collaborative response to sexual assault. Presentation topics included: impact on the Survivor, Investigative Procedures, Collection of Forensic Evidence, Drug-facilitated Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault Response Team Protocol and What Makes a Successful Court Case.

This initiative was supported by the Making a Difference Project, Canada (www.evawinifred.org/MADCanada), with financial assistance from the Donner Foundation.

Volunteers and Essential Service

Is it true that volunteers at an agency can supply essential services? That an agency can rely so completely on unpaid personnel for vital work, including direct client programs, that without those volunteers, the services would disappear or be seriously reduced? Absolutely! Here at WSAC, we couldn’t provide the services we do without the fundamental support of women and men who believe whole-heartedly in our mission. These individuals offer their time and considerable skills, enriching the centre and upholding our values. In the last year, we have had many people ask what they could do to help, either as part of the Sexual Assault Response Team, as office volunteers, helping with the Triathlon of Compassion, or as part of our Board. Our volunteers are essential. And we thank them for their commitment.

Welcome Christine Clark! Our newest member of Project Respect

Project Respect – Empowering the Youth of Bella Coola

Bella Coola, an isolated coastal community in northern BC, saw the need for an innovative program that would engage its youth on issues of gender-based violence and sexuality. When they heard about Project Respect, they knew that they had found the answer. Thanks to your generous donations and a grant from the Canadian Women’s Foundation, Project Respect has been empowering a group of sixteen youth in Bella Coola with skills and knowledge for preventing sexualized violence and developing healthy relationships. After many hours of travel and several weeks of training, Project Respect will leave Bella Coola with a trained core of youth workers, teachers and youth who will be able to share what they’ve learned with their peers long after we’ve gone. What an amazing legacy for Project Respect to leave behind!

A Collaborative and Effective Response to Sexual Assault

The Centre is facilitating a group for women who are experiencing post-traumatic stress reactions and struggling with substance use. The 16-week Seeking Safety program welcomed nine survivors at the end of September and will be offered again starting in January. The program’s focus is on learning about the connections between trauma symptoms and substance use, and developing skills to help cope and find alternatives to substance use. This program was made possible by community donations and a grant from the Victoria Hope Society.

“We wish to acknowledge the significant benefits that the Seeking Safety program has had in helping a marginalized population of young women reduce their feelings of isolation and stigma and improve their ability to address safety and manage symptoms.” Susie Girling, Program Coordinator, Specialized Youth Detox, and Chris Ford, Liaison Worker, Youth Empowerment Society

Direct Client Services

In collaboration with Vancouver Island Mental Health and Addictions, the Centre is facilitating a group for women who are experiencing post-traumatic stress reactions and struggling with substance use. The 16-week Seeking Safety program welcomed nine survivors at the end of September and will be offered again starting in January. The program’s focus is on learning about the connections between trauma symptoms and substance use, and developing skills to help cope and find alternatives to substance use. This program was made possible by community donations and a grant from the Victoria Hope Society.