The Centre was proud to commemorate their 25th anniversary by partnering with over 20 Victoria businesses on October 25th to raise awareness around the issue of sexualized violence. Drawing attention to the fact that 1 in 3 women will experience sexualized violence, businesses displayed posters and distributed information cards and pins which were designed to promote conversation and encourage community support. The day of awareness concluded with a performance by Anna Camilleri at the Metro Studio, entitled, “Sounds Siren Red.” Thank you to everyone who came out to support the Centre and to all of the businesses for their generous sponsorship.

Women’s Sexual Assault Centre

healing, education & prevention

FALL 2007

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.

Upcoming Events

Triathlon of Compassion - Sunday, July 13, 2008

Thanks to a generous donation of $2,000 from Runners of Compassion, the Triathlon raised $21,600 this year and welcomed a record number of participants. Jessica Morris was the top fundraiser bringing in an amazing $3,100 and repeat top fundraisers from last year included WSAC friend, Jules Wilson ($2,105) and the phenomenal young athletes known as Kelly’s Kids ($1,520). With the continued support of Fort St. Cycle, Frontrunners and Runners of Compassion, we look forward to seeing you at CFB Esquimalt again in 2008.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes - Saturday, May 3, 2008

Plans are underway for the 2nd annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event in 2008. Building on the success of this year’s event (we had over 200 participants and raised over $17,000), we look forward to welcoming men of all ages to literally walk one mile in women’s shoes to raise awareness and funds for the Centre. Start looking now for that special pair of shoes and keep your eye on the website at http://walk-a-mile-in-her-shoes.blogspot.com for further details.

Thank You for Your Support


Fundraising

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, services, 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.

Did you know? Due to the elimination of capital gains on publicly traded securities, you can now easily donate gifts of stocks, bonds and mutual funds to the Centre and enjoy immediate tax savings. Contact Tracy Lubick at 383-5545 or tracy@vwsac.com.

Wish List

Gifts from the community enable us to provide a calm, relaxing and supportive atmosphere for our clients. We welcome donations of any of the following items: beeswax candles (tealights or votives), journals, art supplies, nutritional snacks, shoe boxes (for art projects), and Kleenex. Please visit our website at www.vwsac.com to see a complete list.

Women’s Sexual Assault Centre

941 Pandora Ave. Victoria, BC, V8V 3P4
Business Line: 383-5545 - Crisis & Information Line: 383-3232
Visit our website at www.vwsac.com

Project Respect was one of the most amazing and empowering experiences of my life. Before the Project Respect group, I had been sexually assaulted several times and afraid to come forward. No one knew, I thought it was my fault. With the help of Susan and several other leaders, I learned to stand up for myself and what I believe in.

I am no longer the girl that walks to the side, with her eyes downcast, afraid to be seen. I am proud that I have grown and become a stronger person. I have evolved to a new, different person, everyone I know says so; and they are happy for me and for me to see this change in me. I know I have Project Respect and their incredible team to thank for this.

One of the best things about this group is that it is geared towards youth, focusing on how to connect with them, not just “teach” what they believe needs to be learned. This was a journey with 12 best friends that I hadn’t met yet, all of whom I had never interacted with before, all with whom I still keep in touch. We not only learned about the importance of consent and respect, we had fun and laughed along the way.

The things that I have learned I have kept with me and pass along to my friends. It is easy to become involved with the group and stay interested. There are always new things to learn and people to meet. This group changed my life and helped me in ways no one else has ever been able to, for this I thank them, and hope that they are always around.

Because everyone needs help sometimes.

(Progress Report is a prevention education program focused on teens ages 14 to 18.)

WSAC has a New, Information-filled Website!

WWW.VWSAC.COM

Information Includes:
• WSAC Services - and how to contact us
• Volunteer opportunities
• Ways to give
• Funding
• Project Respect
And much more...

We are pleased to launch this new website thanks to the generous support of the Victoria Foundation - Woodsome, Hugh & Helen Mogensen, and Community Funds.
The Respect Revolution Campaign (RRC) is a youth capacity building program that fosters youth-for-youth violence prevention activities. Youth participate in 10 weeks of training, which prepares them to plan and carry out prevention activities in their school. This will be the third year Project Respect will be implementing the RRC. To date, 4 youth groups in cooperation with 6 schools throughout BC have been trained. Each school has delivered activities to raise awareness about sexual assault and sexualized violence in their school or community. Activities have included: workshops, informative posters, and art pieces. Through their innovative activities, RRC youth have created a new awareness around the issue of sexualized violence throughout BC.

Past school partners with Project Respect include: Lambrick Park Secondary School, Mt. Doug Secondary School, Spectrum Community School, Acwsalcta School & Sir Alexander McKenzie Secondary School (Bella Coola), and Oak Bay High School. Each one of the 45 young people who have participated in this training has been an inspiration in their strength and dedication to creating a society free of violence.

Youth Workshops
Project Respect offers workshops to schools and community groups in Victoria and BC. These workshops not only raise awareness about the issue of sexual assault but also reach out to survivors who might have not yet reached out for support. The workshops are adapted to the specific needs and ages of each group but always carry a clear message of a person’s right to respect and to stand up for their personal boundaries. Groups that the project has reached include community girls groups, Victoria Youth Custody Centre, Artemis Girls Place, S.E.X.Y. Youth Group, youth leadership groups and peer counselling groups. The workshops are delivered in a fun, engaging and interactive manner, allowing an honest dialogue about this issue to take place.

Group Work with Clients of WSAC
How do we begin to help our clients heal from the effects of sexualized violence? The importance of ‘physical’ safety is pretty obvious, but how to deal with the effects of sexualized violence is a lot more challenging. In group counselling at WSAC we introduce a concept with a focus on information around the effects trauma on the nervous system, and the development of skills to help women increase their capacity to cope with difficult feelings. We all know we wouldn’t dream of learning to drive by just waking up one day and getting in and stepping on the gas. First, we need to know how it works, and where the brakes are!

In our first two group programs, “Skills for Healing” and “Building Strengths”, we teach specific skills for grounding and containment, techniques for distancing and breathing, and ways of understanding symptoms and triggers. Volunteers tell us they feel a tremendous sense of relief knowing that what they are teaching is in fact normal. (“You mean I’m not crazy?”) Whether she intends to continue doing group sessions, or just wishes to do individual counselling, a woman can feel emotions without feeling overwhelmed by some skills to use.

Volunteers
Here at WSAC, we couldn’t provide the services we do without the fundamental support of 80+ volunteers. These individuals offer their time and considerable skills to contribute as part of the Sexual Assault Response Team, as office volunteers, helping with the Triathlon of Compassion and Walk-A-Mile-In-Her-Shoes, and as part of our Board of Directors. We are always looking for new individuals to volunteer with the Centre. If you are interested in volunteering or would like information, please contact Lindsay Pomper at 383-5545 or volunteer@vwsac.com.

Client Voices Quilt
The Client Voices Quilt was started in 2002 as part of our 20th anniversary celebration. We asked our clients to let us know what their experiences at WSAC had been like and how they had been affected by their time here. Over the last five years messages of hope, healing, and appreciation have accumulated on what began as a plain white sheet with some stars tacked on. The final transformation to a beautiful quilt came about this year when the Cowichan Valley Heritage Quilting group generously agreed to help us complete our project for our 25th anniversary. The loving attention that was so clearly put into this work greatly honours the women whose voices grace our quilt, and in fact, all women whose lives have been affected by sexual violence. If upon reading these messages of inspiration, you find a small tear welling up, well, you wouldn’t be the first.

Sharing our Knowledge!
Drawing on the experience gained while developing a group for women who have experienced trauma and substance use (based on the Seeking Safety model by Lisa Najavits), Centre staff Sally Gose and Linda Jennings wrote a chapter for the recently published Highs &Lows: Canadian Perspectives on Mental Health and Substance Use, edited by Nancy Poole and Lorraine Greaves. This book is available through the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at www.camh.net.