WE’RE MOVING!!!

The Victoria Women’s Sexual Assault Centre Announces
Purchase of New Space

After over 30 years of renting offices, the Women’s Sexual Assault Centre has secured a down payment to finally purchase a new space for our counselling and prevention services; thanks to the generous donors who left bequests to our society. The Centre’s new home will be in the same office building as the Victoria Women’s Transition House (VWTH) Community Office. The Victoria Women’s Sexual Assault Centre and the Victoria Women’s Transition House are currently experimenting with an administrative consolidation, which resulted in administrative cost savings for both agencies last year. Further cost savings are anticipated now that both WSAC and VWTH will operate out of the same office building.

WSAC moves from our current address at 620 View Street on August 28th, 29th and 30th, and will be closed for business on those days (the crisis and information line and the Sexual Assault Response Team will remain accessible). The Centre will re-open on September 3rd at the new location, #201 – 3060 Cedar Hill Road.

A sincere thank you to all our donors – many of you have such a strong tie to this agency and act on that commitment so generously each year.

Makenna Rielly
Executive Director

The Vancouver Foundation awarded WSAC a $120,000 grant ($40,000 over three years) to become trans* accessible, and create training and resource materials to share both locally and nationally.

“WSAC has been providing services for survivors of sexualized violence for thirty years and has been informally serving the transgender community for the past decade. After constructive feedback from the community, our staff and board collectively made the decision to seriously evaluate the accessibility of our services to the trans* community,” says Makenna Rielly, Executive Director. “We recognize that trans* people are among the most marginalized and experience high levels of violence; 64% experience sexualized violence in their lifetime.”

Trans* survivors of sexualized violence have long been excluded from traditional women and men only services. The goals of the project are to decrease the negative impacts of trauma for trans* survivors of sexualized violence by providing accessible, gender-inclusive services and support, and to incite a community wide shift to make all services for victims of violence trans* inclusive.

The project will include community consultation, a re-branding process, the development and implementation of a promotion and communications plan, and community education. We want trans* survivors to feel supported in their healing and have access to services, but more than anything the purpose of this project is to increase understanding and acceptance of *trans people and decrease transphobia in our community. We sincerely wish to increase the sense of safety and belonging for trans* and gender variant people.

COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION:

Our violence prevention education programming expanded this year to reach adults in workplaces and the wider community – with a particular aim to engage more men in violence prevention.

Thanks to a grant from the Victoria Foundation we offered violence prevention training for community groups and businesses including Vancity, Discovery Coffee, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, OUR Ecovillage as well as others others. The training is based on Project Respect’s award-winning curriculum and explores the root causes of sexualized violence and what we can do as individuals to prevent it.

WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES 2013: A huge thank you to our returning presenting sponsor, Vancity, our volunteer organizing committee, and everyone that participated and supported our 7th annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® on May 26th, 2013. Over 400 people came together for this event and together we raised $22,000 in donations for our services for survivors of sexual assault. The Project Respect team, along with UVic’s anti-violence project did an excellent job engaging the audience in arts-based activities focused on violence prevention and this year, we had 3 very inspiring speakers join us on stage: Jeremy Loveday, Victoria Slam Poet, Janet Rogers, Victoria Poet Laureate; and Paul Lacerte, Founder of the Moosehide Campaign.

TRIATHLON OF COMPASSION: The 2013 Triathlon of Compassion took place on June 30th; 131 athletes raised a combined total of $23,493! Special thanks to everyone who raced, raise pledges, or made a donation. Thanks also to Rob Dibden of Human Powered Racing Events whose efforts and organizational skills as Race Director were paramount to Tri of Compassion success.

JACKSON KATZ: With the support of Vancity and anti-violence project, we invited educator, author, and leader in engaging men in gender-violence prevention, Jackson Katz to come to Victoria for three community events. We held a Public Talk, a Men’s Leadership Breakfast, and a Training for prevention educators and in total engaged over 500 people. Through a post-event survey, many people told us that they had a better understanding of how violence is embedded in language, media and societal norms and how men can play an important leadership role in preventing violence in our communities.