

Annual Report 2013-2014 Victoria Sexual Assault Centre



healing, education
& prevention

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Victoria Sexual Assault Center



www.yesmeansyes.com

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Amazing changes occurred at our Centre this year! While we continue our important work within the community to deal with trauma as a result of sexualized violence, we also continue to work on being more inclusive in our practice and persist to address funding pressures.

We officially changed our name to Victoria Sexual Assault Centre to reflect that we serve all women and trans* survivors; and men for emergency services. I know we have relayed this information in a variety of ways, but it remains a priority of our work to serve marginalized people who may have not received needed services. We are committed to reviewing our values individually and as a team, and working toward an anti-oppressive practice. We are making important changes to become more inclusive.

Receiving donor bequests in the 2012/2013 fiscal year allowed for planning and transformational growth. We continue our savings from our administrative consolidation in partnership with the Victoria Women's Transition House, which enables us to pursue more cost saving measures and reduce our overhead costs. Additionally, VSAC was able to purchase an office suite for our counselling, prevention education, and administrative services in the same building as the Victoria Women's Transition House Community Office, which will allow us to save on expenditures in our current overhead costs. We are now settled into our suite and encourage donors and community supporters to come by for a tour. The cost saving is a good return on our investment, and staff volunteers and clients are happy to not have to relocate every five years.

In closing I want to acknowledge our donors' support whether they be gifts of time, goods, and or money. Many have such strong ties to this agency and act on that commitment so generously each year. Thank you for all of your support of VSAC and showing that the community cares about preventing sexualized violence and supporting those traumatized by sexualized violence.

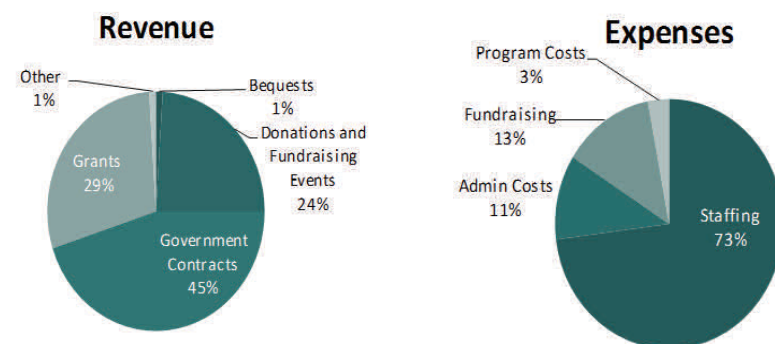
Makenna Rielly, MA
Executive Director

2013 - 2014 VICTORIA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE STAFF

Makenna Rielly, Executive Director

Lorinda Allix, Elinor Bazar, Kelly Blank, Catherine Charlton, Tracey Coulter, Mathew Davydiuk, Catherine Day, Alex Filippelli, Kate Fleming, Heidi Gayleard, Lara Graves, Amanda Lynn Halldorson, Erin Harvey, Quetzo Herejk, Linda Isarasakdi, Georgie Jackson, Linda Jennings, Leslie Jensen, Lenore Kennedy, Nadia Khan, Sage LaCerte, Gagan Leekha, Katrina Lim, Elicia Loiselle, Alyx MacAdams, Eunice Malchuk, Dean Mang-Wooley, Jude Marleau, Paula Murphy, Flora Pagan, Barb Peck, Judith Prat, Lindsay Pomper, Paloma Ponti, Kelly Sherwin, Cici Shi, Sharon Stewart, Kingsley Strudwick, Kara Taylor, Robyn Tomaz, Karen Wickham, Melissa York.

2013—2014 EXPENSES/REVENUE BREAKDOWN



REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Another year has passed in the life of VSAC, and – as always – there are many exciting changes to report!

Probably the biggest piece of work the board undertook in the last year was navigating big changes to our board – including the resignation of some key members, the voting in of a new co-chair, and the recruitment of new members.

First, we wish to acknowledge the resignation of some important members of our board: Emily Arthur and Elizabeth Holland, who brought such great passion and experience to many efforts at the centre. As well, we wish to offer deep gratitude to two very special, long-time members of the board who left us this past year: Sally Gose and Yvonne Haist. These incredible people have been part of VSAC for many years, and have helped to guide VSAC through much challenge and change. They leave incredible legacies of unparalleled commitment, leadership and support, and will be dearly missed.

With Sally's resignation was the need to vote in a new co-chair – Sean Dhillon. Sean has served on the board through the recent and very fast-paced, work-packed, and challenging time of our agency move, administrative consolidation, and trans* inclusion beginnings, so was ready and excited to be voted in to help lead the board. Congratulations, Sean, and welcome to the position of Co-Chair!

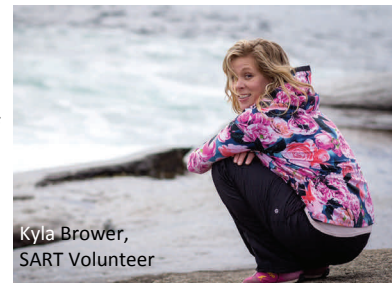
Knowing we had some resignations coming, the board wanted to be pro-active in our approach, while also wanting to update and improve our recruitment, interview and training process for new members coming in. We worked with VSAC staff (special thanks to Lindsay Pomper, Volunteer Co-ordinator "extraordinaire" and Makenna Rielly, VSAC's esteemed leader) to update our recruitment practices, ensuring there was a wider reach than before to invite people to our board. We also offered more information nights for interested individuals to learn more before they applied. We extended our interview process to allow for more dialogue between interested folks and our staff and board, to help ensure the best fit between our agency and potential new board members. Finally, we planned to host an orientation night to help bring new members up to speed on the work they will engage in, and to help build a sense of team with more senior board members from the start. This resulted in the largest and most skilled group of applicants we have ever seen! The decisions to select only a few were very tough, but we are proud to announce the newest members to the VSAC board: Jean FERENCE, Nat Johnstone, Sinan Soykut, Gulrose Jiwani, and Lisa Jozsa.

In other work, we continued our support for awareness- and fundraising events for the centre, including Walk a Mile, the Triathlon for Compassion, and Goddess Run. Of particular significance was how we supported the decision to make this year's Walk a Mile our last. Unfortunately, we were hearing more and more from various individuals and groups that the event was not inclusive of everyone, and may be perpetuating homophobia and transphobia. This caused us some significant concern, especially given our recent move to become more trans*-inclusive. VSAC is committed to the humbling, inspiring and provocative process that drives us to rethink and improve our ways of working on issues of gender-based violence in community, so we realized we had a responsibility to investigate these concerns and respond. Thus, we are excited to plan something that will take the place of Walk a Mile next year, while being more engaging and welcoming to even more participants! We wish to acknowledge and thank our community for coming out in support of Walk a Mile these many years, and to the many who offered their perspectives about how we can change for the better. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the community for all it does to support the work of the centre—we are ever grateful for your support.

Sincerely,
Kim Brown, Heidi Exner (Co-chair), Sean Dhillon (Co-chair), Kelly Branchi (Secretary), Julia Denley, and Debra Scarfone (Treasurer).

REPORT FROM COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS

8000 hours is the amount of time, commitment, and compassion the volunteers of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre provided this year to ensure that survivors of sexualized violence are supported in our community. Volunteers serve on our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), as office volunteers, on our Board of Directors as well as events. The volunteers at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre are truly exceptional and one of our volunteers, Kyla Brower, is no exception. Kyla started in the Fall of 2011 as a volunteer on the SART team. As part of her role, Kyla provided immediate support and information to recent survivors down at the hospital and/or police station. Kyla always went above and beyond as a volunteer, whether it was covering a shift last minute, taking on-call shifts over the holidays, helping new volunteers in training or providing back-up support to other SART volunteers while on-call, Kyla was always generous, thoughtful, open and supportive. We ask that volunteers stay on for a year, but Kyla stayed on for 3 years right up until she moved to Halifax this year. Kyla is just one example of the dedication and skill our volunteers bring to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. Year after year, our staff is truly thankful for their contributions.



Kyla Brower,
SART Volunteer

REPORT FROM RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Vancity, our volunteers and everyone that participated and supported our 8th annual, and final, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® on May 25th, 2014. Thank you to everyone that helped make this event a memorable one!
- This June Triathlon of Compassion participants raised \$22,000 to support VSAC services. Special thanks to Rob Dibden and the Tri of Compassion Race Committee and to the hundreds of volunteers who make the event possible.
- 3000 runners and walkers took to Langford Streets on June 1st for the third annual Goddess Run to support three local charities, including VSAC. Of special note, our very own Victim Service Worker, Lara Graves, placed first in the half marathon distance!
- VSAC Board member, Julia Denley launched a new grocery store fundraising campaign which raised awareness and \$5000!
- Donations from direct mail and telemarketing continue to be critical to VSAC's financial solvency and we extend sincere thanks those donors who contribute.
- In 2013-2014 VSAC launched a new website and blog that better allows VSAC to connect with community members, share resources, and provide support to survivors.

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 counsellor. Provincial Employees Community Services Fund – Crisis & Information Line, Information Meetings, Workshops for Supporters. United Way of Greater Victoria – Project Respect. Vancouver Foundation – Trans* Inclusion. Canadian Women's Foundation – Project Respect. Telus Community Fund – Project Respect. Government of Canada – Canada Summer Jobs – Project Respect. Status of Women Canada – Preventing and Responding to Sexualized Violence. Girls Action Foundation – Project Respect. Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program – Signage and Promotional Material Harweg Foundation*

PROJECT RESPECT

Project Respect, the sexualized violence prevention program of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, works to engage the whole community in addressing the root causes of gender-based violence. Project Respect's Rhizome Youth Social Action Team, made up of youth ages 12-21 from across Greater Victoria, are key partners in creating and implementing the vision for the program.

In our school-based work, we engage classes of youth ages 12-19 in sexualized violence prevention workshops, 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.

As usual, over the 2013-2014 school year we have integrated many new learnings into Project Respect sexualized violence prevention workshops. Our focus remains to shift cultural understandings of the root causes of violence and introduce tools for critical thinking. However, our approaches and entry points are constantly shifting to respond to the particular contexts and experiences of participants. Over this past year, we have offered workshops in middle schools, high schools, alternative schools, employment-skills programs, and other community-based programs serving youth.

This year, Project Respect reached approximately 1020 youth and community members during the 2013/14 school year through: 60 workshops in schools and community-based organizations; multiple youth-led social action projects; and, key community events. Our reach extends across School Districts 61 (Victoria Area), 62 (Sidney Area), and 63 (Sooke Area), with request from all across BC and beyond for resource and curriculum sharing and support.

Through national partnerships with and funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation, Students Commission of Canada, and the Girls Action Foundation, Project Respect is also collaborating with anti-violence organizations across the country to create a stronger voice for violence prevention that addresses the root causes of gender-based violence and engages young people to take the lead on engaging communities in this work.

TEEN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROJECT In 2013, Project Respect received a Canadian Women's Foundation 4-Year Teen Healthy Relationships Program grant. Through this funding, as well as additional support from Telus Community Fund and the United Way of Greater Victoria, we just delivered the first year of this program. We worked with students in two schools over 12 sessions to create a rich and meaningful process that enabled students to explore their experiences, learn more about the root causes of violence, create strategies to address the forms of violence they see happening in their daily lives, and become anti-violence leaders in their schools and communities.

#TOPLEFT : ENGAGING BOYS AND YOUNG MEN IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION



In 2013, we began a partnership with national youth organization, the Students Commission of Canada, to do the Top Left project. Youth involved in the project named it Top Left because that's where the heart is. The project is designed to engage more boys and young men in working with youth of all genders to end gender-based violence. Top Left is happening in four communities across the country: Victoria, Saskatoon, Toronto, and Miramichi NB.

Over the course of the year, Rhizome youth travelled with Project Respect staff to two national Top Left conferences in Ontario hosted by the Students Commission. At these conferences, youth from all four communities came together, shared experiences, ideas, and skills, and created social action products (such as videos and presentations) to take back to their home communities. The conferences were also life changing on a personal level for many of the youth who were able to go.

PROJECT RESPECT TOP LEFT YOUTH CONFERENCE

Organized and co-facilitated by the Rhizome youth social action team, Project Respect held our first overnight anti-violence youth conference at Camp Barnard March 7, 8, and 9 as part of our local Top Left project. In line with the outcomes for this project, 13 of the 30 youth who participated self-identified as boys or young men. The conference brought together youth ages 12-18 from diverse backgrounds and cultural contexts to explore the root causes of gender-based violence and create strategies to end it.



THE PREVENTION TEAM In the fall of 2013, The Project Respect Rhizome Youth Social Action Team was recognized with the BC Ministry of Justice, Crime Prevention and Community Safety Youth Leadership Award. 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 diverse audiences in difficult discussions about violence and inciting collective action toward building non-violent communities. Our staff team over 2013/14 included: Elicia Loiselle (Prevention Manager), Kingsley Strudwick (Prevention Coordinator), Alyx MacAdams (Trans* Inclusion Coordinator), Alex Filippelli (Auxiliary Facilitator), Mathew Davydiuk (Auxiliary Facilitator), Paloma Ponti (Youth Community Developer), and practicum student Dean Mang-Wooley. Many youth were involved in creating our various social action projects this year. Our core team of talented and fierce youth leaders kept the momentum of the projects going throughout the year: Alicia Lee, Chloe Mumford, Emily Carson-Apstein, Eunice Rasmussen, Geneviève Nevin, Kele Antoine, Lucius Hall, Mikayla Milne, Nicholas Higgins, Paloma Ponti, Rowan Hébert, Safahana Husein, and Shan Khan. We'd also like to thank our adult volunteers Amy Dorais and Isaac Rosenberg for their solidarity and support in our projects this year!

A big thanks to all of our community partners and supporters and to our funders: Canadian Women's Foundation, United Way, Telus Community Fund, and Province of BC Community Gaming Grant, Vancouver Foundation, Government of Canada - Canada Summer Jobs, Girls Action Foundation.

HOLLABACK! VICTORIA Hollaback! is an international movement to end street harassment. It consists of locally run Hollaback! sites all over the world. Run by members of the Project Respect Rhizome Youth Social Action Team, Hollaback! Victoria has been busy over the past year running their blog (<http://victoria.ihollaback.org/>) and developing projects to incite community action to end street harassment. A particular focus for community engagement has been to teach community members the skills to intervene when they see street harassment in order to shift the culture that normalizes this violence. In December, the Hollaback! Team facilitated a community event called HollaCafe! in collaboration with Discovery Coffee.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

This year has been a very successful year for the Direct Client Services Team. With a core staff of ten providing immediate crisis support, victim services support and/or longer-term counselling to survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, clients may access service at various points in their recovery and healing journeys.

Stopping the Violence (STV) counsellors are working with the changes to the new mental health policy inclusion and exclusion criteria through the use of new assessment tools that can be discussed with clients. Follow-up actions to this policy finalized consent for service forms, which clearly indicate reasons for ending service and counselling interfering behaviours assessment, which also identifies limitations to future services.

The individual waitlist has been brought down substantially with a waiting period of approximately 12 to 14 months for individual counselling. However, clients are being streamed through our two core groups: Skills for Healing and Building Strengths providing them with the necessary skills to undertake trauma therapy while waiting for this service. For the most part, this is going well as we are seeing some attrition from the individual and group waitlists through these

processes. Please note increased number of group session participants in the DCS summary.

Adapted sessions, on Trauma Informed Practice and Support (TIPS), were presented to the community organizations Cool-Aid Society and PEERS. Also, two mini-TIPS trainings were provided to the Cool-Aid Society, generating funds.

The Team has been working closely with Alyx, our Trans Inclusion Coordinator, to discuss changes to DCS processes (e.g., trans inclusion in groups, evaluation and possible research opportunities) and is committed to the inclusion of trans* and gender variant survivors.

Our counselling services range from short-term crisis support to longer-term, individual trauma therapy and groups with other survivors. A variety of techniques, such as EMDR, somatic, narrative and Art therapy are used by our counsellors who are all trauma specialists. A practicum student was mentored in trauma-informed practice and honed their skills through a placement with the crisis services. This professional and dedicated team continues their commitment to supporting women, trans* and gender variant survivors of sexual assault and sexual childhood abuse and working towards an end to sexualized violence.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES ANNUAL SERVICE SUMMARY

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Crisis and Information Line Calls	1244	1060	917
SART Responses	56	67	80
Victim Services Program Direct Client Contacts	1321	901	738
Crisis Support Sessions	890	899	1026
Stopping the Violence Counselling Sessions	1880	1851	1947
Group Support (Information Sessions & Group Therapy)/ Number of Participants	104/924	92/404	113/443

"Thank you for helping me help myself. Thanks to you I have discovered strengths I did not know I possessed."

~ VSAC client



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE!

Karen Wickham came to VSAC by a fortuitous accident. Volunteer Victoria misdirected Karen to the VWSAC crisis line instead of the general crisis line in 1986 when she was a student at UVIC, wanting to volunteer in the community. And the rest, as they say, is herstory!

After a year on the crisis line and a trained member of the Emergency Response Team, Karen became an employee in 1988. She has worn several hats in different capacities: crisis intake, emergency response, crisis intervention program (a combo of crisis and victim services), counselling and court services. Today Karen still manages two hats; Crisis Line Coordinator and Team Leader for Direct Client Services.

Being an icon of longevity, Karen has seen:

- three executive directors
- the staff contingent grow from 4 to 25 employees
- the inception of the Victim Services Program, the roll out of the Stopping the Violence Initiative
- the introduction of the Residential Historical Abuse Program
- the creation of Ending Violence Association of BC
- the provincial umbrella group supporting Victim Assistance and Stopping the Violence Counselling programs
- the ground-breaking trans* inclusion work being done to provide services for the trans* and gender variant survivors.

Karen is the "expert" when it comes to statistics and the database. Having begun with no computers and hand written data, to an early database then many computers, Karen has assisted those of us, who glaze over at the mention of numbers, report on our daily work and has shared with us the "joy" of data input and recording statistics!

In 1996 when VSAC was certified with the BCGEU, Karen became a shop steward and continues to support the staff to this day. As shop steward, Karen has served on the Provincial Bargaining Committee and participates in ongoing training with the union.

Karen holds the history of VSAC and is a much respected member of this organization. We appreciate the enormous breadth of knowledge and expertise you bring to the table and your strength and wisdom that supports and enriches us all.