

Annual Report 2014 - 2015 Victoria Sexual Assault Centre



healing, education
& prevention

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Business Line: (250) 383-5545

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24 hour Crisis Line service made possible through partnership with
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www.yesmeansyes.com

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Community partnerships were a cornerstone of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre's work in 2014-2015. The power of partnerships cannot be underestimated. Collaboration keeps our agency vital and responsive to community need and this year we worked to build new connections as well as bolster established ones.

Thanks to generous funding from the Ministry of Justice and private donors, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) in partnership with Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Society of Greater Victoria (formerly Mary Manning Centre), Island Health, local police and RCMP are working together to create the first Integrated Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Support Centre in British Columbia. The Centre will provide crisis counselling, medical/forensic exams, police interviews, and other support in a central, safe, welcoming environment for survivors of sexualized violence of all ages and genders. The project will address the critical need for a non-institutional venue to reduce barriers to service for survivors of sexualized violence. We have long had the vision to open such a clinic but only in early 2015 did we conceptualize the project and begin talks with partner agencies to lay the early groundwork. At this time, construction has begun and the clinic will open in fall 2015.

The Community Based Response network is a two-year project funded by the Status of Women Canada and currently we are working with six partner agencies, The Victoria Native Friendship Centre, The Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria, Child Abuse Prevention and Counseling Society of Greater Victoria, PEERS Resource Society, Victoria Women's Transition House and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre. Our goal is to create a network to better respond to sexualized violence in the greater Victoria area by collaborating with multiple agencies and developing strategies to better serve multiple communities.

For five years we have partnered with the Victoria Women's Transition House in an administrative consolidation which has allowed us to reduce our overhead. This relationship is not only cost effective but we are also more efficient in our administrative processes.

Community partnerships are a good way of doing business and our donors are our most important community partners. Thank you for trusting us to do the needed work in our community. Survivors need our services so 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

Makenna Rielly, MA
Executive Director

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Victoria Sexual Assault Center Board of Directors has experienced a year of change, bringing about new opportunities, ideas, and members.

Over this past year the faces at the board meeting table have changed. It is with the utmost gratitude we said farewell to Heidi Exner, Kim Brown, and Yvonne Haist. These women have been long time members of the board, volunteers for the center, and ambassadors in the community.

We had two successful board member recruitment sessions; giving us five new members. Our new members bring with them fresh ideas, new strengths, and opinions allowing us to diversify the abilities of the board.

The financial audit for this past fiscal year was presented to the board members by the Treasury Committee. The board voted unanimously to pass the motion to approve the audit.

The board has participated and volunteered in many successful community events! The Goddess Run and Triathlon of Compassion were both great events where the members participated and volunteered! The board collaborated with community members and Victoria Sexual Assault Center employees to host "This One's For the Girls" event in July! The event was a night of dancing, education, and fun! The goal of the event was to celebrate, empower, and unite all women. The proceeds raised from the event went directly toward client services programs. The event was a success! We all left with intentions of hosting another similar event in the New Year!

The board is ecstatic to be involved in such a ground breaking venture, the Integrated Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Support Centre. The center will strive to provide efficient and effective medical and forensic care for all survivors of sexual assault, child maltreatment, and domestic violence. The combination of medical and forensic care coupled with education creates strong healthy woman in our community.

Sincerely,

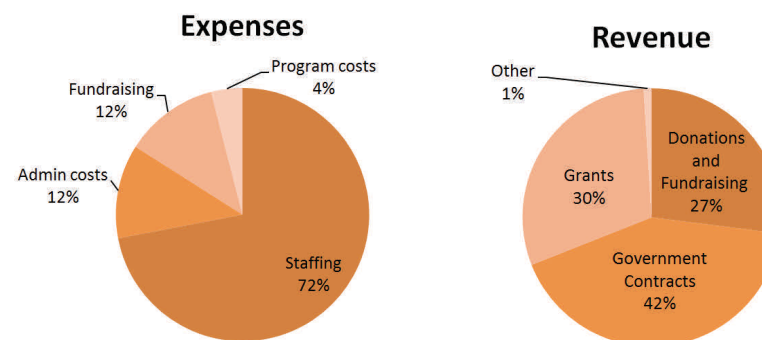
Kelly Branchi (Co-Chair & Secretary), Sean Dhillon (Co-chair), Julia Denley, Gulrose Jiwani, Nat Johnstone (Treasurer) and Lisa Jozsa.

2014 - 2015 VICTORIA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE STAFF

Makenna Rielly, Executive Director

Lorinda Allix, Catherine Charlton, Chaw-win-is, Tracey Coulter, Mathew Davydiuk, Catherine Day, Alex Filippelli, Kate Fleming, Heidi Gayleard, Lara Graves, Ana Maria Guerra, Amanda Lynn Halldorson, Georgie Jackson, Crystal James, Linda Jennings, Leslie Jensen, Lenore Kennedy, Nadia Khan, Sage LaCerte, Gagan Leekha, Elicia Loiselle, Nancy Lowry, Alyx Mac-Adams, Jasper Malchuk, Jude Marleau, Anna McClean, Mikayla Milne, Paula Murphy, Flora Pagan, Barb Peck, Lindsay Pomper, Megan Quigley, Draco Recalma, Alexa Robin, Isaac Rosenberg, Kelly Sherwin, Cici Shi, Sharon Stewart, Kingsley Strudwick, Kara Taylor & Karen Wickham.

2014 - 2015 EXPENSES/REVENUE BREAKDOWN



REPORT FROM COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS

This past year the volunteers at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre continued to provide to countless hours to our agency. Through their work the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), as office volunteers, on our Board of Directors as well at events, VSAC volunteers compassionately worked to ensure that survivors of sexualized violence are supported in our community.

This year we said goodbye to one of our longstanding volunteers, Heidi Exner. Heidi first started at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre as a Prevention Coordinator with Project Respect in the early 2000's. She moved agencies to start her longstanding position at AIDS Vancouver Island, but still wanted to be part of the VSAC, so she decided to become a volunteer on the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). We usually ask SART volunteers to commit to a year of providing on-call immediate support and information to recent survivors of sexual assault at the hospital or police station, but Heidi stayed for five. From there, in 2009, Heidi decided to join the Board and we were happy to accept her into that role. Heidi stayed on the Board until 2015 when she decided to move to Calgary, Alberta.

Heidi is someone that you want in your corner. She was someone who we could call on, when we need it the most, and even if it was last minute! Among her many talents, Heidi is an incredibly skilled public speaker and facilitator. If ever there was an event that needed an emcee, or a conversation that needed to happen, Heidi could be trusted to be there and perfectly articulate what we wanted to say and what we needed to hear.

These are just a couple of examples of what Heidi brought to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. As an agency, we are incredibly grateful for everything that Heidi contributed. Her level of commitment, passion, sense of collaboration, thoughtfulness, insightfulness and positivity were true gifts to the Centre.

Heidi always called herself, "a lifer" at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre and although she is no longer with us in an official capacity, she will always be a strong supporter of VSAC and has left a lasting impact on the work this agency has been able to accomplish. Although we will miss her, we are excited for her and all of her future endeavors in Calgary (Calgary is lucky to have her!).



Heidi Exner

REPORT FROM TRANS INCLUSION COORDINATOR

This last year has been an exciting one for Trans Inclusion! We brought together a brilliant group of 12 local Trans folks to develop and facilitate our Trans Inclusion workshops. These workshops are decolonizing, participatory, and skill-building events with the aim of getting service providers more confident and comfortable when serving Trans and Gender non-conforming clients. We've been able to connect with hundreds of staff and volunteers at a wide range of organizations - including PEERS, the United Way Community Partners, Need2, and many more!

This year also marks the last year in this role for Alyx, and the introduction of Alexa as the new coordinator (as well as the affirmation that everyone working in Trans Inclusion is named some form of Alex). Trans inclusion remains committed to working towards inclusion and acceptance for Trans folks here at the Centre, as well as within our networks and the wider community.

REPORT FROM RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Highlights from 2014 - 2015



Left: Board member Kelly Branchi slices watermelon to refresh triathletes at the Triathlon of Compassion. Over 100 athletes participated and raise approximately \$17,000 in pledges. Special thanks to our sponsors: Peninsula Co-op, Robert Cameron law, Country Grocer, and our Media partners 100.3 the Q and CTV.

Below: Three Kids of Steel. The Tri of Compassion is a family friendly event that nurtures young athletes by providing a safe and fun venue for many first time participants.



Below: Victoria Goddess Run participants getting ready to run and walk for VSAC. This year we had a record breaking number of participants choose to support VSAC through pledge-raising and by additional donations at the time of registration. This year the Goddess Run was a week-end of highlights: from the Friday/Saturday race expo and Sunset Yoga, to the bathrobe run and main event- the energy was infectious. Thanks to our Charity Champions Kelly Branchi and Mena Westahaver – who raised a combined total of \$5500!



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, United Way of Greater Victoria – Project Respect Vancouver Foundation – Trans Inclusion, Canadian Women's Foundation – Project Respect, Telus Community Fund – Project Respect RBC Foundation – 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 & Zonta Club of Greater Victoria

REPORT FROM PREVENTION TEAM

Project respect, the sexualized violence prevention program of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, works to engage the whole community in addressing root causes of gender-based violence. Project Respect's Rhizome Youth Social Action Team made up of youth aged 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 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, relationships, sexuality, and societal level influences by focusing on knowledge change, skill building, attitude change, and social change.

Over the 2014-2015 school years, we have continued to focus on generating an understanding of the root causes of sexualized violence while introducing tools for critical thinking. We continue to adapt curriculum based on what is most pressing or relevant for youth we serve. Technology and access to information via tools like computer and cell phones, more present than ever in schools, impacts the workshops we deliver. Over this year we have delivered workshops in middle-schools, high schools, alternative schools, employment-skills programs, and other community-based programs serving youth, reaching over 1000 youth in the Greater Victoria Area.

We have re-vamped our YesMeansYes website and included our blog component. The website restructure has been a great way to further communicate with a larger audience for social media and a great way for the younger people we work with to engage them in the work we do here at VSAC but include their voice and perspective as young people.



Youth participants and facilitators at this year's Project Respect Top Left Social Action Camp

A major highlight of this past year was the top Left Social Action Camp where youth from the Rhizome Youth Social Action team put together a video and rewrote the lyrics to a popular song, making them empowering through writing about the importance of consent! The following is a blog published by Elicia Loisel, Prevention Manager who is currently on parental leave until this Spring.

Project Respect launched its first hit music video "Respect Me Like You Do" a re-write of "Love Me Like You Do" (from Fifty Shades of Grey). We are creating the media that we want to see in the world - media that shows diverse bodies, genders, orientations, relationships, ways of loving, and lots and lots of explicit...consent!

The lyrics and scenes were developed by young people at the #TopLeft Youth Conference, and the song was recorded in partnership with The Choir (Larsen's Music) and directed by Project Respect's year-round youth group, Rhizome.

WWW.YESMEANSYES.COM

REPORT FROM DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES

First and foremost, an expression of total gratitude to the amazing and dedicated counsellors, crisis support workers, and victim service workers on the DCS team needs to be heard by all who support us. The core staff of ten, who provide immediate crisis support, victim services support and/or longer-term counselling to survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, approach their work with passion, expertise and exemplary care. A special thank you goes out to Ana and Crystal, our two new Crisis line auxiliary staff as well. I am honoured to work with each and every one.

We have had some staff leave this year with a rearrangement of some responsibilities. Linda left us this year after many years of service to concentrate on her private practice. Lara moved with her partner to an exciting new adventure in Albany, New York with first baby on the way. Barb B. has replaced Lara bringing 20+ years of experience from Sooke Police Victim Services. Lorinda has moved permanently to STV counselling while retaining a piece of SART training. Nadia has taken a permanent position with the Crisis Team and a temporary STV counselling position in collaboration with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Amanda Lynn has joined us for a year's time in STV counselling until May of 2016 while Barb P. sails her way to Mexico and back on an extended leave.

We are still streaming clients through our two core groups: Skills for Healing and Building Strengths providing them with the necessary skills to undertake trauma therapy while waiting for individual service. Our decision to continue this process was based on the attrition we were seeing on the individual and group waitlists. This has given us the ability to more efficiently handle the long waitlists and for clients to have more contact with VSAC while on the waitlist.

The DCS Team has participated in several public education opportunities. A four day series of specially adapted Trauma Informed Practice was presented to the staff at Victoria Native Friendship Centre with 39 participants providing some income for the Society. Presentations were made at Royal Roads University, Victoria Brain Injury Society, South Island Counselling and Trauma Centre, the Forensic Nurse Examiners and Public Health Nurses. We continue to be an active member of Team Victoria and the Victims Assistance Program Coordinating Committee.

As Manager of DCS, I attended a Ministry of Justice forum in Nanaimo with Makenna (ED) to give input into the new Negotiable Request for Proposals plan in which both our STV Counselling and Victim Service contracts will be publicly tendered with all other contracts across the province beginning in 2016.

The Victim Service Workers and Crisis Support Workers continue to have heavy caseloads and our extra 7 hours of funding ends March 2016. Victim Service Workers worked with 2 law students from UVIC through Pro Bono Students Canada to produce a document for survivors of sexual assault who are interested in finding out about reporting to police and the court process. The next step is to condense the document into a three-fold pamphlet that will be translated into at least 7 languages.

We have continued to work closely with Alyx, our Trans Inclusion Coordinator, to change DCS processes (e.g., trans inclusion in groups, evaluation and possible research opportunities) and are committed to the inclusion of trans, gender variant and queer people.

Our counselling services continue to 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. This year the intern student (School of Social Work) was mentored in trauma-informed practice and honed their skills through a placement with the Crisis Services. This professional team continues their commitment to supporting women, trans, gender variant and queer survivors of sexual assault and sexual childhood abuse and working towards an end to sexualized violence.

Direct Client Services Summary

Many heartfelt thanks to our staff, interns, volunteers, community and funding partners for the generous contributions toward this essential support for survivors of sexualized violence. The Ministry of Justice, PECSF, Status of Women Canada, Vancouver Foundation and our generous donors provide the funding to provide our services and programs in our community.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES ANNUAL SERVICE SUMMARY

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Crisis and Information Line Calls	1260	1244	1060
SART Responses	54	56	67
Victim Services Program Direct Client Contacts	1590	1321	901
Crisis Support Sessions	989	890	899
Stopping the Violence Counselling Sessions	1488	1881	1851
Group Support (Information Sessions & Group Therapy)/ Number of Participants	99/392	104/424	92/404

REPORT FROM NETWORK COORDINATOR

This year we launched a two-year project funded by Status of Women Canada to develop a coordinated prevention and response to sexualized violence in Victoria BC. Our partners include organizations who worked with people who were most affected by sexualized violence, such as immigrant and refugee communities, sex workers, queer and/or trans people, and girls and women who experience violence. Specifically, the Network first formed with 7 organizations: **The Victoria Native Friendship Centre, The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counseling Society, Peers Resource Society, Victoria Women's Transition House, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre and the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre.**

In addition to meeting monthly, the Network undertook the large task of doing a needs assessment of community and staff consultations in Year 1 to help inform our strategy building in Year 2. The consultations included: 15 focus groups and 1 interview with staff, 2 community consultations, 8 community focus groups; and 13 interviews with girls, women and trans community members. Overall 104 community members gave their input to this project.

Some of the major findings include:

Coordinated outreach – coordinate with a larger network of organizations and community members who provide outreach in the area of ending sexualized violence. This process must also engage boys and men as people who do harm, and who are sometimes survivors.

Training for service providers – specifically to cross train within the network as we expand regarding: immigrant/refugee cultural competency; Indigenous knowledges and practices; gender and gender diversity; and de-stigmatizing sex work.

Prevention/education – strategizing around coordinating efforts and challenging funding status quo by collaborating on funding initiatives.

Existing Community Responses - finding where community are already responding and support the work they are doing with providing space, training, funding (etc.) where applicable.

Knowledge translation – a major finding for knowledge translation is the "word-of-mouth" networking that occurs within marginalized communities. We can strategize around using existing networks within communities to increase knowledge and information regarding sexualized and gender-based violence, services, and support.

Since the beginning of year 2 we have focused on knowledge sharing and strategizing a coordinated response, please stay tuned for updates on our website!