Food Justice & Social Action

Project Respect is excited to announce that we will be going ahead with the *Resistance to Violence Through Food Justice and Social Action Project* this coming Fall. The project was created for youth to explore the connections between gender-based violence, colonization and food justice. The 2 year project involves: canning and preserving salmon; a camp to explore topics of food justice, sexualized violence, and social action; teach-outs with local organizations and individuals; cooking and dialogue classes; and the development of social actions.

The canned salmon that the youth will prepare with local indigenous experts will be donated to the Cedar Hill Clinic as part of their commitment to building relationships and sharing food as an important step to healing form the effects of sexualized violence. Youth will share back with community the ways that we can take responsibility for creating personal, social and systemic change to promote healthy relationships and inclusive communities through social action and food justice.

You’re invited to our 2015 AGM

**“Building Relationships”**

Featuring presentations from Chaw-win-is, Prevention Manager, Alexia Robin, Trans Inclusion Coordinator and Makenna Rielly, Executive Director.

**Tuesday, September 15th from 4pm – 6pm**

Cedar Hill Golf Course in the Banquet Room (1400 Derby Rd)

Please RSVP by Thursday, September 10th, 2015 (email: info@vsac.ca or call: 250-383-5545)

Light refreshments will be served.
Our Sexual Assault Response Team, which provides an emergency service to recent survivors of sexual assault and offers support and information at the hospital or police station, has allowed our agency to create long-standing, collaborative partnerships with community partners, such as Forensic Nurse Examiners, local police and RCMP, Crown Counsel and Island Health. Our Community partners are fully supportive of the Cedar Hill Clinic and see it as an opportunity to enhance service delivery and reduce barriers for survivors accessing support.

We had the chance to speak with some of our community partners to hear their thoughts about the creation of the Cedar Hill Clinic.

Jan Calnan has been a dedicated Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) for the past 16 years. Jan is a registered nurse that has been specially trained to provide medical and/or forensic care to recent survivors of sexual assault. FNEs are an integral part of our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and work to ensure that survivors are met with comprehensive and compassionate care.

Opening a facility like the Cedar Hill Clinic has been a vision of yours for a long time. What excites you about it?

I have always thought a survivor needs a community of support around them. The idea of the Cedar Hill Clinic is that it will be a one-stop-shop for survivors. The Cedar Hill Clinic will have counselors, support workers, victim service workers, and FNEs in one place so the survivor can really feel that there is a community of people to support them.

Another big advantage is that it takes survivors out of the emergency room department. The ER can be a barrier to survivors out of the emergency room waiting room, survivors can feel on display, many people will not go. I think we will be easier for a survivor to walk through these doors than to walk through the doors of a police station.

With the Cedar Hill Clinic, everything will be in one place. Without a clinic like this, we have to take the survivor to so many different places after they have just experienced a sexual assault. With the Cedar Hill Clinic, everyone is coming to the survivor, not the other way around.

How do you think the Cedar Hill Clinic will benefit the survivor?

A lot of people will break down some of the barriers to report. My hope is that it will be easier for a survivor to walk through these doors than to walk through the doors of a police station.

What excites you about the Cedar Hill Clinic?

There are so many things excite me about this project. Ultimately, my hope is that it will provide a safe place for survivors to deal with the trauma they have experienced. I think having all of the resources in one place will make it better for the survivor. The Cedar Hill Clinic makes my job easier and, in turn, makes my job more successful. I think VSAC always strives to have a fresh approach to tackle this complicated and sensitive issue. I think a new approach is always good to try and the Cedar Hill Clinic would offer that.

The Cedar Hill Clinic will be survivor-led. Survivors are in control of their choices, whether it is choosing what medical care to have, whether or not to report to police or accessing ongoing counseling.

How do you define success in your job?

When I can make the process of reporting comfortable for a survivor. I think experiencing a sexual assault can be one of the most traumatic experiences some people go through. Success for me is to make sure the survivor has support throughout the report. One of the things that helps to not only ensure that there will be success in the criminal investigation, but also in the survivor’s ability to heal from this trauma.

If someone is thinking about reporting to police, what would you encourage them to do?

Ask questions. Even before you talk to police, I encourage survivors to connect with Victim Services at VSAC to ask questions and get information so they can decide if this is something they want to do.

How do you think the Cedar Hill Clinic will benefit the survivor?

At Hope Place, I will break down some of the barriers to report. I hope that I will be there for a survivor to walk through these doors than to walk through the doors of a police station.

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How can you support the Cedar Hill Clinic?

Although we have secured partial funding for the Cedar Hill Clinic we are still in need of donations for its initial infrastructure as well as its ongoing sustainability. Any donation you are able to give is greatly appreciated. This is your chance to support a greatly underserved sector in Victoria as well as be part of something that is first of its kind in BC. (On your enclosed yellow donation card you have the option to add an additional donation that will go directly to the Cedar Hill Clinic.)

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