UPCOMING EVENTS

VICTORIA GODDESS RUN
SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2015
Participants can choose to sign up for the 5K, 10K and Half Marathon. The weekend of activities include a Women’s Expo at the Westin Bear Mountain, Yoga at Sunset, Bathtub Run and Kids Run.
VSAC is proud to be one of three partner charities to receive five dollars from every registration! Sign up to walk/run or raise pledges at www.victoriagoddess.com.
Volunteers needed: volunteer@victoriagoddess.com

TRIATHLON OF COMPASSION
SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2015
Swim, bike and run for the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre! Whether you are a first timer or seasoned athlete, this friendly, triathlon is for you. Sprint distances are: 500m pool swim, 20K bike and 5K run. Everyone welcome!
Proudly brought to you by Human Powered Racing. Located at Esquimalt Recreation Centre.
Register to race at www.3iofcompassion.com
Volunteer needed: volunteer@3iofcompassion.com

If 2015 had a theme for the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre it would be: connection, collaboration, and innovation.

For 33 years we have worked to meet the needs of those whose lives have been impacted by sexualized violence and to provide quality violence prevention education in our community. We want to be even better. That’s why VSAC is actively seeking and acting upon community feedback and striving to connect, collaborate, and innovate. We want to see a shift in the way the world sees and responds to sexualized violence, to ensure that every person who has experienced sexualized violence gets the help they need and that those who endure trauma and the after effects have the type of deep and meaningful support that helps them heal and feel a sense of their own strength.

There is so much we’d like to share with you about the inspiring work we are doing at the Centre. The Community-Based response Network (funded by Status of Women Canada), Trans Inclusion, and our administrative consolidation are just a few of the ways we have been collaborating and innovating. We have many more projects on the go and in development. If you haven’t already, subscribe to our e-news (you can do so by visiting www.vsac.ca) to stay up-to-date with our work.

Thank you for your support,

Makenna Rielly, Executive Director
By Alan MacAdams

This year has been marked by many achievements in our Trans Inclusion project, including: consultation and relationship building; providing education and assisting gender and trans people to service providers and new volunteers; and outreach to trans communities to participate in our Centre through volunteer, intern, and staff roles.

A recent highlight included holding a community consultation with anti-hate group in January about the accessibility of services in Victoria. A working group of 5 trans people received honorariums to plan this event, which over 25 people attended and others participated in online. Beyond community building there were many impactful suggestions and a range of perspectives shared about how services can be more accessible to trans communities, notes of which can be found online via our website. We look forward to utilizing this feedback as we continue growing more accountable and responsive to community.

This year we have learned that many other services are also recognizing the need to become more educated and purposeful in making their services accessible and safe for trans people. We regularly receive requests for workshops about trans inclusions from other organizations. We had the capacity to deliver over 10 workshops this last year but we were unable to meet the demand for workshops. Furthermore, we knew that by only having the Trans Inclusion Coordinator facilitating these workshops not enough perspectives or experiences on being trans were being represented. This next year, however, we will be able to deliver even more workshops and pay trans people to be facilitators thanks to a grant from the Victoria Foundation.

It is important to also recognize the new initiatives in Victoria. Primarily led by trans community, have created more opportunities for trans people to gather and meet each other. Most of these initiatives have come to fruition through unpaid work of dedicated community members. We hope that this change will mean that we are able to provide support and solidarity to these groups through the healing, education, and prevention of sexualized violence services we provide.

In November 2014, we introduced our Community-Based Research Project and coordinator, Kara Taylor, who talked about the value of building relationships, breaking down silos, and having the resources allocated to collaborative work in order to better address the needs of communities across Victoria and to respond to sexualized violence.

Here is an update about the project.

By Kara Taylor

I am continuously grateful to work alongside our partner organizations, and have the opportunity to strengthen connections between our organizations and the communities we serve. The Network meets monthly to share ideas, expertise and knowledge, and we have been very busy engaging with the perspectives of staff and community stakeholders to inform our practice.

Each organization has done both staff and community consultations that explore how different communities understand sexualized violence, the specific contexts of settings of lives in which it occurs and its root causes; accessibility of services for diverse communities; exploring our capacity to respond to sexualized violence as organizations and community members; and visioning community-based ways to support post-survivor lives in which to improve our collective responses to sexualized violence and strengthen our prevention efforts. We are currently analyzing the information we have gathered and will report to the next phase of the project in which community knowledge will shape concrete strategies that improve our collective responses to sexualized violence across our diverse local communities.

Already, some truly innovative and energizing partnership opportunities have emerged from the Network. For example, partners are committed to doing cross-training among our organizations to share our dispersed expertise. VSAC has been inundated with requests from Network partners to share our knowledge about gender and sexualized violence in training and information sessions with staff and people using these services. We can barely meet the demand for collaboration on other projects as well.

I am so excited for the upcoming months and all of the innovative ideas we can put into action to help to end violence towards women, girls and trans people.

This work cannot happen without the generous support of the Status of Women Canada.