

Annual Report 2015 - 2016 Victoria Sexual Assault Centre



healing, education
& prevention

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Business Line: (250) 383-5545

Crisis & Information Line: (250) 383-3232

24 hour Crisis Line service made possible through partnership with
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REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A priority for the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) in our 2015 – 2016 year was to develop and implement strategies on how we can remove barriers and increase the accessibility of our services. Focusing on accessibility and building partnerships helps to improve the quality of our programs and services not only for the people we serve and our stakeholders, but also the larger community. In order to build bridges we are committed to continually examine the ways we do our work.

Accessible Services

Over the past five years, every department at VSAC has worked hard to improve how we respond to sexualized violence across diverse communities. Our Prevention Team has led the way to develop core training for our staff members and volunteers so that the entire agency uses a critical, intersectional feminist lens in our work and practice. Our prevention team's innovative work with youth and addressing the roots causes of sexualized violence continued to expand this year. Under the development of our former interim Prevention Manager, Chaw-win-is, our agency announced an exciting new project called Rooted in Respect: Resisting Violence through Food Justice. Through new and continuing collaborations with agencies like the Victoria Native Friendship Centre and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre, our Direct Client Services Team worked to enhance front line service delivery to Indigenous communities, immigrants and refugees and Trans and Gender Non-Conforming people. Our Development Team, along with program managers, has sought out funding for our Trans Inclusion Coordinator to continue their work within VSAC as well as with our community partners to increase inclusive practices across the Greater Victoria area and beyond.

Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic

Through collaboration with Island Health, Capital Regional District Police, Crown Counsel, Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre (VCAPCC) and the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC), we have successfully opened a beautiful new clinic, which is the first of its kind in the province of British Columbia. Utilizing a holistic model of service delivery, the clinic shifts key services and supports for recent survivors of sexual assault from the hospital emergency department and police stations to one location - a welcoming, accessible, supportive, client-centred, and therapeutic environment for survivors to access medical, forensic and support services safely and confidentially. We know that sexual assaults are vastly under reported and many survivors do not access medical or support services after experiencing a sexual assault. The goal of the clinic is to reduce barriers that many survivors face, especially those who experience marginalization and are currently underserved, when trying to access services. With a generous grant from the Ministry of Justice we opened the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic in February, 2016. The clinic is housed in the new Victoria Community Response Centre, which also houses VCAPCC's Child and Youth Advocacy Centre.

Continuing Partnerships

For six years 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. This relationship is not only cost effective, but we are also more efficient in our administrative processes.

Our loyal donors and supporters continue to be greatly valued partners in the work that we do. Without their support, VSAC could not provide the needed work in healing, prevention and education in

our community. Many of our donors have such strong ties to this agency and act on that commitment so generously each year. Thank you for your trust and support of VSAC and proving that the community deeply cares about ending sexualized violence and supporting all survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

Makenna Rielly, MA, Executive Director

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

This year, we began a successful board member recruitment process resulting in on four new members joining the Board of Directors. Our new members bring with them fresh ideas, new strengths, expertise and experience 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 Finance Committee. The board voted unanimously to pass the motion to approve the audit.

In other work, we continued our support with the agency's awareness- and fund-raising events. Board members had a busy summer with two members participating in the 5th annual Victoria Goddess Run as charity champions to raise funds for the organization's programs and services. The Board also supported the 23rd annual Triathlon of Compassion, VSAC's longest running fundraiser. Board members promoted and volunteered for the event as well as participated in raising funds as part of team VSAC!

The Fundraising Committee, a subcommittee of the Board of Directors formed this past year and meets monthly to generate new fundraising ideas and initiatives for the Centre. The committee is excited to explore new ways to engage with our donors and will host appreciation events to thank our donors and provide them with the opportunity to see firsthand how their donations are used within the centre.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge our whole community of donors and supporters for their generosity and commitment to the work of the centre—we are tremendously grateful for your support.

Sincerely,
VSAC Board of Directors, Kelly Branchi (Co-Chair), Sean Dhillon (Co-chair), Julia Denley, Peter Gibbs, Paula Greene, Gulrose Jiwani, Nat Johnstone, Lisa Jozsa and Melanie Litoski.

2015 - 2016 VICTORIA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE STAFF

Makenna Rielly, Executive Director

Lorinda Allix, Barb Benson, Catherine Charlton, Chaw-win-is, Tracey Coulter, Mathew Davydiuk, Catherine Day, Sheleena Forfar, Heidi Gayleard, Donna Gordon, Lara Graves, Ana Maria Guerra, Sonya Hauser, Liz Herring, Amanda Lynn Halldorson, Georgie Jackson, Crystal James, Anat Kelerstein, Lenore Kennedy, Nadia Khan, Sage LaCerte, Gagan Leekha, Elicia Loiselle, Sharde Long, Nancy Lowry, Alyx MacAdams, Jude Marleau, Anna McClean, Mikayla Milne, Michelle Moreno, Paula Murphy, Barb Peck, Lindsay Pomper, Megan Quigley, Draco Recalma, Alexa Robin, Isaac Rosenberg, Kelly Sherwin, Kim Smith, Leslie Sochowski, Sharon Stewart, Kingsley Strudwick, Kara Taylor, Nichola Watson, Rebecca Watts, Shannon Weinkauff & Karen Wickham.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & GRANT PROVIDERS

Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General - *Stopping the Violence & Victim Services contracts*, Ministry of Justice - *Clinic*, 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, United Way of Greater Victoria – Clinic*, City of Victoria - *Clinic*, Vancouver Foundation – *Trans Inclusion*, Victoria Foundation— *Trans Inclusion*, Canadian Women's Foundation – *Project Respect*, RBC Foundation – *Project Respect*, Government of Canada – *Canada Summer Jobs – Project Respect*, Government of Canada – *Status of Women Canada – Preventing and Responding to Sexualized Violence*, Girls Action Foundation – *Project Respect*, Greater Victoria Savings and Credit Union - *Project Respect*, Victoria Foundation—*Food Justice*, Horner Foundation— *Food Justice*, Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program, Harweg Foundation & Zonta Club of Greater Victoria

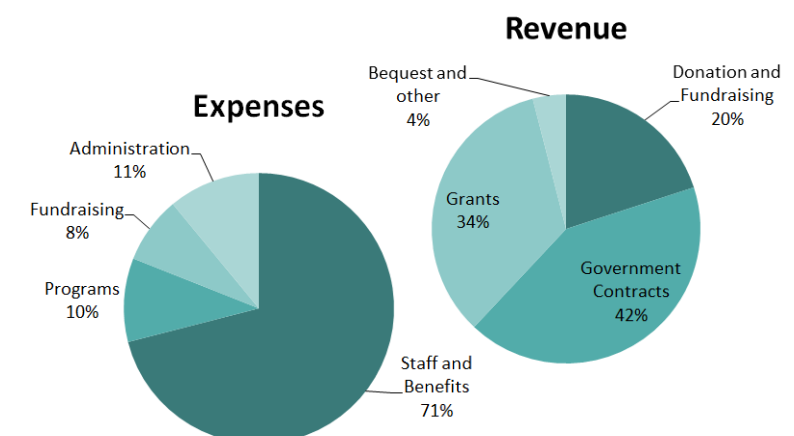
OUR DONORS

We rely on the generous financial support of a community of individual and business donors to sustain our services and programs. Whether a donor chooses to support the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre through one of our mail campaigns, telemarketing, online, as a monthly donor or through one of our annual fundraising events like the Victoria Goddess Run and the Triathlon of Compassion, we are thankful for their gifts, no matter their size, that make a positive impact in the lives of many. Their support is truly appreciated and we sincerely value each and every donor.

We would like to provide a special acknowledgment to Jules Wilson, a donor who has been deeply committed to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) for the past 10 years. This past year marked Jules' 10th year as a participant and fundraiser at VSAC's Triathlon of Compassion. Jules was once again the event's top fundraiser and over the past 10 years, Jules' fundraising total has surpassed the \$25,000 mark! Throughout his involvement with the VSAC, Jules has also been a strong and passionate ally in creating awareness not only VSAC, but around the issue of sexualized violence. To honour his long-term and generous commitment to our Centre we presented Jules with our Guardian award this past year.



2015 - 2016 EXPENSES/REVENUE BREAKDOWN



REPORT FROM DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES

Georgie Jackson, Manager of Direct Client Services

There cannot be enough said about the dedication, expertise and skill of the amazing counsellors, victim service workers, crisis line support workers, Sexual Assault Response Team volunteers, the Direct Client Services' team lead and clinic program coordinator, administrative assistant and the auxiliaries who are relief on the crisis line and front desk. The passion and exemplary care shown by all staff at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) reflects in the comfort and success displayed by the clients as they access our services. It is a team in which I am grateful to participate. A huge thank you to all.

It has been a busy and fulfilling year. Our greatest excitement has been the opening of our community sexual assault clinic. A dream for many, now a reality. A comfortable, compassionate place where survivors can come to begin their healing; and have forensic nurses, police and VSAC support workers available to them at the clinic. No waiting in the emergency department and no need to go to police stations if the survivor chooses not to. We opened in February 2016, the interest is growing and the word in the community spreading. We have had wonderful feedback about the comfort, efficiency and calm atmosphere.

One big challenge this past year was a flood in our building with a consequence of having to repair water damage in five counselling rooms. We had to move some of our team to another venue while the drying out and reconstruction was completed. We were happily moved back in to our offices at the end of December.

We are working diligently to address our waitlists. The triage system in place to provide ongoing support for those on our long-term individual counselling wait list is working efficiently. The wait for individual, trauma-processing counselling, after clients have attended an Information Meeting, Skills, and Building Strengths counselling groups is generally about six to eight weeks. Clients have access to our crisis and information line for support as well as crisis support when needed.

Two counsellors worked with Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre to adapt and present our Trauma Informed Practice and Support (TIPS) training to service providers working with immigrant and refugee communities. Our counselling intern, Leslie Sochowski, has been an excellent addition to the Team this past year.

The Victim Service Team has been fortunate to have Barb Benson from Sooke Police Victim Services join them. The pressure on this team has been formidable, as their caseload has doubled in this fiscal year. We were fortunate to have some Civil Forfeiture funding from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to add some hours to assist with the many court cases and victim support needed.

Again, many thanks to our staff, interns, volunteers, community and funding partners for the generous contributions toward this essential support for the survivors of sexualized violence.

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES ANNUAL SERVICE SUMMARY

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Crisis and Information Line Calls	1632	1260	1244
SART Responses	72	54	56
Victim Services Program Direct Client Contacts	3070	1590	1321
Crisis Support Sessions	754	989	890
Stopping the Violence Counselling Sessions	1415	1488	1881
Group Information Sessions & Group Counselling sessions/ Number of Participants	95/443	99/392	104/424

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES AND CLINIC STAFF AND SPACES



#1: VSAC's Sharde Long, Coordinator of Volunteers and Karen Wickham, Clinic Coordinator. **#2:** The beautiful and bright reception area where clients check in to access services for the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic. **#3:** VSAC's Victim Services Worker Catherine Charlton, Counsellor and Sexual Assault Response Team facilitator Lorinda Allix and Island Health and Clinic Forensic Nurse Examiner Coordinator, Jan Calnan. **#4:** VSAC's Manager of Direct Client Services Georgie Jackson and Counsellor Nadia Khan.



REPORT FROM PREVENTION

Elicia Loiselle, Prevention Manager

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 Lkwungen and W'SANEC territories (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.

Staffing: This year Project Respect experienced a lot of staffing changes. Elicia Loiselle, Prevention Manager, was on parental leave. Chaw-win-is offered her leadership to the program as Interim Prevention Manager during the year Elicia was away. Some of our most experienced staff also moved on to other things during this past year. We were sad to say good-bye to Kingsley Strudwick, Alyx MacAdams, and Anna MacLean, all of whom held multiple positions at Project Respect over the years including Prevention Coordinator (though they have all continued to do some part-time facilitation with us whenever they can).

Rooted in Respect: Resisting Violence through Food Justice:

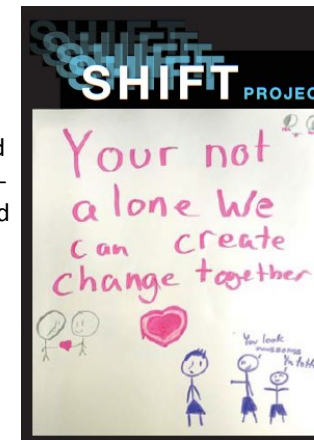
Rooted in Respect is an important new project that emerged from the priorities of Project Respect youth leaders and has come to fruition through the vision and leadership of Interim Prevention Manager Chaw-win-is. The project focuses on engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to explore the connections between gender-based violence and food (in)justices – between violence against bodies and violence against land – and create social action that addresses these interconnected forms of colonial violence. Through Rooted in Respect, we have invited local Indigenous elders and mentors to help facilitate young people's learning about how colonialization has impacted local Indigenous communities, food systems and how these communities have resisted this violence. Youth will explore how land degradation and food injustices resulting from ongoing colonial violence impact all of us who are living on these lands. Through social action, youth will take leadership roles to promote and create relationships of respect and consent with people and land across their diverse communities. The project has been generously supported by the Horner Foundation and the Victoria Foundation.

SHIFT: This past year we completed the third year of a four year project called SHIFT, which is part of the Canadian Women's Foundation Teen Healthy Relationships national network. SHIFT is a 12-session youth leadership program we offer in two middle schools that supports students to develop the skills to build healthy relationships



Addie Elliott, Food Justice Intern and Coastal Elder Mae Sam at a Rooted in Respect event.

and create youth-led social action to address violence and discrimination in their school communities. Students have created videos to teach other youth about bystander intervention and creating inclusion, produced music videos with alternative anti-violence themed lyrics, and created poster campaigns, among other action projects. Throughout these three years, the program has built students' leadership capacity and created broader awareness in our partner schools of strategies to address the root causes of gender-based violence and create inclusion. Peer to peer learning is a key component of the program as, each year, Grade 7 students who were participants in the program in the previous year act as Grade 8 leaders who offer their knowledge and support to the new group of Grade 7 participants. We are very excited for the upcoming year of SHIFT.



The Talk: In August 2015, Project Respect's two summer youth staff Mikalya Milne and Draco Recalma organized and facilitated The Talk. As they write in their Facebook event: "The Talk is a youth led, developed and offered day event for other youth to learn and explore topics surrounding sex, sexualities, services and everything you missed in Sex Ed.!" Mikayla and Draco did a phenomenal job on this event and were even interviewed for CBC radio about the need for this kind of non-judgemental, peer-to-peer, transformative space for learning and sharing knowledge about relationships, sexuality, and consent.

Challenges: This past year Project Respect experienced funding cuts that resulted in reduced staffing capacity. These cuts have specifically impacted the number of our 2-part consent workshops we are able to offer in classrooms and community programs. These workshops are a critical component of our work as teachers, counsellors, and school administrators have been relying on us to offer this violence prevention and healthy relationships education for the past 15 years. Project Respect has no core funding and unfortunately we find it most challenging to secure new funding for our school-based workshops as many funders are seeking to fund new projects rather than existing initiatives.

REPORT FROM TRANS INCLUSION COORDINATOR

Alexa Robin, Trans Inclusion Coordinator

This past year marked the final year for the original 3-year Trans Inclusion project. Trans Inclusion continued to focus on training our community partners and furthering the ongoing Trans inclusion work here at VSAC. In partnership with Trans community members our Trans Inclusion workshops have been ongoing, and in the past year we were able to reach 800 staff and volunteers at numerous agencies and organizations. We were successful in our application with Vancouver Foundation to expand this work into a second phase of the project. This new phase will allow us to further the Trans Inclusion work here at the Centre, while supporting other agencies across Vancouver Island in partnering with their local Trans/Two-Spirit communities and engaging in their own Trans Inclusion process.

There is a lot still to be done, and Trans Inclusion is incredibly thankful to the Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation and United Way for granting us the opportunity to continue learning and growing through this critical work.

Crisis and Information Line:
250-383-3232